



City of  
**Stoke-on-Trent**



**STAFFORDSHIRE  
POLICE**

Dear Parents/Carers

You may be aware of the term County Lines as it has been reported in the national press over recent years. It is used to describe the networks of gangs and organised criminals who export illegal drugs into other areas of the country, often smaller areas, using dedicated mobile phone lines known as 'deal lines.'

Dealers will take orders from drug users through mobile phones and exploit children and vulnerable people to move and store drugs and money. Often they do this using blackmail and intimidation and violence.

Children and vulnerable people can be groomed online or face-to-face by a stranger or someone they know. They can receive money, mobiles, credit, expensive clothing, jewellery, or other items/gifts in exchange for a specified task.

We want to reassure you that you are not receiving this letter because your school has a problem with County Lines activity but it's important you know the risks and what you can do to help. This letter forms just a small part of the partnership work which is ongoing to combat this criminal activity.

Staffordshire Police are working alongside Stoke-on-Trent City Council as part of a County Lines operation which has two aims – to arrest members of organised crime gangs who target young and vulnerable people, but also to identify young people who are at risk of criminality and to help divert them away from criminal exploitation.

The activity also involves educating children and highlighting the dangers and consequences of being involved in gang culture, violence or drugs.

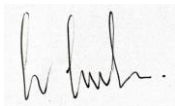
We are asking education establishments and parents to help identify young people who are at risk of criminality, so they can be given help. The enclosed leaflet contains information on the signs of County Lines activity and the help and advice available.

No one school in Stoke-on-Trent is more or less affected by these problems. We know that the overwhelming majority of young people will never be affected by this issue but a conversation with your child will help us collectively make a difference. It is critical that young people know that there is help available if they are involved in County Lines activity and that they can get support from home, school and agencies who work with young people.

You can find more information on the issue here:  
<https://www.staffordshire.police.uk/countyline>

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Best wishes,



Detective Chief Inspector Rob Taylor  
County Lines Lead, Staffordshire Police



Cllr Abi Brown  
Leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Council