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Support & Services

If you have concerns about an adult, refer to [Bury Adult Social Care](#)

If you have concerns about a child, refer to [Bury MASH](#)

[Promotional Posters: County lines - protecting vulnerable people from exploitation: posters - GOV.UK](#)

[Understanding County Lines: resources and information | Crimestoppers](#)

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What to do

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. Dial 101, or in an emergency 999.

If you would rather remain anonymous, you can contact the independent charity [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111.

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Social Media Continued

- Dealers sharing 'stories' to followers, and using social platforms to expand their network with 'suggested' friends
- Tricking people with 'fast cash' scams, which is often referred to as 'squares'. Victims may end up working for no little or no money, which is known as 'debt bondage'
- Advertising for 'workers' or 'runners' to recruit people into county lines activity
 - Using hashtags linked to drugs
- Using emojis as code for drug, violence and sexual activities, e.g. the snowflake emoji (for buying cocaine), 8-ball emoji (for buying an eighth of an ounce) or the rocket emoji (for purity of drugs)

County Lines



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Social Media

Criminal networks use social media to groom and recruit children for county lines. They may send them direct messages (known as 'DMs') or share messages to wider groups as 'stories' or 'posts'.

Organised Crime Groups use social media in the following ways:

- Advertising drugs through photos, emojis, and price lists
- Posting statuses that show money, new drugs or when a dealer is open for business

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Background

County lines is the name given to drug dealing where organised criminal groups (OCGs) use phone lines to move and supply drugs, usually from cities into smaller towns and rural areas.

They exploit vulnerable people, including children and those with mental health or addiction issues, by recruiting them to distribute the drugs. This is often referred to as 'drug running'. Criminals may also use a vulnerable person's home as their base of operations. This is known as 'cuckooing'.

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Exploitation

A common feature in county lines drug supply is the exploitation of young and vulnerable people. The dealers will frequently target children and adults - often with mental health or addiction problems - to act as drug runners or move cash so they can stay under the radar of law enforcement.

People exploited in this way will quite often be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse, and in some instances will be trafficked to areas a long way from home as part of the network's drug dealing business.

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Signs

- Repeatedly going missing from school or home and being found in other areas
- Having money, new clothes or electronic devices and they can't explain how they paid for them
- Getting high numbers of texts or phone calls, being secretive about who they're speaking to
 - Decline in school or work performance
 - Significant changes in emotional or physical well-being