

What should I do if I think my child is involved?

If you suspect something is wrong with your child, stay calm and don't make judgments. It's important to sit down and have a conversation with them. We've pulled together some handy advice in this resource to help you get the most out of it.

Once you've had a conversation with your child and you need help and advice, contact the police and children's services. They are there to help and will work with you to get the right support.

Who to speak to

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on **999**.

Tell us about your concern by completing our online form at westsussex.gov.uk/rasieaconcernaboutachild. You can report anonymously, however it would be helpful to have your contact details in case there is additional information we need.

Sending us the information using the online form is the best way of reporting your concerns but if you prefer, you can call us on **01403 229900** (Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm).

For emergencies only

If you require the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) outside of office hours (5pm-9am weekdays) or at weekends and bank holidays, please call **033022 26664**. If the Emergency Duty Team line is unavailable and you need to report an emergency safeguarding concern, please call **07711 769657**. This number does not accept texts.

Other contacts

Childline:
0800 1111
childline.org.uk

Fearless:
fearless.org/give-info

NSPCC:
0808 800 500
help@nspcc.org.uk

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Published by Crawley Borough Council



Resource for parents and carers

WHAT IS
COUNTRY
LINES?

FORTRESS
Shielding your community from drug-related harm

KEEPING THOSE YOU CARE FOR SAFE FROM HARM

What is county lines?

County lines is used to describe criminal gangs grooming and exploiting young people or vulnerable adults to carry and sell drugs using dedicated phone lines from borough to borough and across county boundaries with minimal risk of detection.

These criminals will groom children into trafficking drugs for them with promises of money, gifts, friendship and status, before controlling them with threats of violence and abuse, further drawing them into that lifestyle.

Exploitation can happen to any child and they often don't realise they are being exploited.

How can I tell if my child is being exploited?

There are many signs that your child is being exploited for the purposes of county lines activities:

- Has an unexplained amount of money and clothes
- Has multiple phones and receives an excessive amount of texts or calls
- Mention of new relationships or friendships with older, controlling individuals
- Frequent missing episodes, from school or home, or being found out of the local area
- Leaving home or care without explanation
- Looking dishevelled on return from missing episodes
- Mention of going to parties, people's houses, hotels with unfamiliar people
- Signs of injuries from either self-harm or physical assault
- Found with quantities of drugs or weapons
- Changes in behaviour, becoming more hostile, aggressive or secretive and withdrawn
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know.

Getting the most out of a conversation with your child

- Stay calm, listen to what they have to say and avoid interrupting
- Let them know that they aren't in trouble and that you are worried and want to make sure they are okay
- Don't make judgments; especially in relation to their involvement in criminal activities. Remember, they may appear to be willing participants but it is likely that their actions and choices are being controlled by criminals with more power than them
- Your child may believe that they are protecting you against threats made by the criminal gang. Let your child know that you know about this risk and that it is not their responsibility to protect you
- Encourage them to share information with you and reinforce the idea that they can come to you at any time with any information.



County boundaries is a tactic used by gangs to sell drugs without increasing their risk of detection.