



County lines

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What is County Lines

- County lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which criminals groom and manipulate children 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.



County lines gangs use children and vulnerable people to courier drugs and money. A young person who is involved in county lines activity might exhibit some of these signs:



Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area



Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones



excessive receipt of texts or phone calls



Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association



Leaving home or care without explanation



Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries



Parental concerns



Significant decline in school performance



Significant changes in emotional well-being



Home Office

A dark, grainy photograph of three individuals standing side-by-side. The person on the left wears a black hooded jacket and a black mask with orange eye cutouts. The person in the center wears a blue hooded jacket and a blue bandana covering their face. The person on the right wears a dark hooded jacket and a dark hood. The background is a dark, textured wall.

Who are the runners?

- Typically, children aged 14-17 are most likely to be targeted by criminal groups.
- However, some as young as 7 years old have been targeted.
- Why, primary aged children are seen as easy targets and can slip under the radar.
- Chosen because they are cheap and maximise profits whilst taking the biggest risks.



Cuckooing

- Cuckooing is a **practice where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation**

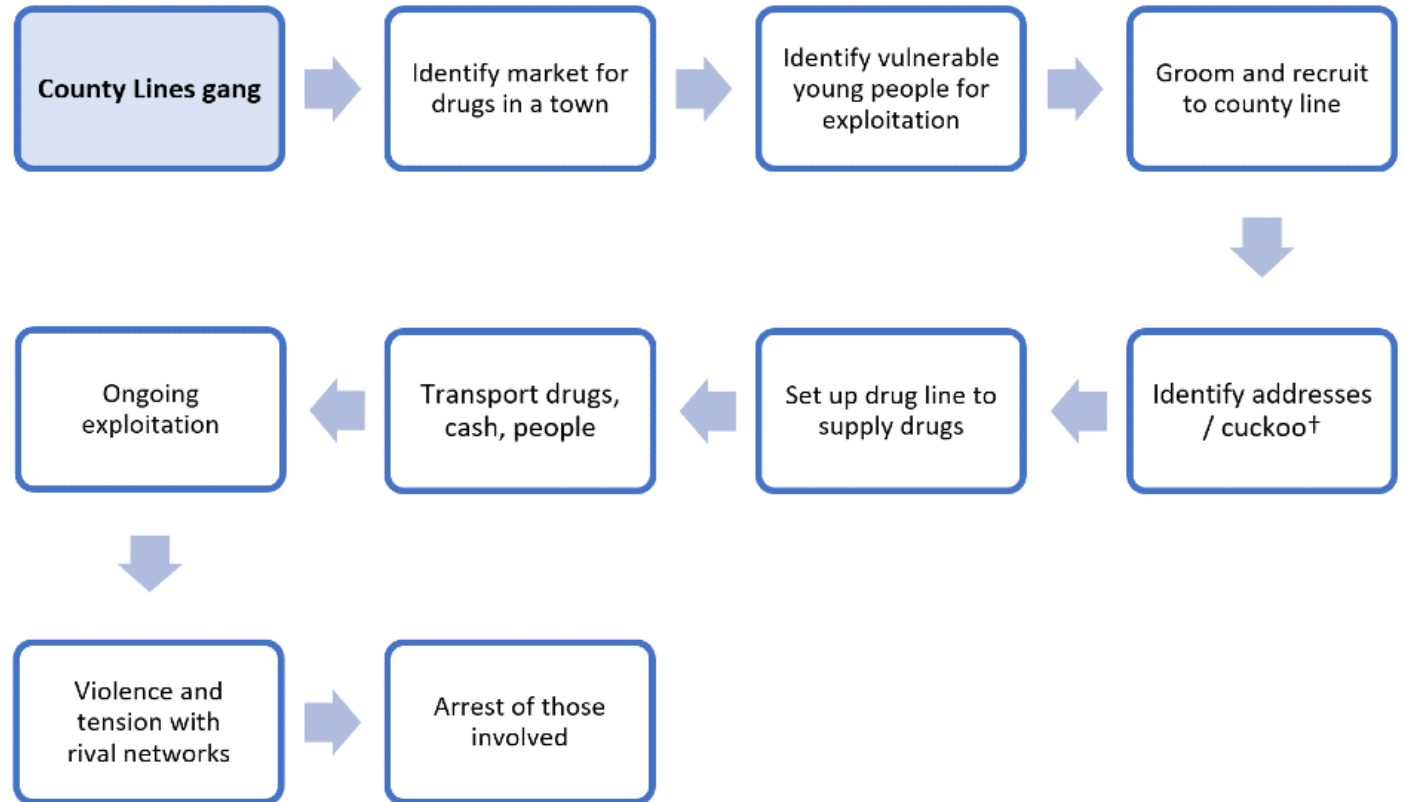


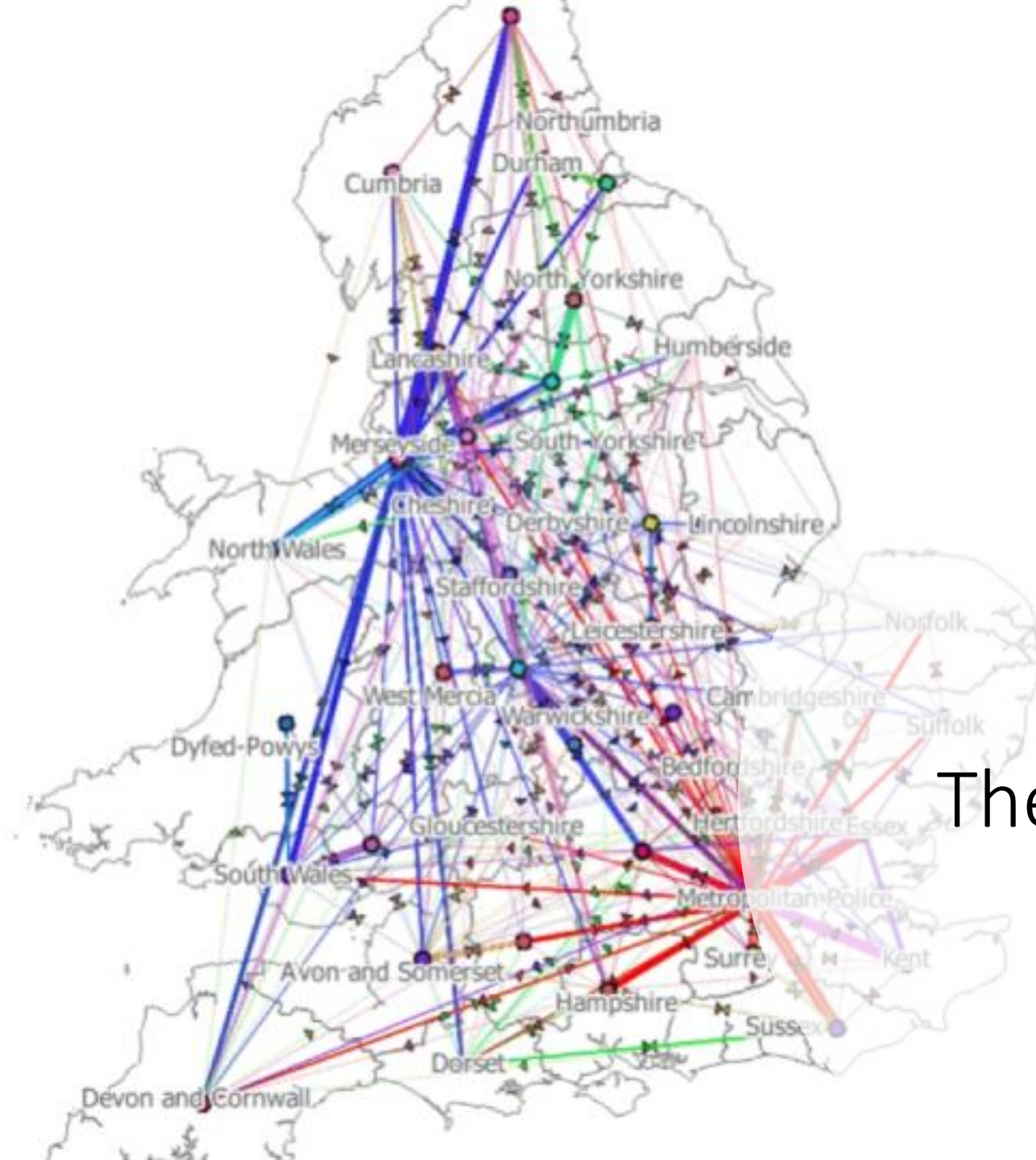


Blending in

- During COVID runners were disguised as Deliveroo riders
- In Liverpool, dealer sell via an ice cream van

The process





The network

Show me the money



- 1,000 different County Lines operating
- majority originating from London, West Midlands and Merseyside
- **Profit per line (annually):**
 - over £800,000
- **Overall profit (annually):**
 - over £800,000,000



Spot the signs

Lots of visitors

New friends

Change in
behaviour

Substance misuse

Changes in social
groups

Flashy new stash

Missing episodes

Getting into
vehicle with
unknown/known
people

Truancy, exclusion,
disengagement
from school

An increase in
anti-social
behaviour in the
community

Unexplained
injuries



Risks and Consequences

- Risk of physical and sexual violence
- Social isolation
- Aspirations
- Increase in ACEs
- poor mental health and self-harm
- Plugging
- Debts
- Criminal and sexual exploitation
- Modern slavery