* County lines gangs pose a big threat to vulnerable adults and children, with whom they rely to conduct and/or facilitate this criminality. Over 70% of polices forces in England and Wales, including Greater Manchester Police, are now reporting established activity within their area.
* Gangs from London dominate the drug lines, however there has been an increase in other counties of other gangs. Gang members are generally in their late teens to mid-twenties.

2. Why it matters

Topic/Title of Brief

County Lines Drugs Gangs

Live and Learn Sports

Safeguarding Children

Partnership 2020

Normally county lines activity involves an urban criminal gang moving around smaller locations to sell Class A drugs. Groups normally run from a single telephone for their customers ordering drugs, operated from outside the area, which becomes their ‘brand’. Unlike other criminal activities where phone numbers are changed on a regular basis. The numbers are protected as they have a good value. The gangs will normally use a local property, again normally using a vulnerable person as a base for their activities This is often over force or coercion and in some instances victims have left their homes in fear of violence. They use various tactics to prevent detection, using women and children is one of these.

1. Background

**Motivators for setting up include:**

* A receptive customer base
* Less risk of being a target for shooting.
* Less likely to be known by police.
* Less competition.

3. Information

* Read the National Crime Agency Report (Nov 2016)
* Home Office Guidance: Criminal exploitation of children & vulnerable adults county lines. (2017)
* It’s Not Okay
* Trapped campaign
* Speak to your agency safeguarding lead if you have any concerns.

7. What to do =

A drawing of a cartoon character

Description automatically generated

* Children from urban areas are recruited by gangs to courier drugs and money to the county location, often by train, cars and coaches.
* Children often stay in poor conditions in places belonging to class A users. Most children deal drugs within the county markets.
* Most areas have found it hard to see the true damage of child exploitation as many children are not safeguarded.

5. Information

**Recent trends include:**

* The emergence of a 24/7 market.
* Gang members establishing roots in areas that have had county lines activity over a long period and creating spin off markets.
* Using Tasers and acid as weapons to enforce dominating certain areas.
* Targeting adults with health issues.

Gangs exploit children to deliver drugs to customers, using intimidation, violence, debt and grooming to control them.

4. Information

RSCB

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board –

7-minute Briefing

* How do I find out more?
* How are children recruited?
* What are the signs?
* Are there links with CSE?

6. Questions