



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Thursday, 21 November 2019
:

**Committee:
People Overview Committee**

Date: Friday, 29 November 2019

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter
Director of Legal and Democratic Services

Members of the Committee

Peggy Mullock (Chair)
Kevin Turley (Vice-Chair)
Roy Aldcroft
Rob Gittins
Christian Lea

Matt Lee
Elliott Lynch
Cecilia Motley
Kevin Pardy
David Vasmer

Co-opted Members (Voting):

Carol Morgan
Sian Lines
Vacancy
Vacancy

Diocese of Shrewsbury (RC)
Diocese of Hereford (CE)
Parent Governor – Secondary Schools
Parent Governor – Primary & Special Schools

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting):

Mark Hignett

Voluntary and Community Sector
Assembly

Substitute Members:

Julian Dean
Roger Evans
Kate Halliday
Roger Hughes

Claire Wild
Leslie Winwood
Paul Wynn

Your Committee Officer is:

Tim Ward Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257713

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies and Substitutions

To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members are reminded they must not participate in the discussion or vote on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

3 Public Question Time

To receive any public questions or petitions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The deadline for this meeting is 2.00pm on 27 November 2019

4 Members' Question Time

To receive any questions of which Members of the Council have given notice.

Deadline for notification: 2.00pm on 27 November 2019

5 Exploitation (Pages 1 - 18)

To receive updates from Shropshire Safeguarding Partnership on work to tackle exploitation in Shropshire

Attached are the Home Office County Lines Guidance and the SSCB Criminal Exploitation and County Lines briefing note

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Professionals Learning Briefing: Criminal Exploitation and County Lines

Overview

This briefing is for professionals working with children, adults with care and support needs and their families or carers. However, it can also be used as a source of information and advice for individuals, families, carers and members of the public to:

- Provide [key definitions](#) relating to criminal exploitation, Organised Crime, County Lines and cuckooing.
- Highlight [groups at risk](#) of exploitation;
- Outline signs of [criminal exploitation](#) and [cuckooing](#);
- Provide advice and guidance on [what to do if you are concerned](#);
- Provide [further resources](#) and news articles (local and national), which can be used with people you work with or for yourself.

Definitions

Criminal Exploitation

Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child, young person under the age of 18 or an adult with vulnerabilities (including those with care and support needs) into any criminal activity:

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator (such as to support serious organised crime), and/or
- (c) through violence or the threat of violence to ensure compliance.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology and/or social media.

[Adapted from Child Criminal Exploitation definition in Working Together:DfE:2018:107 and Home Office:2018: 46]

Because they are more likely to be easily detected, individuals who are exploited are more likely to be arrested and criminalised for criminal behaviour, than those individuals or groups who are exploiting them.

Individuals who are being criminally exploited can be involved, linked to or considered to be (by themselves or others) as part of a “gang” (Factor et al:2015). It is important when children or adults with vulnerabilities (including those with care and support needs) identify or are identified as being affected or involved with gang-related activity that involves the use of actual or threatened violence and/or drug dealing that professionals also consider that they may be victims of criminal exploitation.

Criminal exploitation is broader than but often part of organised crime and county lines.

Organised Crime & County Lines

Organised Crime is “serious crime planned, coordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain.” Organised crime groups are “organised criminals working together for a particular criminal activity or activities.” (National Crime Agency: 2018).

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults (including those with care and support needs) to move, [locally supply] and store the drugs and money. They will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. (Home Office:2018:2)

Cuckooing:

This term is “named after the nest stealing practices of wild cuckoos. It describes the situation where a county lines dealer ‘takes over’ accommodation located in the provincial drugs market, using it as a local dealing base.” (Coomber and Moyle: 2017)

An individual or group can do this by taking over the homes of local adults and families with vulnerabilities (including children and adults with care and support needs) through an abuse of power or vulnerability by coercion, control and/or force so that they can provide a base for the supply of drugs into the local community. This places the adult and/or families at an increased risk of eviction (if they are in social or privately rented housing) and isolation from their communities due to the anti-social activity it can create. Cuckooing often forms part of wider ‘county lines’ activity and is also a form of criminal exploitation.

The context of Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation (including cuckooing) can include several different types of abuse.

The types of abuse that can often be present/relied upon include:

- Modern Slavery and trafficking
- Physical Abuse
- Neglect (including self-neglect)
- Domestic Abuse
- Psychological Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse (including exploitation)
- Financial Abuse

Criminal exploitation can involve complex and organised abuse involving one or more abusers and several children and/or adults with vulnerabilities (including those with care and support needs).

Criminal exploitation often takes place outside of the family or home environment. As is indicated in the ‘groups at risk’ and ‘signs’ sections below; it is often a combination of the interplay between the relationships and circumstances both inside and outside of the family/home environment that can lead to a child or adult with vulnerabilities (including those with care and support needs) being criminally exploited.

It is therefore important that a multi-agency **contextual safeguarding** approach (Firmin:2017) is adopted which considers and addresses the individual needs, risks and protective factors within (including the needs and capacity of parents/carers) and outside (including the impact of social conditions) of the family/home. This approach should also be taken when a child or adult with vulnerabilities (including those with care and support needs) is being considered as a potential perpetrator.

Vulnerable Groups at risk.

As with other types of exploitation, individuals (both adults and children) who fall into the following vulnerable groups are more likely to be at risk of being criminally exploited. Individuals or families who fall into more than one of the groups, who have the presence of signs of criminal exploitation or cuckooing as outlined below, should be considered at the greatest risk:

- Teenage children and young adults;
- Have previously or are currently experiencing abuse or other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Have a lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (for example due to domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality);
- Are homeless or have insecure accommodation status;
- Live in a neighbourhood which is exposed to violent crime, gang-related activity and deprivation;
- Are socially isolated, lonely or experience social difficulties;
- Are economically vulnerable (such as in debt, experiencing poverty or are poor at financial management);
- Have connections with other people involved in gangs;
- Have a physical or learning disability;
- Have mental health or substance misuse problems (in particular Class A dependant drug users);
- Are or have been in care (particularly those in children's residential care and those with interrupted care histories).
- Children excluded from school (either permanently or temporarily); or who are not fully engaged/attending their educational provision or those in alternative learning provision (Tapper:2018)

(Home Office: 2018)

Signs of criminal exploitation

There are several signs that may indicate that an individual may be subject to criminal exploitation. The more signs outlined below that are present for an individual indicate a greater level of risk. Signs listed at the top of the list are most concerning in respect of risk:

- Persistently going missing or being absent from school/college/work or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Leaving home / care without explanation;
- Unexplained bus/train tickets or regularly being transported in taxis or unknown vehicles;
- Unexplained acquisition/gifts of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts /phone calls/use of social media
- Access to numerous phones or regular change of phone
- Relationships with controlling /older individuals or groups
- New "friendships" with people who are not known, gang association or isolation from positive peers or social networks
- Use of unusual terms (such as 'going country')
- Suspicion of physical assault /unexplained injuries
- Parental/Carer concerns
- Carrying weapons or keeping them within the home
- Significant decline in school/college/work performance

- Refusal, resistance to or significant reduction in attendance and/or engagement with services or professional sources of support;
- Secretive behaviour
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

[Adapted from Home Office: 2018 and Crimestoppers:2018]

Any sudden changes or presence of the below signs should be discussed with the individual (where possible) in the first instance to explore with them the reasons behind the behaviour and try to improve their own understanding of the potential risks.

Signs of cuckooing

Cuckooing not only has an impact on the individual or family whose home has been taken over, but also the neighbours and neighbourhood of the property that has been cuckooed. Signs of cuckooing may therefore be more evident to neighbours than professionals in the first instance so comments and reports from them must be noted and considered by professionals working with individual or families.

Much cuckooing takes place in rented or social housing, including multiple occupancy housing provision. However, individuals who own their own homes, particularly those in the vulnerable groups listed above may also be targeted.

The following signs may indicate that an individual or family's property has been cuckooed:

- Unknown people frequently staying at/moving into the property; often described by the individual or families as "friends";
- The individual or family moving out or regularly staying away from the property while the unknown individuals remain;
- New vehicles regularly parking or remaining outside the property;
- An increase in the number of comings and goings throughout the day and/or night, including people who/vehicles that have not been seen before;
- An increase in anti-social behaviour (such as property damage, littering, regular loud music or 'parties' evidence of verbal or physical aggression) in and around the property;
- The individual/family refusing entry to or restricting access to certain parts of the property to neighbours, friends or professionals (particularly if they have allowed it before).

Professionals: What to do if you are concerned

Criminal Exploitation, including county Lines and cuckooing put the safety of vulnerable groups (including children and adults with care and support needs) and the public in our local community at risk. It is therefore important that individuals, communities and public services all work together to prevent and protect vulnerable groups and our communities from this harm.

If you have specific information of criminal activity taking place, please contact West Mercia Police on 101.

If a child or adult is in immediate danger please contact 999.

AND

If you are working with or receive specific information about a child or an adult with care and support needs and/or you have concerns about a family or accommodation where identifiable children, adult(s) with care and support needs reside or visit, you should:

1. Discuss your concerns and work with (if possible and safe to do so) the child, their family or the adult. Use this document and Resources/advice for them provided below to assist you.
2. Seek advice from your line manager and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead in your organisation.
3. Refer to and follow the relevant multi-agency safeguarding procedures:
 - a) For Children: <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>; referring in particular to the [Multi-Agency Threshold Criteria](#) and
 - b) For Adults: <http://www.keepingadultssafeinshropshire.org.uk/multi-agency-procedures-tab>; referring to the [Safeguarding Process in Shropshire](#).
4. Where appropriate, report Safeguarding Concerns to
 - a. For children: 0345 6789021 AND complete a [Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#)
 - b. For adults: 0345 678 9044
5. If there is evidence that the child or adult is a victim of modern slavery (see [Modern Slavery learning briefing](#) for more information) you must make (if you are a first responder) or contribute to a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Please see the [Home Office National Referral Mechanism Guidance](#) for more information.

Resources and News Articles (Local and National)

- IT'SNOTOKAY. Trapped- County Lines (8 June 2017). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLhGpS1f-F0>.

Police, local authorities, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, young people and an MP have launched a campaign to stop criminal gangs from grooming children and vulnerable adults to commit crime. The campaign has supported the completion of the below short film on You Tube to raise awareness of criminals who are grooming and exploiting children and young adults to commit crime on their behalf.

- Marks & Canyon (11 July 2012) CUCKOO *Spine* TV. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hX58oYMBKA>.

An 8-minute documentary exploring the experience of an ex-drug user about his experience of drug dealers moving into his home. This explores the practice of drug dealers who gradually move in on the homes of susceptible users, using them as a base for selling drugs - a process that leaves many users struggling and homeless with nowhere to turn.

It touches on the blurred line between drug addiction and being a mentally ill or vulnerable member of the community and how society treats them differently.

- Children's Society (2018) "Children and young people trafficked for the purpose of criminal exploitation in relation to county lines: a toolkit for professionals". Available at: <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/exploitation-toolkit.pdf>.
- Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire Board Hate Crime information and Resources (as part of Hate Crime Awareness Week). Available at: <http://www.keepingadultssafeinshropshire.org.uk/learning-resources/hate-crime-information-and-resources>.



- Contextual Safeguarding Network webpages: <https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk>.
'The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking' launched the Contextual Safeguarding Network in September 2016. The Contextual Safeguarding Network brings together practitioners across the United Kingdom to share and generate knowledge on contextual approaches to safeguarding young people from violence and abuse. The network promotes theory-informed practice and seeks to develop practice-informed research co-created with academics and practitioners. The Network seeks to accelerate the learning from, piloting of, contextual approaches to safeguarding by disseminating research findings and running in-person and online trainings and events. Members are encouraged to submit ideas for trainings or materials so that Research Team can respond to the identified needs of practitioners.
- BBC News Report 6 July 2018: The problem children who are really victims. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-44725966?S>.
- ITV News Report 29 September 2016: "Going country": ITV news reveals scale of children being exploited and sent around Britain carrying drugs: <http://www.itv.com/news/2016-09-29/going-country-itv-news-reveals-the-scale-of-children-being-exploited-and-sent-around-britain-to-carry-drugs>.
- Shropshire Star 28 July 2018: County line and cuckooing: Vulnerable targeted by major drug gangs. Available at: <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/crime/2018/07/28/county-line-and-cuckooing-vulnerable-targeted-by-major-drug-gangs>.
- Shropshire Star 23 July 2018: Vulnerable man avoids jail after drug gang took over his home and bullied him into selling cocaine. Available at: <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/crime/2018/07/23/judge-spare-cuckooing-victim-jail>.
- Shropshire Star 14 April 2018: Drug dealers forcing vulnerable Shrewsbury people out of their homes. Available at: <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/crime/2018/04/14/drug-dealers-forcing-vulnerable-shrewsbury-people-out-of-their-homes>.
- Shropshire Star 20 Apr 2018: 'Cuckoo' drug dealers driven out of Oswestry. Available at: <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/crime/2018/04/20/cuckoo-drug-dealers-driven-out-of-oswestry>.
- Shropshire Star 2 March 2018: Drug dealers jailed after 'cuckooing' at Shrewsbury home. Available at: <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/crime/2018/03/02/drug-dealer-jailed-after-cuckooing-at-shrewsbury-home>.

References /Further Reading

Coomber and Moyle (2017) The changing shape of street-level heroin and crack supply in England: commuting, holidaying and cuckooing drug dealers across 'County Lines'. *British Journal of Criminology* November 2017. Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/bjc/advance-article/doi/10.1093/bjc/azx068/4668676> [Downloaded 29 June 2018]

Cooper P & Littleford K (January 2018) Modern Slavery Briefing *Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire Board* [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.keepingadultssafeinshropshire.org.uk/media/1035/modern-slavery-briefing.pdf>.

CrimeStoppers (2018) Drug gangs and county lines [ONLINE] <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/campaigns-media/campaigns/drug-gangs-and-county-lines>. [Accessed 31 July 2018]

Factor F, Pitts J & Bateman T (2015) Gang-Involved Young People: Custody and Beyond. *Beyond Youth Custody*. Available at: <http://www.beyondyouthcustody.net/wp-content/uploads/Gang-involved-young-people-custody-and-beyond-a-research-report.pdf> [Accessed 28 August 2018]

Firmin C (November 2017) Contextual Safeguarding: An overview of the operational, strategic and conceptual framework. *Contextual Safeguarding Network*. Available at <https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/assets/documents/Contextual-Safeguarding-Briefing.pdf>. [Accessed 28 August 2018]

Home Office (2018) Modern slavery victims: referral and assessment forms [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms>. [Accessed 31 July 2018]

Home Office (September 2018) Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines> [Accessed 24 September 2018]

HM Government (July 2018) Working Together to Safeguarding Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguarding and promote the welfare of children. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722305/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children_-_Guide.pdf. [Accessed 31 July 2018]

HM Government (April 2018) Serious Violence Strategy. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/698009/serious-violence-strategy.pdf. [Accessed 31 July 2018]

National Crime Agency (2018) Organised Crime Groups [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/crime-threats/organised-crime-groups>. [Accessed 31 July 2018]

Tapper, J (15 July 2018) "School Exclusions 'put children at risk of gang grooming': 'off-rolling' difficult students to boost exam results is fuelling gang violence, say children's czar" *Guardian Newspaper* [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/jul/15/school-exclusions-put-children-at-risk-gang-grooming> [Accessed 31 July 2018]

West Midlands Safeguarding Children's Procedures (2018) Statutory Child Protection Procedures: 1.15: Organised and complex abuse. Available at: <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/ykpzp/statutory-child-protection-procedures/organised-and-complex-abuse>.

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Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance



Who's this guidance for?

This guidance is primarily aimed at frontline staff who work with children, young people and potentially vulnerable adults.

This includes professionals working in education, health, housing, benefits, law enforcement (police) and related partner organisations.

This guidance is also useful for carers and parents, although they are not the primary audience.

It has been produced by the Home Office in co-operation with other Government Departments, National Crime Agency, Local Government Association, National Police Chiefs' Council, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in London.

What's this guidance for?

Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines activity. It is a harm which is relatively little known about or recognised by those best placed to spot its potential victims.

This guidance is intended to explain the nature of this harm to enable practitioners to recognise

its signs and respond appropriately so that potential victims get the support and help they need.

What is county lines exploitation?

County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations.

The UK Government defines county lines as:

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

What is Child Criminal Exploitation?

Child criminal exploitation is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved, and is defined as:

Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines, and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

Case study 1 (Suffolk Police)

A 16 year old male had been reported as missing from London and was considered at risk due to his age and link to gangs. He had recently failed to appear at court for his alleged involvement in a stabbing. He was found in possession of a 6-inch kitchen knife and 30 wraps of drugs.

Whilst in custody he was found to have significant burns to his body, on his stomach area, consistent with having been burnt by boiling liquid. He would not disclose further details; however it was suspected this may have been caused by those responsible for placing him in Ipswich to deal in class A drugs.



How does it affect young people and vulnerable adults?

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

One of the key factors found in most cases of county lines exploitation is the presence of some form of exchange (e.g. carrying drugs in return for something). Where it is the victim who has been promised

or given something they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or clothes) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived friendship or affection). It is important to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs and to remember that the receipt of something by a young person or vulnerable adult does not make them any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange, for example a young person who engages in county lines activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

Case study 2 (South Wales Police)

At least one vulnerable female has been used by a gang from London to sexually service its members and has been subjected to sexual violence.

As a result of drugs debts they attempted to kidnap her at least twice and it is believed that they have also trafficked her to London in order to pay off a debt through prostitution.



Who is vulnerable to county lines exploitation?

The national picture on county lines continues to develop but there are recorded cases of:

- children as young as 12 years old being exploited or moved by gangs to courier drugs out of their local area; 15-16 years is the most common age range
- both males and females being exploited
- White British children being targeted because gangs perceive they are more likely to evade police detection but a person of any ethnicity or nationality may be exploited
- the use of social media to make initial contact with children and young people
- class A drug users being targeted so that gangs can takeover their homes (known as 'cuckooing').

We do know that county lines exploitation is widespread, with gangs from big cities including London, Manchester and Liverpool operating throughout England, Wales and Scotland. Gangs are known to target vulnerable children and adults; some of the factors that heighten a person's vulnerability include:

- having prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse

- lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example)
- social isolation or social difficulties
- economic vulnerability
- homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- connections with other people involved in gangs
- having a physical or learning disability
- having mental health or substance misuse issues;
- being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)
- being excluded from mainstream education, in particular attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

Case study 3 (Eastern Region Special Operations Unit)

The [county lines] group were consuming and selling drugs from within the property and prevented the [homeowner] from leaving the address or going to the toilet areas.



Signs to look out for

A young person's involvement in county lines activity often leaves signs. A person might exhibit some of these signs, either as a member or as an associate of a gang dealing drugs. Any sudden changes in a person's lifestyle should be discussed with them.

Some potential indicators of county lines involvement and exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

- persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets
- relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- leaving home / care without explanation
- suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries
- parental concerns
- carrying weapons
- significant decline in school results / performance
- gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

What to do if you are concerned

Any practitioner working with a vulnerable person who they think may be at risk of county lines exploitation should follow their local safeguarding guidance and share this information with local authority social services. If you believe a person is in immediate risk of harm, you should **contact the police.**

Use your local safeguarding process, the first step of which is usually to contact your designated safeguarding lead within your organisation. If you don't know who this is, refer to your manager. Your designated safeguarding lead has the responsibility for linking in with your local authority's social services. If you are not satisfied with the local authority's response, you should follow up your concerns by discussing these with your safeguarding lead.

Case study 4 (Humberside Police)

A male's hand was severed and both legs broken. The victim is believed to be part of a county lines network with the offenders being a local drug line. It's suggested to be a punishment attack by the persons the victim was running drugs for, for having used drugs/spent proceeds himself.



If you are aware that a potential victim may have come from / travelled to another area as part of their involvement in county lines, you should include this information in your referral to enable liaison between safeguarding agencies in the different areas.

Further information on safeguarding can be found in the Department for Education's Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance.

If you are worried that a vulnerable person is at immediate risk of harm you should also contact the police: your local public protection officer or, in the case of a child, local children's protection officer.

If you are a designated First Responder for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), you should also consider referring any young person or adult you suspect of being a potential victim of trafficking or modern slavery to the NRM. Any referral should be after appropriate safeguarding steps have been taken and in light of multi-agency discussions.

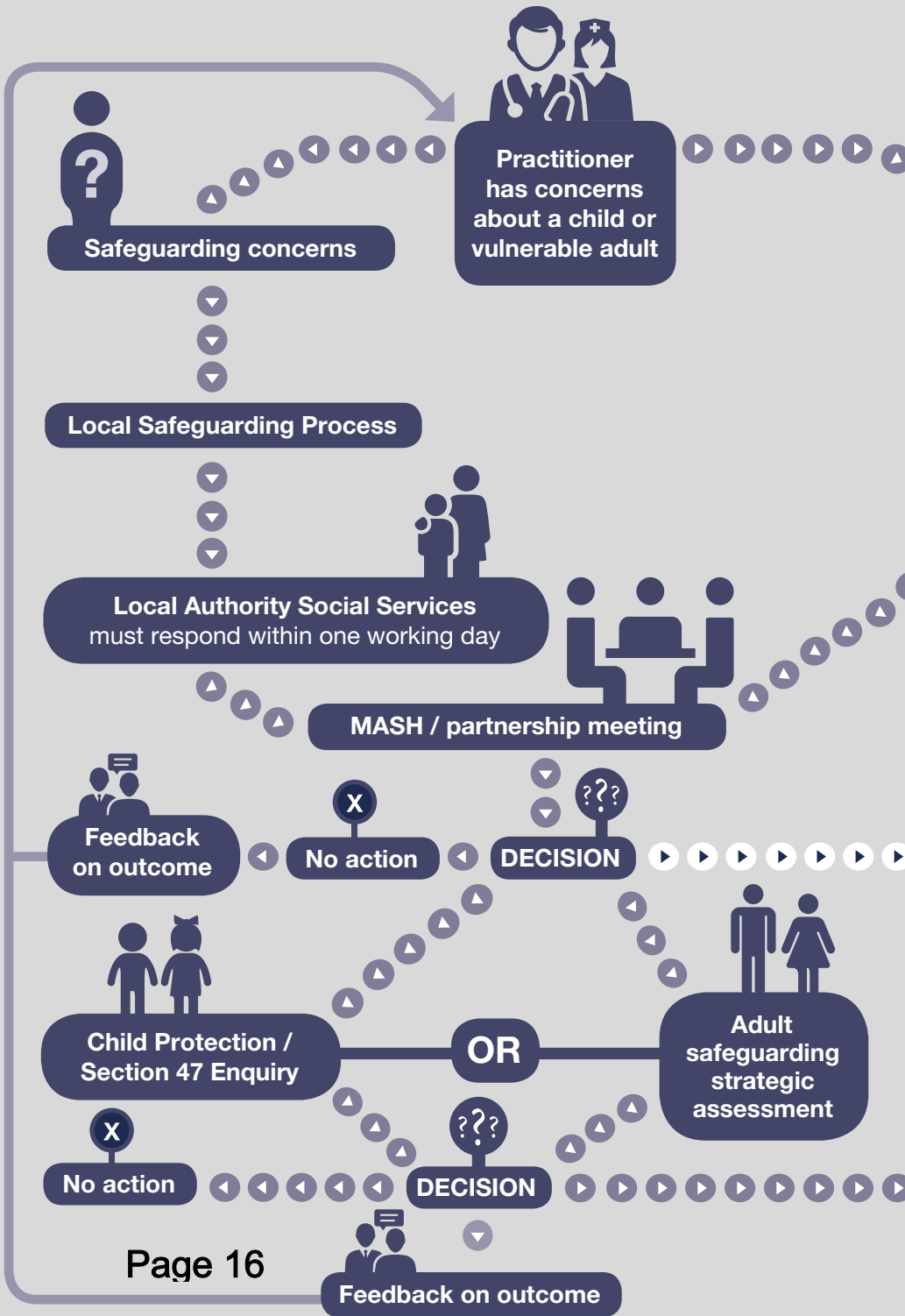
Further information and guidance on county lines exploitation can be found from The Children's Society. NSPCC and Childline also offer sources of support for young people. Mind is a source of help for those suffering with mental health issues.

Your role

The flowchart below shows what should happen after you raise a concern. White arrows represent additional options to the prescribed process.



Note: Local Authorities are transitioning to new safeguarding arrangements to implement the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and **the flowchart is schematic only.**



Risk of imminent harm

Local Police Protection Officer / Safer Schools Officer

DECISION

Emergency Protection Order

National Referral Mechanism (NRM) by First Responder

National process for identifying and providing support for potential victims of modern slavery including trafficking. For children, support is provided by local authorities.

Safeguarding or Protection Plan

Notes
