

## COUNTY LINES DRUG GANGS

Whilst there is no official definition, typical county lines activity involves an urban criminal gang travelling to smaller locations to sell heroin/crack cocaine.



The group will use a single telephone number for customers ordering drugs, operated from outside the area, which becomes their 'brand'.

The gangs tend to use a local property, generally belonging to a vulnerable person, as a base for their activities. This is often taken over by force or coercion (cuckooing), and in some instances victims have left their homes in fear of violence.

They employ various tactics to evade detection, including rotating gang members between locations so they are not identified by the police or competitors, & using women & children to transport drugs in the belief that they are less likely to be stopped and searched.

County lines gangs pose a significant threat to vulnerable adults and children, upon whom they rely to conduct and/or facilitate this criminality. Over 70% of police forces in England and Wales, including North Wales Police, are now reporting established activity within their area. Gang members are generally in their late teens to mid-twenties.



### Motivators for setting up include:

- A receptive customer base
- Less competition
- Less risk of being the target of a shooting
- Less likely to be known to police

### Recent Trends:

- The targeting of adults with mental health issues
- 80% of police forces reported the exploitation of children, typically to deliver the drugs to customers.

### Recognition:

- Children from urban areas are recruited by gangs to courier drugs and money to the county location, often by train but also via cars and coaches.
- Children are reported to have stayed in very poor conditions in cuckooed addresses that generally belong to Class A drug users.

**Read the National Crime Agency Report (Nov 2016) Home Office Guidance: Criminal exploitation of children & vulnerable adults county lines. (2017)**

**It's Not Okay and Trapped campaign**

[Its Not Okay Trapped Campaign](#)

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