

What can you do?

There are things that you can do to prevent your child from being involved in a gang:

- **Talk** to them about the serious risks of being in a gang
- Ask them about their **future**
- Get them involved in **positive activities**, such as sports and music
- Be aware of who their **friends** are
- Be aware of what they do **online**
- Get **involved** in their school activities
- **Act as an example** – avoid using violence in arguments



Useful Contacts

If a child is already in a gang, try to talk and listen to them **without getting angry**. Seek help from the following organisations:

If you are worried that a child is in **immediate danger**, call Police on **999**. Otherwise, call **101** if it is a **non-emergency**.

Crimestoppers – allows you to report information about a crime anonymously. Tel: **0800 555 111**.

Local Authority/Council – find out about specialised work with gangs, parent groups and activities for young people in your area. Web: www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) – helpline for adults concerned about young people who may be involved or affected by gang activity. Tel: **0808 800 5000**. Email: help@nspcc.org.uk Web: www.nspcc.org.uk/gangs

Victim Support – a national charity which helps people affected by crime. Web: www.victimsupport.org.uk

ChildLine – helpline for young people. Tel: **0800 1111**.

Criminal Exploitation of Young People



Children as **young as 12** are being used to carry, move, and sell drugs and other illegal items.

Read on to find out:

- **Who is at risk?**
- **How to spot the signs of criminal exploitation**
- **What you can do to help**



What is Criminal Exploitation?

Criminal exploitation is a form of child abuse when a child is controlled and pressured by others into committing crimes.

County Lines

A gang may approach a vulnerable child and befriend them with the aim to use that



child to **traffic** (transport) drugs such as heroin and crack cocaine.

This allows gangs to expand the areas in which they deal drugs and is known as 'County Lines'.

Who is at risk?

Gangs frequently take advantage of children whose backgrounds already make them more **vulnerable** to abuse. These include children who:

- Live in disruptive family homes
- Have learning difficulties, behavioural or mental health issues
- Have low self-esteem
- Dislike school and education

Why do some children join a gang?

- Wanting to feel respected and important
- Being promised rewards, such as money or new gadgets
- Wanting protection from other gangs or bullies
- Poor school results and not feeling like they have a good future



Risks of County Lines

Children involved in County Lines are exposed to numerous **dangers**, including:

- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Violence causing physical harm
- Rape or sexual abuse
- Risk of severe injury or being killed
- Becoming a missing person
- Criminal record which affects education and employment options

Signs to look out for

Both boys **and** girls can be affected by a gang. Sudden changes in a child's lifestyle may indicate that they are part of a gang:

- Poor behaviour
- Specific dress style
- Talking differently
- Poor school results or skipping school
- Carrying weapons
- Unexplained injuries, money, or new possessions
- Staying out late or going missing

