COUNTY LINES

Drug gangs are exploiting vulnerable young people in North Wales.

Using violence and abuse, criminals recruit youngsters to act as couriers to move drugs and cash around suburban or rural areas.

1 INCREASED PHONE ACTIVITY

A young person caught up in a county lines gang may be seen using their mobile or a new provided phone excessively, often receiving calls and texts at unusual times from people you are not familiar with. This may be travel instructions to supply drugs at various locations around the country.

2 UNEXPLAINED INJURIES

A criminally exploited young person may come home with unexplained injuries. These may be as a result of violent incidents they have been caught up in as they supply illegal drugs, or it could be self harm injuries.

3 CHANGE IN MOOD

You may notice a change in their mood and emotional well-being. Once a young person has been drawn into trafficking drugs, they are controlled using threats, violence and sexual abuse, often leaving them feeling scared and traumatised.

4 GANG ASSOCIATIONS

A young person caught up in drug trafficking will often become involved in gangs or the may suddenly appear to have a new friendship group who you are not familiar with. They may become isolated from their usual friends and may change their appearance.

5 NEW EXPENSIVE POSSESSIONS

Criminals will often groom a vulnerable young person into trafficking drugs with the promise of money, expensive designer clothes, trainers and friendships in return. Take note of any possessions or extra cash they cannot account for.

6 MISSING FROM HOME

A young person groomed into trafficking illegal drugs may often go missing from home on a number of occasions as they travel the country to supply drugs to users. They may stay out later than permitted with no explanation and will not disclose where they have been.

7 INCREASE IN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

A young person who is being exploited may display more anti social behaviour at home, or a desire to be violent. They may also show disrespect for boundaries set by parents, guardians or teachers.

8 DECLINE IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

A young person criminally exploited may begin to struggle at school and their grades may suffer. This may be due to unexplained absences or difficulty in concentrating on their studies.

9 DRUG DEBT

Exploiters often supply free drug samples to get a young person addicted. By using this grooming tactic the exploiter will quickly gain control of the young person through their addiction and 'drug debt'.

10 KNIFE CRIME

A young person caught up in a county lines gang will often carry a weapon (usually a knife) to protect themselves. Statistics show that if you carry a knife you are more likely to be injured.

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NORTH WALES POLICE

If you suspect county lines in your area, call 101 or alternatively call CRIMESTOPPERS anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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