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9th October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Parent Information regarding County Lines

Cleveland Police are staging three webinars on Tuesday 10th October 2023 aimed at increasing awareness and signposting support regarding County Lines. Our school will be joining the student webinar on the afternoon of Tuesday 10th October 2023 at 1.15pm. A further webinar is offered to parents on the Tuesday at 7.00pm and to professionals and other members of the public at 11.30am and 4.15pm. The links to each webinar are available on the attached flyer.

What is County Lines?

County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend.

Exploitation of young and vulnerable people

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.

In some cases, the dealers will take over a local property, normally belonging to a vulnerable person, and use it to operate their criminal activity from. This is known as cuckooing.

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.

Children often don't see themselves as victims or realise they have been groomed to get involved in criminality. It's important that we all play our part to understand county lines and speak out if we have concerns.

How do you know if County Lines drug dealing is happening in your area?

Some signs to look out for include:

- An increase in visitors and cars to a house or flat
- New faces appearing at the house or flat.
- New and regularly changing residents.
- Change in resident's mood and/or demeanour.
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
- Changes in the way young people you might know dress.



- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things
- Residents or young people you know going missing, maybe for long periods of time.
- Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults.
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are.
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries
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Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information, have any questions or have concerns regarding county lines.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ndouglass', with a small flourish at the end.

Mrs N L Douglass
Head of Personal Development