

An introduction to County Lines



Aim

- To understand what County Lines means.
- To know how County Line gangs target and groom.
- To have an awareness of the impact to the victim and their families.
- To recognise possible signs a child is being groomed into County Lines.
- To know how to report concerns.

What is County Lines?

“When gangs and organised crime networks groom and exploit children to sell drugs. Often these children are made to travel across counties, and they use dedicated mobile phone 'lines' to supply drugs.”

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100 X £50

£5,000

£35,000

£140,000

£1,680,000

County lines gang's youngest victim: Drug dealers enslaved a six-year-old and are exploiting disabled and 'disposable' children to help them avoid detection, say police

- Cleveland Police said youngster is being treated as a victim not a suspect
- DCI Wendy Tinkler revealed the case at a council meeting in Stockton on Tees
- She said gangs are targeting disabled children and ones expelled from school

By [LARA KEAY FOR MAILONLINE](#)

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A county lines gang has tricked a six-year-old child into dealing drugs for them, it has been revealed.

Cleveland Police is treating the youngster as a victim rather than a suspect in their investigation into a prolific drugs ring in Teesside.

The force claims the gang is being run by criminals who target 'disposable' children, with those who are disabled and out of school being the most likely targets.

Who do they target?

Children who have been victims of abuse

Children from households where DV has been a feature

Children whose parents are vulnerable

Family breakdown

Children with disabilities/ Children who are bullied

Absence of primary attachment figure



Being liked/fancied/ made to feel special/ trusted

Receiving alcohol, drugs, money, food or gifts

Getting a buzz and the excitement of risk taking behaviour

Being offered somewhere to stay where there are no rules or boundaries

Being given lifts, taken to new places, having adventures with 'friends'

How they target?

Build a friendship

Feel valued

Gifts

Reward with responsibility

Gain gang trust

Asked to carry out serious crime

Threat of or actual violence

Impact on young person

https://notinourcommunity.org/real_stories/915/



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POLICE



Impact on the families

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZPx0ZIY8sA>

What are the signs to look out for?



Significant decline in school performance



Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries



Significant changes in emotional well-being



Leaving home or care without explanation



Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area



excessive receipt of texts or phone calls



Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones



Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association



Parental concerns

Consider a young person you know



- Persistently going missing from school, home & care
- Children travelling to locations, or being found in areas they have no obvious connections with, including seaside or market towns
- Unwillingness to explain their whereabouts
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, accessories or mobile phones which they are unable to account for
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls
- Children have multiple mobile phone handsets or SIM cards
- Withdrawal or sudden change in personality, behaviour or language used
- Relationships with controlling or older individuals and groups
- Leaving home or care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault or unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results or performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self harm or significant changes in emotional well being

What to do and how to report



The Children's Hub

Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees

The Children's Hub is a partnership between:

- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Cleveland Police
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust.

Tel: 01429 284284
Email: childrenshub@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk



Logos for Cleveland Police, Hartlepool Borough Council, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

What to do and how to report



During working hours:

Monday to Thursday 8.30am – 5pm

Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm

Redcar & Cleveland Multi-agency Hub

Daisy Lane, Overfields, Redcar

Tel: 01642 130700

Email: RedcarMACH@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Out of hours:

Emergency Duty Team

Tel: 01642 524 552

In an emergency contact Cleveland Police on:

101

What to do and how to report



Social Care - Middlesbrough Multi Agency Children's Hub (MACH)



If you need extra help, you can contact Middlesbrough Councils social care teams. There are a number of ways to do this.

If you have a child who needs additional support please contact us. If you'd like to contact us there are a number of ways you can do it.

For information/advice or referrals for **Middlesbrough** residents, you will need to phone **01642 726004** or email MiddlesbroughMACH@middlesbrough.gov.uk

For information/advice or referrals for **Redcar & Cleveland** residents, you will need to phone **01642 130700** or email RedcarMACH@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

In person

The Customer Centre at Middlesbrough House provides a face-to-face service offering help on a variety of topics and services.

Or if you are 18 years or older please contact;

Adult social services

Phone: 01642 065070

Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 5pm, and 8:30am to 4:30pm, Friday

Email: socialservices@middlesbrough.gov.uk



Further research and learning

- The Children's Society launched a nationwide campaign called 'Look Closer'. To learn more please go to [#LookCloser To Spot Exploitation | The Children's Society](#)
- Stop & Prevent Adolescent Criminal Exploitation website. [Useful Links - www.bespaceaware.co.uk](#)

For further assistance from your Early Intervention Coordinator please email:
earlyinterventioncoordinators@cleveland.pnn.police.uk