

# CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

## 1 WHAT IS CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION?

Child Criminal Exploitation, or CCE, is an ever increasing form of child abuse whereby children and young people are manipulated or coerced into committing crimes. It is particularly complex as often these children are recruited by older young people who have been coerced and abused themselves, but often do not realise that they are being exploited. There is generally an adult or group of adults at the top of the pyramid pulling all the strings.



CCE runs alongside, but is not entirely the same as, County Lines—a police term for urban gangs exploiting young people to move drugs around the country using dedicated mobile phones or “deal lines”. This can involve young people being trafficked away from home, going missing, cooking drugs and moving weapons and has been known to happen to children even younger than 11.

## 2 KNOW THE FACTS

- Victims of CCE are usually groomed.
- Victims of CCE may commit crimes or anti social behaviour. They are still victims.
- Young people who are frequently suspended or excluded from school are more at risk.
- Young people with challenges at home like abuse or neglect are vulnerable.
- CCE is common in areas of low income.
- Victims of CCE are at high risk of being killed, physically harmed and arrested.
- Victims usually believe they have some form of ‘debt bondage’ to the gang where they are tricked into illegal activity as a way of repaying a financial or social ‘debt’.
- One of the greatest barriers to impacting this kind of abuse is victim-blaming. Once behaviour becomes poor, many adults and professionals ‘write off’ young people as ‘just bad’ and it becomes harder and harder to reach them.
- The cost of living crisis is compounding the problem, with children feeling responsible for helping parents and carers with money.

## 3 SPOT THE SIGNS

- **There are a wide range of signs and this is not an exhaustive list.**
- Newly frequently absent from school or doing badly.
- Going missing from home, staying out late or travelling for unknown reasons.
- New relationships with older peers, especially when these are secretive or seem to come with lots of gifts (grooming).
- Unexplained money, tech, jewellery etc.
- More than one mobile phone.
- Secretive about their mobile phone activity.
- An unusually high amount of time spent using their phone or, even more worryingly, phones.
- Carrying weapons or having dangerous dogs.
- Using new slang or slang you know to be associated with illegality such as ‘cuckoo’ or ‘traphouse’.
- Becoming involved with drugs, alcohol or petty crime.
- Unexplained injuries. Especially when refusing to seek medical help.

## 4 WHAT DO I DO IF I SUSPECT CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION?

- Report your concern on CPOMS
- If you have questions, or you’re not sure whether to be worried or not, speak directly to Steve Ive (DSL) or Ella Ferguson (DDSL) before you leave site.

**For further information, please see overleaf for information of Criminal Grooming and links to some useful sites and videos. This is an ever increasing problem in our area.**

## COUNTY LINES AWARENESS:

A short video to boost understanding of what County Lines is, and the impact it has on communities .

[NCLCC - County Lines Awareness Video - YouTube](#)

## DEBT BONDAGE:

A video to explain the different types of Debt Bondage and their uses in Criminal Exploitation.

[Debt Bondage Awareness - YouTube](#)

## A GUIDE TO COUNTY LINES SLANG:

[County Lines slang | Catch22 \(catch-22.org.uk\)](#)

## GCE GROOMING: A GUIDE CREATED BY SURVIVORS OF CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION:

