



**West Bromwich Police Station
Moor Street,
West Bromwich
B70 7AQ**

Switchboard: Tel 101

January 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians

County Lines

It is likely you will have heard the term 'County Lines' in the news recently. This is a real and growing form of criminal activity that exists nationally and regionally across the West Midlands.

To explain, it is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from urban areas into rural areas. The leaders of these gangs are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults, often without them realising it, to move (and store) drugs and money. They use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

There may be signs of a change in a young person's behaviour such as:

- Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing
- Being found in areas away from home
- Increasing drug use, or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Unexplained absences from school, college, training or work
- Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know
- Coming home with injuries or looking particularly dishevelled
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.

Your school and local police are working together to spot signs of exploitation and ensure young people are safe. We're keen parents are aware and able to offer support.

I would ask that you be aware of County Lines and if you have any concerns about a young person or have any information regarding County Lines to contact West Midlands Police on 101. There are some links below that you may find useful for more information.

With kind regards

Sandwell Partnership Team

<https://www.fearless.org/professionals/resources/gangs>

<https://www.youandco.org.uk/crime-info/violent-crime-facts/gangs-and-street-violence>

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-is-county-lines>

<https://www.spurgeons.org/>