Rothbury First School Safeguarding Newsletter March 2023



WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN **ABOUT A CHILD**

> If you are worried about a child's safety please do not hesitate to contact the Designated Safeguarding Leads straight away.

> The following members of staff are Designated Safeguarding Leads at **Rothbury First School** Mrs C Auld Mrs H Duffield

> > Our safeguarding governor is **Diane Pringle**

They can be contacted on 01669 620283 or via email

For further information on safeguarding at our school, please look on the safeguarding page on the school website.

COUNTY LINES

What does county lines mean?

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation. It is when criminals befriend children, either online or offline, and then manipulate them into drug dealing. The 'lines' refer to mobile phones that are used to control a young person who is delivering drugs, often to towns outside their home county.

Here are some things you might not know about county lines exploitation...

Children as young as seven are targeted

Young people aged 14-17 are most likely to be targeted by criminal groups but there are reports of seven year olds being groomed into county lines.

Primary school children are seen as easy targets because they're less likely to get caught. The grooming might start with them being asked to 'keep watch' but it soon escalates to them being forced to stash weapons, money, or become drug couriers.

County lines is EVERYWHERE

Just because county lines may not get the coverage of other societal issues, it doesn't mean it's a small problem. In fact, most police forces across the country have reported county lines activity in their area and they say the violence is getting worse. It's not just a 'big city' problem'. County lines is far reaching, with many smaller towns being affected.

SIGNS OF CHILD EXPLOITATION

Ask yourself, is a young person:

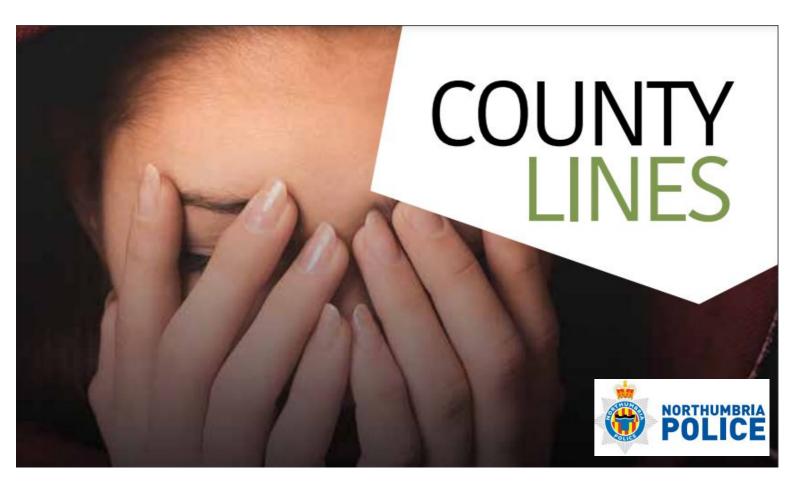
- Travelling alone, particularly in school hours, late at night or frequently?
- Looking lost or in unfamiliar surroundings?
- Anxious, frightened, angry or displaying other behaviours that \rightarrow make you worried about them?
- In possession of more than one phone?
- Carrying lots of cash?
- Potentially under the influence of drugs or alcohol?
- \rightarrow Being instructed or controlled by another individual?
- \rightarrow Accompanied by individuals who are older than them?

What to do if you have concerns about county lines

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.

You can speak to your local police by dialling 101, or in an emergency 999.

If you would rather remain anonymous, you can contact the independent charity <u>Crimestoppers</u> on 0800 555 111.



Some helpful tips from Northumbria Police

- Talk to your child and listen you are looking for open, honest and non-judgemental communication without anger
- Encourage them to get involved in positive activities and to think about their future and employment
- Get involved in your child's school activities
- Know your child's friends and their families
- Always know where your child is and who they are with
- Help them to cope with pressure and how to deal with conflict without the use of violence
- Speak to them about the serious consequences of violent or illegal behaviour
- Help them to understand the dangers of being in a gang and find alternative constructive ways to use their time
- Keep lines of communication open
- Be aware of what your child is doing on the internet
- Look for ways of disciplining children that do not involve harshness, anger or violence
- Work with other parents and school to watch their behaviour
- Contact local voluntary organisations that provide mentoring and other support for young people
- Talk about your child's behaviour with their school and other parents.

Thanks to the internet, there are now many ways for your children to watch TV. Restricting and controlling what your children can watch is harder than ever, but you can make TV safer for your children and limit the amount that they can watch.

