

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

WHAT IS CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION?

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is a term used to describe when children and young people (boys and girls) are manipulated or coerced into committing crimes. Criminals are using children all across the UK.
- They groom young people to carry out illegal activity on their behalf – such as selling and storing drugs, carrying weapons and committing burglary, robbery or theft.
- Currently across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland children and young people aged between seven and 17 being used by criminals.
- Some children are also made to feel like they have no choice and will be scared to speak out about what is happening.
- It is important to remember children are often preyed on because they are vulnerable.

WHAT DOES COUNTY LINES MEAN?

- 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.
- The 'county line' refers to the phone used to conduct the drug deals.
- Criminals exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store drugs and money using coercion, intimidation, violence, sexual violence and weapons.

SIGNS INCLUDE:

- Being away from home more and being in places they wouldn't usually be. Keeping unsociable hours, being withdrawn, quiet and reserved.
- Spending time with older people. Not recognising this group of friends, being different from their usual friendship groups. Seeing them getting into cars you don't recognise.
- Being in trouble with the police and/or found in possession of drugs.
- Changes in emotional wellbeing. Being anxious, frightened, angry or displaying out of character behaviours.
- Unexplained injuries, as a result of self-harm or physical assault
- New and expensive possessions. Having money, new clothes or electronic devices, but can't explain how they have paid for them.
- Deterioration in school performance or going missing from school. Changes in attitudes towards their education, disengaging with teachers/lessons, playing truant or being suspended.
- Increased phone activity. Getting high numbers of texts or phone calls, being secretive about who they are speaking to.

WHERE TO GET SUPPORT?

Contact the police on 101 or online. Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 Other agencies such as the [Children's Society](#), the [NSPCC](#), [Childline](#), [Crimestoppers](#) and [Catch 22](#) also have information and support which can help.

