

# Velocity



## COUNTY LINES BRIEFING FOR PARTNERS

### What are County Lines?

'County Lines' and the supply of drugs is effectively a gang of at least three people who have established a drug market in a rural town, with origins to an urban city location. For example for Suffolk, it is likely to be a gang from London with them moving into local towns, predominantly Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft to transport/sell class A drugs (specifically crack cocaine and heroin).

It's a national trend and all forces within the east are aware and are tackling the issue. Mobile phones are frequently used to facilitate the drug deals and these are professional and experienced gangs.

### Safeguarding the vulnerable

Police will always go after the dealers but it's also about supporting people who have become involved in criminal activity through their vulnerabilities but need help to escape the cycle. Vulnerable adults and young people are frequently used and in some cases ruthless criminals have taken over their properties to do the dealing from. This is known as 'cuckooing'. The vulnerable could be current drug users, addicts, young people who maybe in care or missing from home, pupils absent from school or people with mental health issues.

Gangs typically use vulnerable young people to deliver drugs to customers and this can include deception, intimidation, violence, and/or grooming. The nature of this activity causes disputes with other gang members or local drug dealers for the custom and hence many violent incidents occur because of this.





## Spotting the signs

All parents, people that work with young children, partners and community members should know what signs to look for that their children might be involved with a gang. If a child is involved they may be:

- Truancing from school or poor results
- Going missing for long periods of time or staying out unusually late
- Suddenly have access to more money than usual – spent on items such as new trainers/mobile phone/clothes
- Showing signs of a change in behaviour/mood/absences
- Talking differently – new slang or language with an aggressive tone
- Unfamiliar names on mobile phones
- Interest in music which glorifies weapons/gang culture
- Getting involved in fights
- Substance or alcohol abuse
- Committing crimes such as shoplifting

## Suspicious signs of drug activity:

Local residents may notice more people living at an address of a vulnerable person. Drug dealers often take over the home, make them sell drugs and use the home as a place for others to take drugs. Unusual activity could include:

- Regular comings and goings from the address from lots of people not known locally in the area
- Anti social behaviour/activity from a property at night/early morning/signs of drug usage – i.e. needles discarded
- Strange smells coming from the property
- Windows covered or curtains closed all the time
- Cars pulling up to or near the property for a short period of time

## What role can the general public/partners play?

If someone is in immediate danger or a crime is taking place the public should always call 999. Anyone with information should contact Suffolk Police on 101 or call if they would prefer to stay anonymous they should call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111. Any information which does not need immediate action please visit our website:

**[www.suffolk.police.uk](http://www.suffolk.police.uk)**

Professionals and paid carers working with children can contact the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) consultation line on 0345 606 1499 Mon to Thurs 9am to 5pm and on Fridays from 9am to 4.25pm. For more information visit:

**[www.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk)** and search for 'Reporting a child at risk of harm'