

# Safeguarding News



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## What is County Lines?

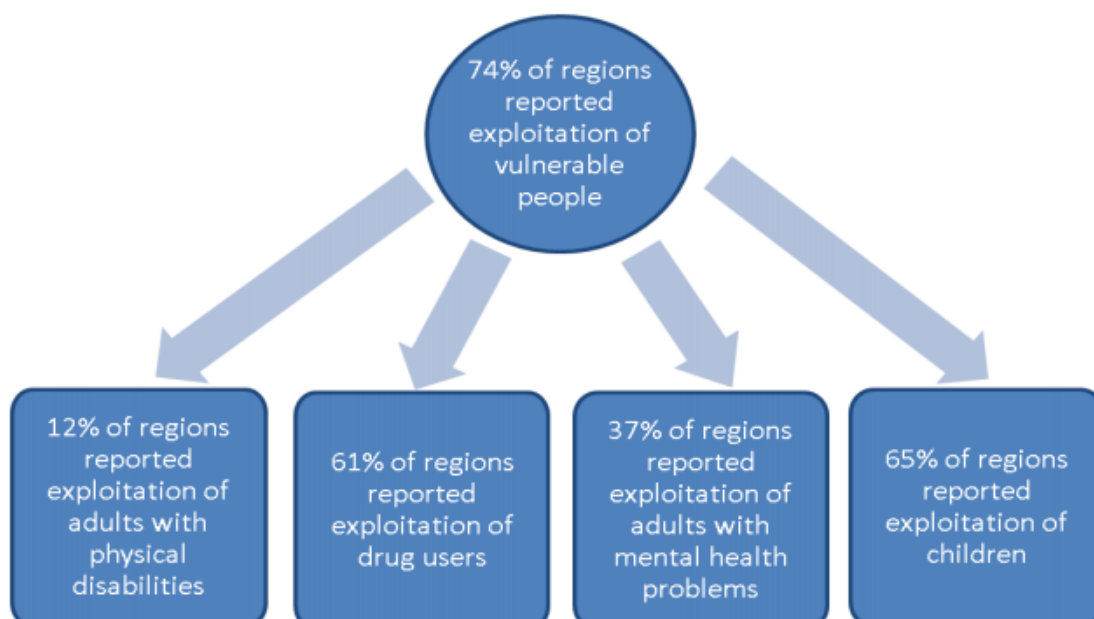
County lines relates to the supply of class A drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) from an urban hub into rural towns or county locations. This is facilitated by a group who may not necessarily be affiliated as a gang, but who have developed networks across geographical boundaries to access and exploit existing drugs markets in these areas.

A key feature of county lines drug supply is the use of a branded mobile phone line which is established in the marketplace and promoted throughout the existing customer base. Group messages are sent out periodically to the customer base to advertise the availability of drugs and orders are placed back to this line in response. A relay system (another phone) is then used to pass orders onto dealers in the rural marketplace.

The exploitation of young and vulnerable persons is a common feature in the facilitation of county lines drugs supply, whether for the storage or supply of drugs, the movement of cash, or to secure the use of dwellings held by vulnerable people in the rural marketplace (commonly referred to as cuckooing).

County lines groups use high levels of violence and intimidation to establish and maintain markets, whether that's forcing existing suppliers out, as a means to enact some form of retribution, controlling vulnerable individuals or as a general show of strength. Levels of violence vary considerably but it often includes the use of knives, corrosives, firearms and other weapons. It may also include sexual violence and sexual exploitation.

## Exploitation of Vulnerable People



For any other questions please contact a member of your Safeguarding Team