

The DfE Child Protection and Safeguarding Unit have asked schools to raise awareness among their communities of an increasingly prevalent issue in keeping our young people safe.

**‘County lines’** is the term used by police and partners for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban and rural areas, market and coastal towns **using dedicated mobile phone lines.**

Gangs use children and young people to move drugs and money to and from the urban area. It is a major cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, exploitation, modern slavery and missing persons.

**Possible signs to look out for:**

There aren't any definite signs that show a child has joined a gang, and it is unlikely that they'll tell you, but here are some things you can look out for:

- spending time with people you don't know and aren't sure about
- going missing from home or school
- getting into trouble at school
- having new clothes or other items that you think they can't afford
- having unexplained injuries
- losing interest in their existing hobbies
- becoming secretive
- not telling you where they have been or why they returned late

**Support Groups for Parents/Carers and Young People**

**Gangline** - Confidential helpline: **0800 032 9538**

Outreach support to young men and women, works to promote organisations and individuals in a community working together to tackle gang culture, including the rise of child exploitation.

**Family Lives** - Confidential helpline: **0808 800 2222**

Charity offering support to parents to deal with the changes of family life.