County Lines

County Lines exploitation is the process by which drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

The County Lines process is now understood as a driving causal factor in youth violence and, in some cases, includes elements child trafficking. An updated report by the National Crime Agency (NCA) has found that the use of 'county lines' by gangs, is a growing issue, and is exploiting ever-younger victims.

Signs of County Lines or other forms of Criminal Exploitation

- Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing
- Being found in areas away from home
- Increasing drug use, or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Unexplained absences from school, college, training or work
- Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery
- Having a second, old phone (i.e. not a smart phone)
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know
- Coming home with injuries or looking particularly dishevelled
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.

What to do if you suspect a child is involved in County Lines or other gang activity

Parents/carers should report your concerns to one of the Safeguarding Leads:

- Mrs Smith
- Mr Plow
- Mrs Mach

Alternatively, you can report your concerns directly to the Police or Warwickshire Children and Families Front Door (formerly MASH)

https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines