

# Child Criminal Exploitation

and PSHE Education

Professionals' Pack

**2022**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03** Introduction
- 04** Safe Learning Environment
- 05** Links to the PSHE Curriculum
- 11** Definitions
- 12** Spotting the Signs
- 17** Legislation
- 18** Language
- 19** National Statistics
- 20** The Local Picture
- 23** How to Refer
- 24** Useful Contacts

# INTRODUCTION

This pack aims to support education providers to deliver quality PSHE education around criminal exploitation and County Lines through identifying the curriculum links within the PSHE Associations' Spiral Curriculum and the Department for Education's statutory guidance and developing staff's confidence and competence on the subject matter to support them to facilitate PSHE education on this topic within their own setting.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance states that:

- Pupils should be made aware of the relevant legal provisions on violence and exploitation by gangs and criminal exploitation including 'county lines'
- Pupils should know how grooming, coercion and harassment can affect current and future relationships
- Schools should show flexibility to respond to local public health and community issues to meet the needs of pupils (for example in teaching about gangs)
- Should be addressed sensitively and clearly

Education providers can help raise awareness of county lines, by discussing what it is and how children and young people might be targeted by gangs, they should also ensure children and young people know who they can talk to if they have any concerns.

Education providers are also well-placed to identify any children or young people who may be at risk of county lines and form part of the multi-agency response so all staff, including those not delivering PSHE education must be aware of the signs and how to report concerns for child exploitation.



# SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A safe learning environment enables children and young people to feel comfortable to share their ideas without attracting negative feedback. It avoids possible distress and prevents disclosures in a public setting and enables professionals to manage conversations on sensitive issues confidently. We have created a guidance document to support professionals to create this safe in their own setting.



## **No. 01 — Ground Rules**

Create in collaboration with the group . As the facilitator role model the agreed ground rules.



## **No. 02 — Collaborate with DSL**

Let them know when the session is being delivered to ensure the correct support is in place should any disclosures be made.



## **No. 03 — Staff Confidence**

Check Staff confidence levels. If anyone is in panic zone it is not safe or appropriate for them or the participants to teach on the topic. This pack should help professionals to move from panic zone to learning or comfort zone



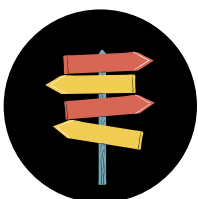
## **No. 04 — Learning Techniques**

Use scenarios and stories to help participants engage with the topic. Refer to the third person rather than you e.g. what could this character do?, or people of about your age....



## **No. 05 — Difficult Questions**

Questions are an important part of learning. Sometimes a child or young person will ask a difficult question. As with all questions the first thing is to value the question whilst either allowing time to consider an appropriate answer or to deflect an inappropriate question.



## **No. 06 — Signposting**

It is absolutely essential, that included in the lesson, is information about different organisations and people that can provide support both within the organisation and outside of it.

**A more detailed version of this page is available by emailing either Natalie or Ellie**

# LINKS TO PSHE CURRICULUM

The table below shows the learning opportunities from the relevant PSHE Association core themes at which can be link to Criminal Exploitation/County Lines

## Primary

### PSHE Association:

#### Key Stage One

R6.	About how people make friends and what makes a good friendship
R9.	How to ask for help if a friendship is making them unhappy
R18.	About the importance of not keeping adult's secrets (only happy surprises that other will find out about eventually)

#### Key Stage Two

R11.	What constitutes a positive healthy friendship (e.g. mutual respect, trust, truthfulness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, sharing interests and experiences, support with problems and difficulties); that the same principles apply to online friendships as to face-to-face relationships
R15.	Strategies for recognising and managing peer influences and a desire for peer approval in friendships; to recognise the effect of online actions on others
R27.	About keeping something confidential or secret, when they should (e.g. a birthday surprise that others will find out about) or should not be agreed to, and when it is right to break a confidence or share a secret
R28	How to recognise pressure from others to do something unsafe or that makes them feel uncomfortable and strategies for managing this

## DfE Statutory Guidance:

By the end of Primary pupils will know:

FR2.	The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.
FR5.	How to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed
RR6.	About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help
BS2.	About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
BS7.	About different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help



# Secondary

## PSHE Association:

### Key Stage Three

R14.	The qualities and behaviours they should expect and exhibit in a wide variety of positive relationships (including in school and wider society, family and friendships, including online)
R24.	That consent is freely given; that being pressurised, manipulated or coerced to agree to something is not giving consent, and how to seek help in such circumstances
R37.	The characteristics of abusive behaviours, such as grooming, sexual harassment, sexual and emotional abuse, violence and exploitation; to recognise warning signs, including online; how to report abusive behaviours or access support for themselves or others
R42.	To recognise peer influence and to develop strategies for managing it, including online
R43.	The role peers can play in supporting one another to resist pressure and influence, challenge harmful social norms and access appropriate support
R44.	That the need for peer approval can generate feelings of pressure and lead to increased risk-taking; strategies to manage this
R45.	About the factors that contribute to young people joining gangs; the social, legal and physical consequences of gang behaviours
R46.	Strategies to manage pressure to join a gang, exit strategies and how to access appropriate support
R47.	Motivations, misconceptions and consequences of carrying weapons and strategies for managing pressure to carry a weapon

## Key Stage Four

H23.	Strategies for identifying risky and emergency situations, including online; ways to manage these and get appropriate help, including where there may be legal consequences (e.g. drugs and alcohol, violent crime and gangs)
R3.	To respond appropriately to indicators of unhealthy relationships, including seeking help where necessary
R28.	To recognise when others are using manipulation, persuasion or coercion and how to respond
R31.	The skills and strategies to respond to exploitation, bullying, harassment and control in relationships
R35.	To evaluate ways in which their behaviours may influence their peers, positively and negatively, including online, and in situations involving weapons or gangs
R36.	Skills to support younger peers when in positions of influence
R37.	To recognise situations where they are being adversely influenced, or are at risk, due to being part of a particular group or gang; strategies to access appropriate help
R38.	Factors which contribute to young people becoming involved in serious organised crime, including cybercrime

## Key Stage Five

R19.	To recognise and manage negative influence, manipulation and persuasion in a variety of contexts, including online
R20.	To recognise and manage different forms of abuse, sources of support and exit strategies for unhealthy relationships
R24.	To evaluate the dangers and consequences of being involved in gangs, serious organised crime or carrying a weapon



## DfE Statutory Guidance:

By the end of Secondary pupils will know:

RR1.	The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship.
RR6.	That some types of behaviour within relationships are criminal, including violent behaviour and coercive control.
II.	The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships

## NYA Youth Work Curriculum:

HW2.	Helping young people make informed choices about how they live, approach risk and take responsibility for their own behaviour in relation to their lifestyle
HW5.	Providing appropriate, accurate information and guidance
HR1.	Offering relationship support and guidance to young people, including sex and relationship education, in settings and in a way chosen by young people



# DEVELOPING SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE



## CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION / COUNTY LINES

with thanks to Staffordshire Police and Catch22 for their input on the local picture

# Definitions

## 1

### Criminal Exploitation

Is the deliberate manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person where children and young people are coerced into committing crimes. It is a form of child abuse.

## 3

### Gangs

Can mean different things in different context. The government's paper "Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity" distinguished between 'peer groups', 'street gangs' and 'organised criminal gangs'.

- **Peer Group** – A relatively small and transient social grouping which may or may not describe themselves as a gang depending on the context.
- **Street Gang** – "Groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity".
- **Organised Street Gangs** – "A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most crime is their 'occupation'".

## 2

### County Lines

Is the police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets – suburban areas and market and coastal towns – using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines". Children as young as 6 years old have been exploited into carrying drugs for gangs. This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs. This can include:

- Airbnb and short term private rentals
- Budget hotels
- Home of a drug user, or other vulnerable adult, that is taken over by a criminal gang – this is called *cuckooing*.

**It is not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of "gang" and not every "gang" is criminal or dangerous. However, gang membership can be linked to illegal activity, particularly organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking, drug dealing and violent crime.**

# Spotting the Signs

In order to help children and young people to recognise the signs that someone may be trying to manipulate or exploit them, it is important that professionals understand some of the different roles within criminal exploitation and how and why children and young people are targeted and groomed. This section will help increase your knowledge on the methodology and models used. Any child or young person can become involved in criminal exploitation so it is important to reflect on any unconscious bias to ensure we are not neglecting any gender, race, ability due to our own assumptions.

## Video:

This ten minute [video](#) from National County Lines Coordination Centre provides an overview on County Lines methodology and the impact on children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The diagram below demonstrates the usual model of a criminal exploitation gang. This demonstrates how children and young people can be both the victim and the perpetrator simultaneously. It is important to remember that a child or young person cannot consent to their own abuse, even the activity appears to them and others as consensual.

Manager (Faces, Olders) Top or higher end of the chain, limited contact with street level operations, not often seen or known by street level members.

ELDERS/Street Gangs – in charge of running street operations and trap-houses, deal in larger amounts of Class A and B drugs, facilitate the purchase of firearms and other weapons, have authority over street dealers and youngers, respected.

Youngers – Generally under 18 and have some level of authority and provide a vital link between the elders and the soldiers. They help to set up the Trap Houses

Soldiers (Runners, Shotters) – Secondary aged young people selling the drugs. They act as drug mules and travel around the counties distributing drugs and recruiting/grooming new members. They may live in Trap Houses

Wannabes or Teenies – The future soldiers and will be upper primary school or lower secondary.

## Grooming:

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. It can be difficult to tell if a child or young person is being groomed – the signs aren't always obvious and may be hidden. It is important to remember that any child or young person is at risk of being groomed- both males and females. Some children and young people are more at risk, particularly those who are vulnerable:

- Children in care
- Children with disabilities
- Children with vulnerabilities

## Why might a child or young person be targeted?

A child or young person might be recruited into a gang because of where they live or who their family is. They might join because they believe it is their only option or they feel like they need protection. There are many reasons that a child or young person may become involved in gangs, including:

- Peer pressure/wanting to fit in with their friends
- Makes them feel important and respected
- Want to feel protected from bullies or other gangs
- Want to make money and are promised rewards
- Want to gain status, and feel powerful
- Been excluded from school and don't feel they have a future.

Children and young people are groomed by organised criminal gangs because they arise less suspicion and if caught are given lighter sentences than adults.

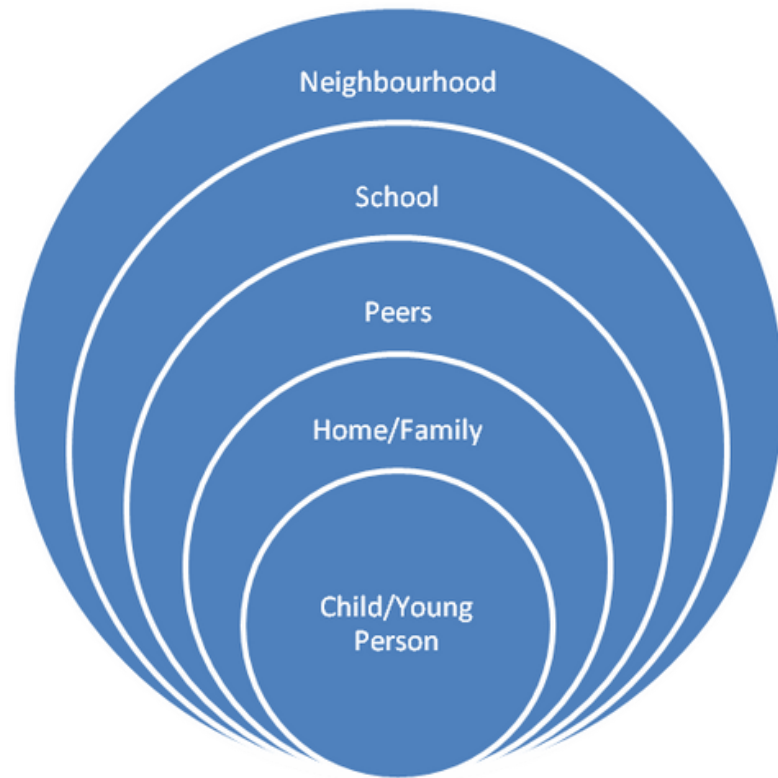
This [video](#) shows the stages of child criminal exploitation

## Contextual Safeguarding:

Contextual safeguarding recognises the impact of the public/social context on young people's lives, and consequently their safety. Contextual safeguarding seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, either from adults or other young people.

Using Contextual safeguarding can enable professionals to build a holistic picture of the child or young person's individual factors and also identify where and by whom interventions can occur

More information on contextual safeguarding can be found [here](#)



Remember having vulnerabilities does not mean that a child or young person will be exploited, but they are factors that could increase the vulnerability that they could be exploited.

- **Child/Young Person** – If a child or young person is looked after, has learning disabilities, substance misuse issues or mental health problems.
- **Home/Family** – If there is neglect/abuse, exposure of experience of violence, parental substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse, poverty, lack of a positive relationship with a protective and nurturing adult, homelessness or insecure accommodation status.
- **Peers**- If the child or young person is exposed to other children and young people who are known to be exploited or exposed to or experience peer on peer abuse.
- **Schools**- If the child or young person has been excluded from school and is not in education , training or employment, or is exposed to or has experienced violent crime.
- **Neighbourhoods** – If the child or young person has been exposed to or has experienced violent crime, or lived in a deprived neighbourhood.

Similarly, a child with no identified risk factors can also be at risk of exploitation and therefore education and awareness of child exploitation must be universal.



## Signs

There are some signs to look out for that a child or young person is being exploited, however it is important to **remember that just because a young person is displaying these does not necessarily mean they are being exploited, equally just because a child or young person is not displaying these signs does not mean that they are not being exploited.**

- Frequently being absent from school
- Reduction in quality and quantity of work being done in school
- Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons
- In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than the,
- Being angry, aggressive or violent
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Having unexplained money and buying new things
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos
- Using new slang words
- Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online
- Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones
- Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell
- Taking drugs and using alcohol
- Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism
- Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help
- Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog



# Risks Factors

Being aware of the risks of criminal exploitation or being involved in a gang is important for professionals. The dangers of criminal exploitation include:

- Risk of or actual threats, blackmail and violence
- Being arrested, including for crimes committed by the gang that they have not directly committed under the law of joint enterprise.
- Having their own, or of the safety of friends and family threatened
- Risk of emotional abuse
- Being exploited and forced to commit crimes
- Not being able to leave or cut ties with the gang
- Risk of physical harm, rape and sexual abuse
- Risk of severe injury or being murdered
- Abusing drugs, alcohol or other substances
- Long term impact on education and employment options

# Concerns/ Disclosures

*Any professional working with a child or young person who they think may be a risk of county lines exploitation, or if they receive a direct disclosure, should follow local safeguarding procedures.*

*If you believe a child or young person is at risk of immediate harm you should contact the police.*





# LEGISLATION

There are a wide range of consequences to being involved in organised crime, for the child or young person, their family and friends and the wider community. A person involved in serious crime is in danger of being arrested or threatened with violence from those higher up the pyramid and live in constant fear of being caught.

It is important to emphasise that if a child or young person has been manipulated or coerced into carrying out a crime, such as dealing drugs, it is essential that they speak to the police about this. A child or young person who has been forced into criminal behaviour is a victim, rather than a perpetrator of a crime. They may still face consequences but these will be considerably less than if they continue to be exploited by the organised crime gang.

## Criminal Activity

## Maximum Sentence

Possession of a Class A drug, with intent to supply

Life in prison or an unlimited fine, or both

Possession of a Class B or Class C drug, with intent to supply

Up to 14 years in prison or an unlimited fine, or both

Possession of a firearm

Up to 7 years in prison

Possession of a bladed weapon

Up to 4 years in prison

Money Laundering (e.g. transferring stolen money through bank accounts)

Up to 14 years in prison



# Language

There is often inappropriate or unhelpful language used to describe children and young people's experiences of being criminally exploited. It is important that professionals use the right language in order to influence proper recognition and responses for children and young people.

Guidance reproduced from The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit for Professionals

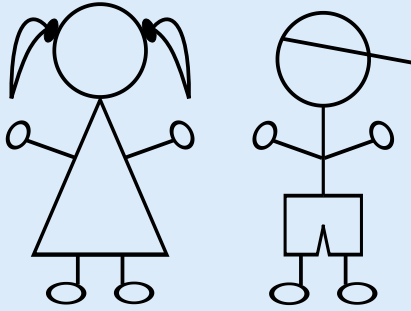
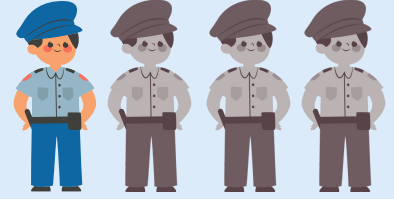
Inappropriate Term	Suggested Alternatives
<p><b>Drug running/ He/she is drug running</b> This implies that the child or young person is responsible for the exploitation and has the capacity to make a free and informed choice. It does not recognise the abusive or exploitative context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)</li> <li>• This child is being criminally exploited</li> <li>• This child is being trafficked for the purpose of criminal exploitation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recruit/run/work</b> This implies that the child or young person is responsible for the exploitation and has the capacity to make a free and informed choice. It does not recognise the abusive or exploitative context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child is being criminally exploited</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spending time/Associating with 'elders'</b> This implies that the child or young person is responsible for the exploitation and has the capacity to make a free and informed choice. It does not recognise the abusive or exploitative context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The young person says that they are friends with the person and there are concerns about that person's age, the imbalance of power, exploitation, offending</li> </ul>
<p><b>He/she is choosing this lifestyle</b> This implies that the child or young person is responsible for the exploitation and has the capacity to make a free and informed choice. It does not recognise the abusive or exploitative context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The young person has been groomed, exploited, controlled.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Offering him/her drugs seemingly in return for sex or to run drugs</b> This implies that the child or young person is responsible for the exploitation and has the capacity to make a free and informed choice. It does not recognise the abusive or exploitative context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child is being sexually/criminally exploited</li> <li>• The child is being criminally exploited through drug debt</li> <li>• There are concerns that the child has been raped as they do not have the freedom or capacity to consent</li> <li>• Perpetrators are sexually abusing the child</li> <li>• The child is being sexually abused</li> <li>• The child's vulnerability regarding drug use is being used by others to abuse them</li> <li>• The perpetrators have a hold over the child by the fact that they have a drugs dependency</li> </ul>

# NATIONAL STATISTICS

**2 in 3 police forces report that the exploitation of children and young people were identified in relation to County Lines activity**



**1 in 4 police forces report that children and young people involved in county lines were experiencing sexual abuse**



Children aged 15 to 17 years are those most commonly identified as victims of County Lines exploitation, although those younger and older are also at risk of exploitation including some as young as 6. (Children's Society, National Crime Agency)

**Both males and females are exploited**

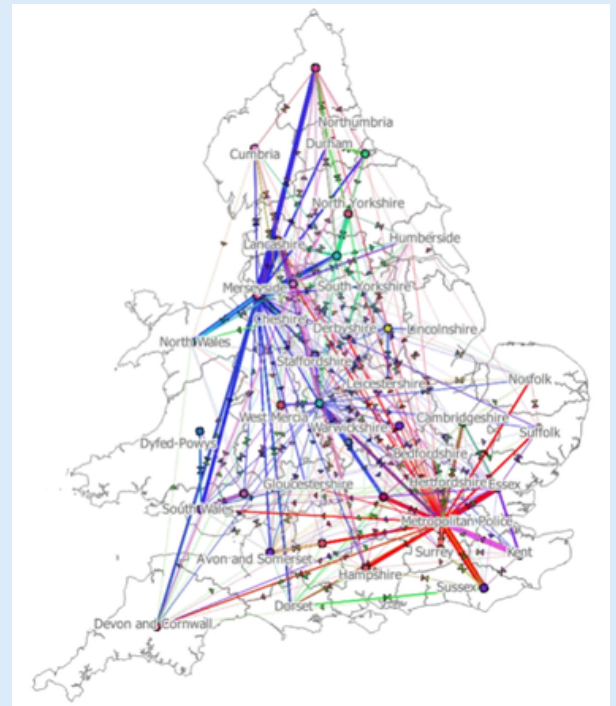
**Children as young as 12 being exploited or moved by gangs to courier drugs out of their local area; 15-16 years is the most common age range**

**White British children are targeted because gangs perceive they are more likely to evade police detection but a person of any ethnicity or nationality may be exploited**

The exact numbers of children affected by County Lines is unknown as there is currently no systematic data collection (Maxwell et al, 2019).

An estimated 27,000 children in England identified as a gang member (Children's Commissioner, 2019).

**County Lines exploitation is widespread, with gangs from big cities including London, Manchester and Liverpool operating throughout England, Wales and Scotland.**



There is an intelligence gap into the true picture of County Lines.

# THE LOCAL PICTURE

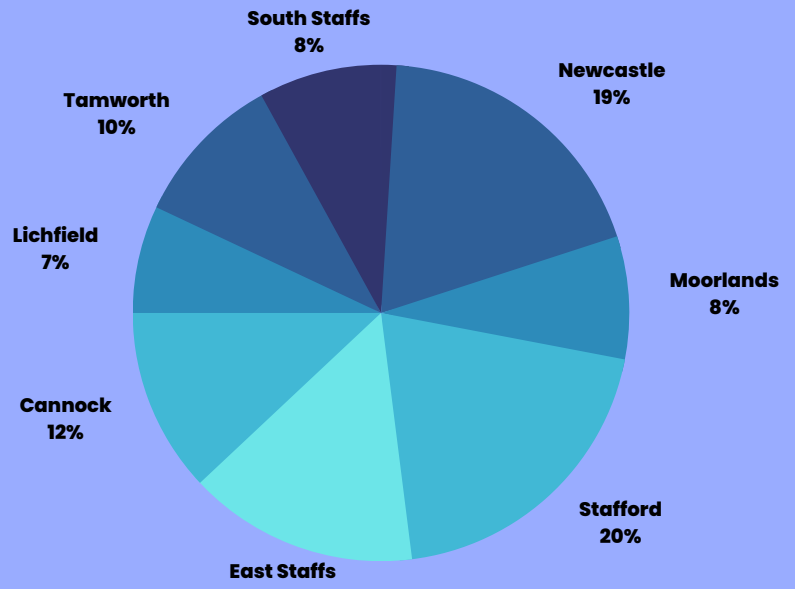
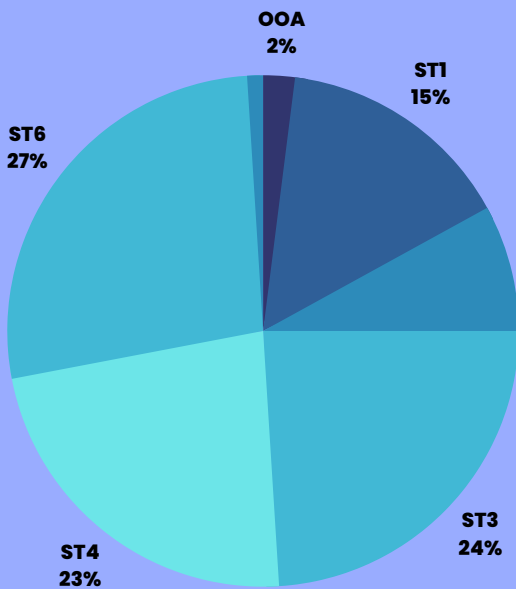
Catch22 have kindly provided the following headline figures from their 2021-2022 annual report to help professionals to understand the local picture.



371 referrals received  
 35% Stoke on Trent (131)  
 65% Staffordshire (240)

Model of Exploitation	% Referrals
CCE Prevention	75% (278)
County Lines	6% (21)
In Borough Drug Dealing	19% (72)

## Referrals by Area

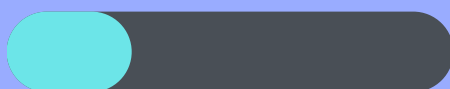
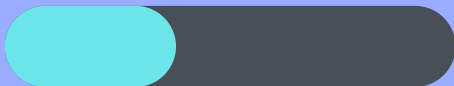


### Linked to gang activity

**38%** 48% Stoke referrals  
 32% Staffs referrals

### Risk related to weapons

**28%** 33% Stoke referrals  
 25% Staffs referrals



# Demographics

**88% ETE (325) 12% NEET (46)**

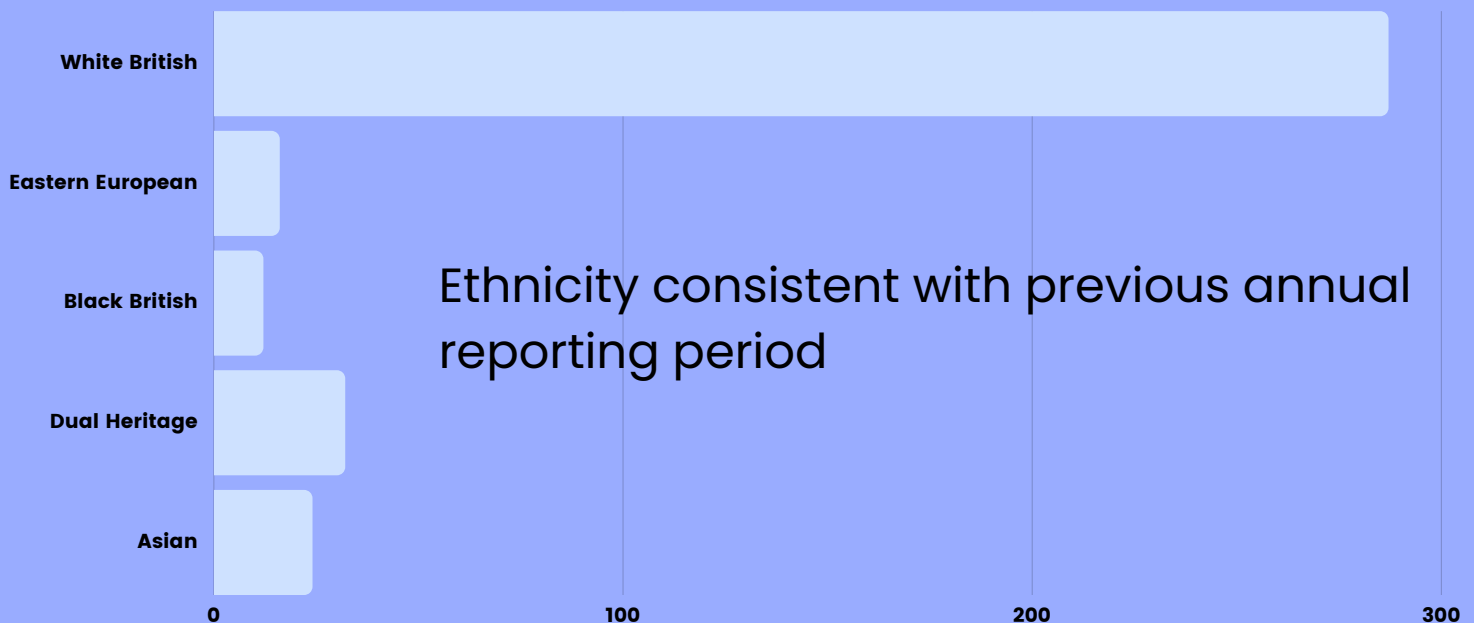
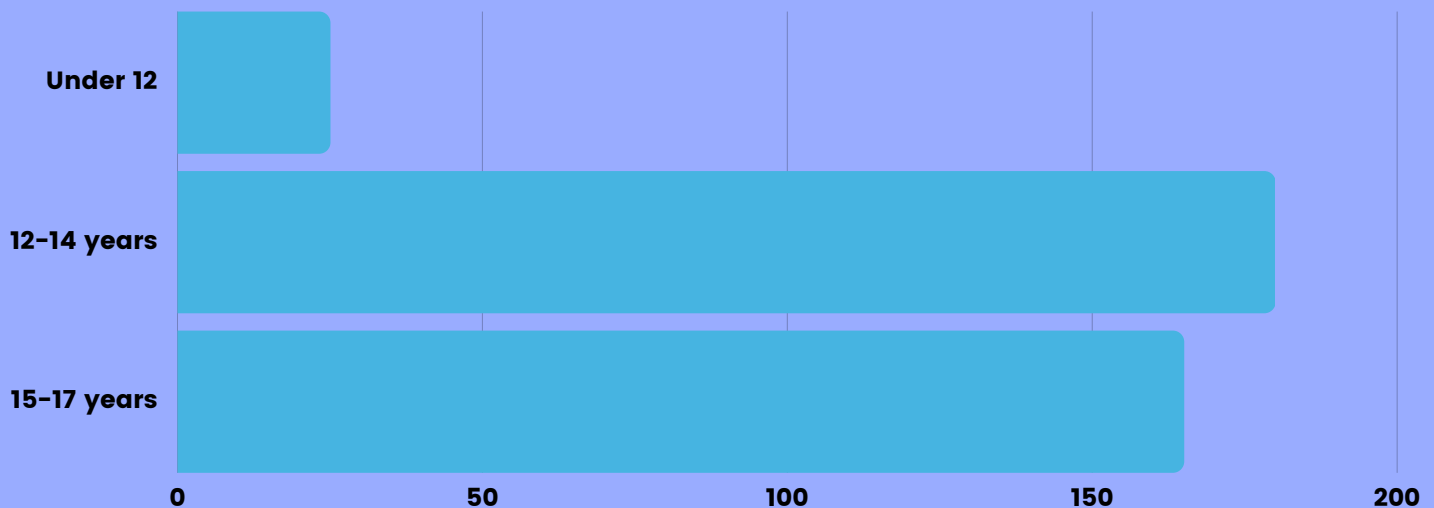
Of the people referred, **68% (252)** had issues related to their education which contributed to their CCE vulnerabilities. This included issues relating to attendance, attainment, behaviour and truancy/exclusions

**27% (89)** people enrolled in education were registered at alternative provision.

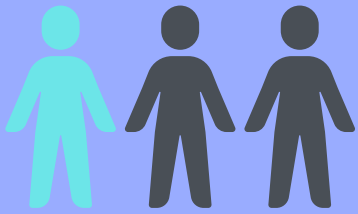
**14 years  
1 month**

## Average age

Consistent with previous year, however increase in the number of under 12 cohort (8 to 25). The highest age group is now 12-14 compared with last year's 15-17



Ethnicity consistent with previous annual reporting period

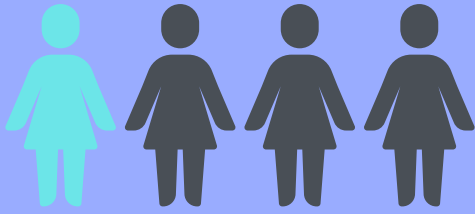


1 in 3 people referred were identified to be at dual risk of CSE and CCE (121)

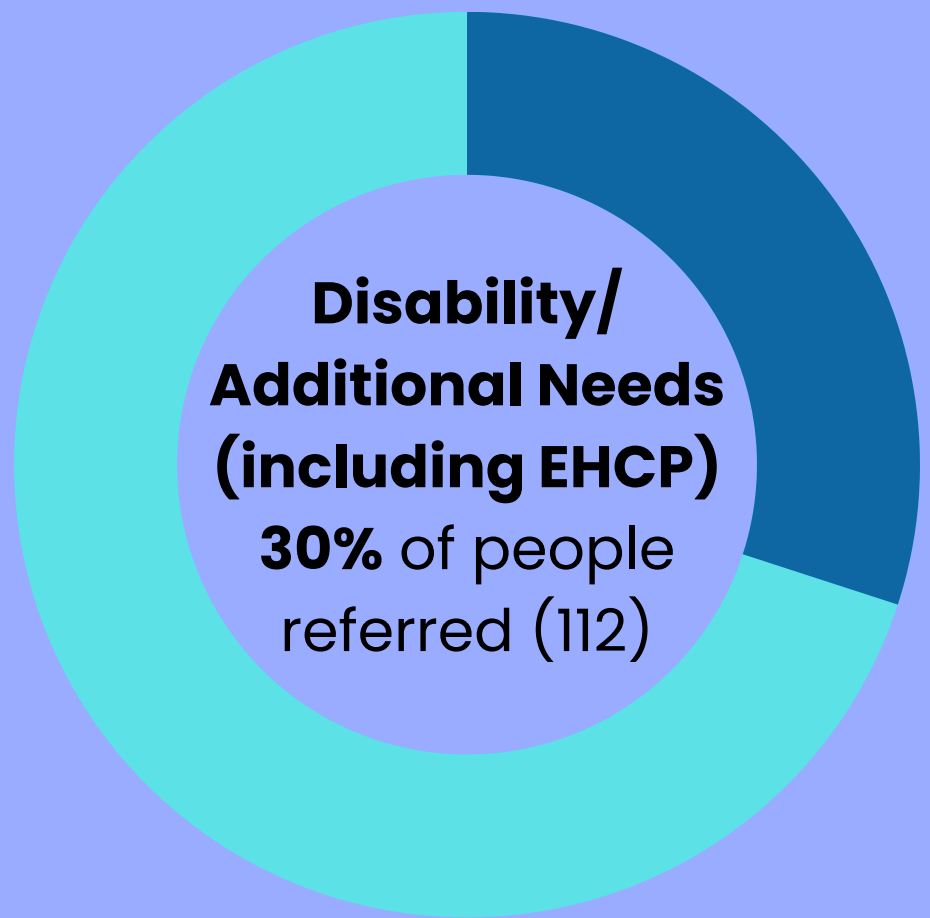


75% of referrals were male (279)

25% referrals identified as female (92)



75% of referrals were male (279)  
25% referrals identified as female (92)



**Missing**  
**39%** of people referred had missing episodes (144)

# How to Refer:

Where a safeguarding concern exist please speak with your organisation's safeguarding lead and refer to Children's Social Care (number are available in Useful Contacts).

The risk factor matrix form does not replace or act as a referral to Social Care but potentially provides additional evidence of concerns.

## **Staffordshire:**

A crib sheet has been created by Staffordshire County Council to support professionals to refer children and young people into the appropriate services via the current processes.

## **Stoke on Trent:**

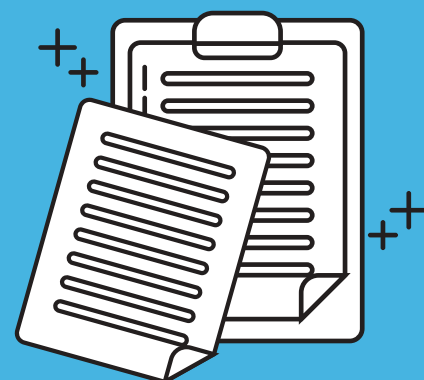
The referral pathway for Stoke on Trent can be located here

It is essential that the Child Exploitation Risk Factor Matrix is completed as this supports your decision making process - this is also the referral form for Catch22

Good practice tips when completing RFM's:

- The RFM should be reviewed every 6-8 weeks or when there is a significant change in risk (this also means for Medium and High risk a new RFM is required for each bi-monthly MACE Panel).
- Professionals are asked to complete this as part of a multi-agency group working around a child so these are not done in isolation and all are aware of who is leading on the reviews of the RFM and contributing to the detail within it.
- Where appropriate, complete the RFM with the child and family.

If a police response is appropriate, for example to enable some form of disruption or to build intelligence about specific networks please also complete the Staffordshire Police Child Exploitation Information Report



# Useful Contacts:



**If you would like more information or support about Child Criminal Exploitation please contact:**

[Catch22](mailto:catch22cce@catch-22.org.uk) - [catch22cce@catch-22.org.uk](mailto:catch22cce@catch-22.org.uk)

Staffordshire Child Exploitation Team -  
[CSEinbox@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:CSEinbox@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Stoke Child Exploitation Team -  
[childexploitation@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:childexploitation@stoke.gov.uk)

**If a referral to Children's Social Care is required please contact:**

**Staffordshire:**

Staffordshire Children's Advice Service - 0300 111 8007  
Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5pm and Friday 8.30-4.30pm  
Out of Hours - 0345 604 2886 / 07815 492613

**Stoke:**

CHAD - 01782 235 100

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5pm and Friday 8.30-4.30pm  
Out of Hours - 01782 234 234



# Further Reading:

[The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit](#)

[County Lines Exploitations – Practice Guidance for YOTs and frontline practitioners \(Published October 2019\)](#)

[Home Office Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#)

[NSPCC Criminal Exploitation and Gangs](#)

[NSPCC Grooming](#)

[Safeguarding Hub – Gang Involvement – Spotting the Signs](#)

[Safeguarding Hub – Young People at Risk of Gang Involvement – More than just a statistic](#)

[Youth & Policy – Theory into Practice: County lines, violence and changes to drugs markets](#)



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With thanks to our Partners

