



City of  
**Stoke-on-Trent**



**STAFFORDSHIRE  
POLICE**

Dear Parents/Carers

We wanted to take this opportunity since our last letter sent in October 2021, to remind you that there are a number of ways in which you can still help us tackle County Lines across Staffordshire.

County Lines is the term used to describe the activity of organised criminal gangs (OCGs) who exploit young and vulnerable people into the distribution of illegal drugs within the county. These gangs target and manipulate young and vulnerable people into moving and storing drugs and money, often doing so by using blackmail, intimidation and violence.

We are working with our partners as part of a County Lines operation which has two aims;

- To arrest members of organised crime gangs who target young and vulnerable people
- Identify young people who are at risk of criminality and to help divert them away from criminal exploitation.

We are asking education establishments as well as parents to know what signs to look for that may indicate someone is involved in County Lines and therefore help identify anyone who may be at risk so they can get support.

The signs to look out for:

- Repeatedly going missing from school or home and being found in other areas
- Decline in school or work performance
- Having money, new clothes or expensive items and they can't explain how they paid for them
- Getting more texts or phone calls than usual and being secretive about who they're speaking to
- Significant changes in emotional or physical well-being
- Having injuries that they can't explain how they received them

No one school in Stoke-on-Trent is more or less affected by these problems and we know that the overwhelming majority of young people will never be affected by this issue. However, a conversation with your child about County Lines will help us collectively make a difference.

It is important that young people are aware that there is help and support available to them if they are involved in County Lines, not just from us but at home, school and agencies who work with young people. This information can be found on the enclosed leaflet and on our website here: <https://www.staffordshire.police.uk/countylines>

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Chisholm', written in a cursive style.

Detective Superintendent Tom Chisholm  
Head of Major & Organised Crime, Staffordshire Police

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abi Brown', written in a cursive style.

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