



Gangs & County Line Bulletin

September 2021

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs or Organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs in to one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Who are Vulnerable

- Children as young as 7 years
- 14-17 years of age is the most common
- Both males and females
- White British children more likely
- Use of social media being used to make initial contact
- Class A drug users
- People with mental health issues or physical/learning difficulties
- Those having prior experience of neglect, physical/sexual abuse
- Lack of stable home, children in care
- Social isolation
- Connections with other people involved in gangs
- Excluded from mainstream education
- Foreign exchange students --(Money Mule)

Gangs

KENT POLICE DEFINE FURTHER:

- Organised criminal gangs (OCGs)
- Gangs who maintain 'drug lines'
- Youth culture gangs' based on postcodes locations, school affiliation,

Peer group:

A small, unorganized group of children who 'hang out together' in public places such as shopping centers. Crime is not integral to their self definition

A Street Gang:

A relatively durable, predominantly street based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity

Organised Crime Group (OCG)

An Organised Criminal Network:

A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain. The gain is mostly measured in financial terms.

Crime is their 'occupation'. 'Serious Organised Crime Group' (SOCG)

There are over 7000 organised crime gangs operating in the UK



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Signs a young person may be involved in gangs or a county line

- Are they always going missing from school or their home?
- Are they travelling alone to places far away from home?
- Do they suddenly have lots of money, new clothes, mobile phones?
- Are they receiving much more calls or texts than usual?
- Are they carrying or selling drugs?
- Are they carrying weapons?
- Are they in a relationship with or hanging out with someone older and controlling?
- Do they have unexplained injuries?
- Do they seem very reserved or acting if they have something to hide?
- Do they seem scared?
- Are they self-harming?

Why do people join gangs?

- Support
- Financial gain
- Sense of worth
- Sense of identity/lack of identity
- Sense of belonging
- Duress
- Peer pressure/exploitation by gangs
- Reputation/desire for status
- Protection
- They are recruited
- Do they even see themselves in a gang at all?
- Opportunist involvement
- Family and friends involved
- Desire for excitement and adventure

For further information visit

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863323/HOCountyLinesGuidance_-_Sept2018.pdf

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines>

THE METANOIA PROJECT

MIND: HEART: ACTION



YOUTH:

Do you believe knife crime and gang culture is a good career choice?
Are you unsure of who you are or what your purpose is in life?
Do you need help disengaging from a gang or bad company?

PARENTS:

Do you know enough about gangs and knife crime to be able to have an informed conversation with your child?
Do you know what to look out for if you are concerned your teenagers are being groomed?

COMMUNITY:

Do you believe gangs and knife crime is on the increase where you live?
Do you think we as a community could do more to inspire and instil in our youth more positive prospects and provisions for their future?
(if so, do you know how?)

What do you think could be done more to prevent knife crime?
(email us and share your thoughts)

If you would like any support with anything related to gangs or knife crime please contact us via our email.

info@uprisinguk.org.uk



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The VRU work to tackle behaviors before they become a "Gang"

"Young Street Groups" is a concept developed by the Violence Reduction Unit in 2020 in response to our daily analysis and review of Serious Youth Violence. Focused analysis highlighted that there are groups of young people, connected in some way (name, school, postcode, for example) who are associating and committing offences involving violence. Early intervention with these groups is key in reducing their development to more serious organised offending.

The definition of Young Street Groups mirrors the Kent definition of a gang and also reflects that fact that members should be under 25, committing level 1 criminality and that intervention and prevention points should be available.

The definition was subject to internal and external consultation and is included in the County Lines and Gangs Team standard operating procedure, along with the Kent and Medway Gangs Strategy.

Daily Review or Serious Youth Violence

Identifications of Young Street Group, Mapping and Networking

Partnership Safeguarding Meeting

Tracing & Review Through Local Safeguarding

THEY MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE FRIENDS. BUT YOU'RE NOTHING TO THEM.

Zack, 15

Drug gangs are grooming kids in Kent and Medway.

The signs of exploitation can be hard to read. Know what to look for. Know who to help.

Campaign to stop criminal exploitation
www.eyes-open.co.uk



Give anonymous information

CrimeStoppers.
0800 555 111
100% anonymous. Always.
Crimestoppers-org.uk

For help and advice

NSPCC
NSPCC.org.uk
0800 800 5000



Eyes wide Open

Is a new website that has just launched this month.

This has information areas around signs, local information for Kent and Medway, resources and where to get help.

The poster to the side is an example of some of the resources that you can download.

<https://eyes-open.co.uk/>



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Further Resources



SPACE is a self-funded organisation founded in January 2018, in response to the national prevalence of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and the County Lines phenomenon which has entrenched thousands of young children and people into serious violence and organised crime.

<http://www.bespaceaware.co.uk/436824474>

St Giles SOS+ Project delivers early intervention work in educational settings, through preventative sessions on violence, vulnerability and exploitation. By trained professionals with lived-experience of the criminal justice system to de-glamorize gang involvement and expose the harsh realities of crime and violence.

<https://stgnew.cendev.net/the-sos-project>

Fearless is a site for young people with information and advice about crime and criminality, for young people, parents and professionals and provide a safe place for young people to give information about crime 100% anonymously.

<https://www.fearless.org/en/campaigns/county-lines>

Family Matters is a charity and the services are free & confidential and have a Gang IDVA service www.familymattersuk.org and click Apply Now

Kent Police <https://www.kent.police.uk/advirece/advice-and-information/cl/county-lines/>

Kent and Medway Gang Strategy

https://www.kscmp.org.uk/___data/assets/pdf_file/0014/112028/Final-Version-Kent-and-Medway-Gangs-Strategy.pdf

Children's Society <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/child-criminal-exploitation-and-county-lines>

What to do if you have concerns

The best advice is to trust your instincts. Even if someone isn't involved in county lines drug dealing, they may be being exploited in some other way, so it's always worth speaking out.

You can speak to your local police by dialing 101, or in an emergency 999.

If you would rather remain anonymous, you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

community.safety@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk



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Fegans

Counselling Children, Supporting Parents

Fegans is proud to be working with the **Violence Reduction Unit** to offer counselling to young people in Kent who are involved in violence, have the potential to become involved in violence or have suffered trauma from violence or violent home situations.



For more information, please call 01892 538288,
or to make a referral
please use this link <https://forms.office.com/r/wPqi8s490C>



Fegans is a 150 year old charity and its vision is to support families emotionally and practically through teams of workers based in our four geographical centres.

We seek to enable children and young people, and empower parents, by offering specialist services in the areas of family support, schools work, counselling, training and community activities.

What is counselling?

“Counselling is an opportunity to build a safe, trusting relationship with a trained or qualified professional so that you can discuss anything that is troubling you in a safe, confidential, non-judgmental environment.

At Fegans, all of our counsellors are qualified professionals. The counsellor will help you to look at your issues, explore options, and find ways of coping with and resolving your difficulties.”

The counselling will be a weekly appointment either online, or on the phone.

Fegans was founded in 1870 and in July 2021 became part of Spurgeons Children's Charity.
Spurgeons vision is to give every child the opportunity of a hope filled life.
Registered charity no. 1081182 | Company limited by guarantee in England no. 3990460



TOGETHER