



COUNTY LINES

What is Fearless?

Fearless.org is the dedicated youth service from the independent charity Crimestoppers. Developed through consultation with young people, Fearless aims to break down any barriers that might prevent young people from reporting crime. Whether this is a fear of the process or a distrust of the police, we want to empower young people to speak out. We do this by promoting our unique service that gives anyone the opportunity to speak up to stop crime, 100% anonymously.

How it works?

Young people can pass information about crime to Fearless 100% anonymously via an online form on the Fearless.org website or by calling our **0800 555 111** phone line, 24/7, 365 days a year. After receiving the call or a completed anonymous online form, we create a report that brings together all the information given to us. Our specially trained contact centre staff make sure it doesn't contain any information that could identify who or where the information came from, protecting anonymity. The sanitised report is then sent to the relevant authority with the legal responsibility to investigate crimes, make arrests and charge people in order to bring them to justice. This could be a local police force or an agency such as the UK Border Agency or HM Revenue & Customs.

Anonymity promise

Anonymous means that your identity is completely unknown. Our promise of anonymity is vital to us as it is what makes our charity unique. We guarantee to young people, indeed everyone, that:

- They can give us information about crime without giving their name or any personal details.
- They will not be asked for their gender or age.
- We will not record any personal details they might mention.
- We physically cannot trace their phone number, email or IP address as our system is designed to protect their identity.



fearlessORG



fearlessuk



fearless.org



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fearlessagainstcrime

Empowering young people to speak up about crime.



For more information, visit
www.fearless.org
Empowering young people to speak up about crime.

About this resource

This resource has been produced for professionals working with young people throughout the UK. It provides information about County Lines including the signs to spot, a glossary of terms and more information on the grooming process. You can use this resource to help you to discuss young people's

perceptions, stimulate debate and encourage conversation around crime and crime reporting.

Fearless is committed to empowering young people to make informed choices about crime that affects them and their communities.

We hope that by using this resource with the young people you work with, they will;

1

Have a greater understanding of specific crimes that affect them and their peers

2

Have a greater awareness of safe routes to report crime and criminal behaviour

3

Take positive action to make their communities safer for everyone

Note: Using this resource for debate and conversation may lead to disclosures from young people. It is important that any disclosures made to you are managed through your local safeguarding arrangements, and that you follow your settings safeguarding policy. Fearless.org are unable to take information from victims of crime, but at the back of this booklet you will find other agencies that maybe able to provide advice, support and guidance.

With thanks to:



This resource was funded and supported by Kent and Medway VRU and Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

For more information contact the Fearless team
fearless@crimestoppers-uk.org





What is County Lines?

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and adults at risk to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

- National Police Chiefs Council

County Lines operations can be run by small street gangs, organised crime groups or even large organised national crime networks. These groups will often criminally exploit young people, forcing them to move illegal drugs and money for them. They will befriend and gain the trust of a young person, before manipulating them into dealing drugs. They will use manipulation, coercion, violence, intimidation and weapons. These are all a form of criminal exploitation.

What is grooming?

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. – NSPCC

It is important to remember when working with young people who have been groomed and criminally exploited, that although they may have committed a criminal offence, they are first and foremost a victim of a crime. They must be safeguarded, supported and treated as a victim, not as a criminal.

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Glossary of terms

The terms below are often used when describing County Lines activity. This is not an exhaustive list of terms, and there will be some regional variations.

Home Invasion (Cuckooing)

Taking over the home of a vulnerable member of the community to use and sell illegal drugs from. The person whose home has been taken over may be exploited in a number of different ways by the County Lines group including criminally, sexually and financially.

Going Country

This is the most popular term used to describe County Lines activity. When someone is referring to a person 'going country', they are suggesting that person is travelling to another city, town or county to deliver illegal drugs or money. This is sometimes also referred to as 'going cunch' or 'going OT'.

Trap House

A building used as a base for drugs to be sold, and sometimes manufactured from. Young people being criminally exploited through County Lines activity may be forced to stay at a trap house for days or weeks at a time. A trap house may sometimes be referred to as a 'bando'.

Debt Slavery / Debt Bondage / Drug Debt

Terms used to describe a type of financial exploitation of a young person, who may be forced to work to pay off a debt that they owe. However, sometimes a County Lines group may use deception to trick a young person into believing they have a debt to pay when in reality they don't.



Spotting the signs

Below are some signs that a young person who is being criminally exploited may exhibit:



Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing for days or weeks at a time



Being found in areas away from home, particularly areas you would not expect that young person to travel to alone



Increasing drug use, or a young person having a large amount of drugs on them when they do not use drugs themselves



Suddenly being secretive about who they are talking to or where they are going



Unexplained absences from school, work, college or training



Having large amounts of money on them, or having lots of new stuff such as clothes, jewellery or phones they usually wouldn't be able to afford



A change in behaviour – more disruptive, aggressive, anxious



Using drug-related or adult language you would not expect that young person to know



Having injuries that cannot be explained



In possession of hotel keys or keys to unknown places

Whilst there are key signs and indicators that a young person is being exploited, it is important to recognise that not every young person who is being exploited will exhibit these signs and not every young person exhibiting these signs, is being exploited.

Are you fearless?

It's easy to embed Fearless within your school, youth group or organisation.

Our positive call to action can be easily slotted into existing health and wellbeing topics, PHSE lessons, assemblies and awareness days.

Fearless five top tips

1

Ask IT to add Fearless.org to the list of secure websites that staff and young people can access and add our homepage as an icon to all computer desktops/tablets.

2

Visit our website Fearless.org and request FREE posters to display in your school, youth club etc.

3

Follow us on X @Fearlessorg and retweet our campaigns.

4

Include information about our service within parent newsletters.

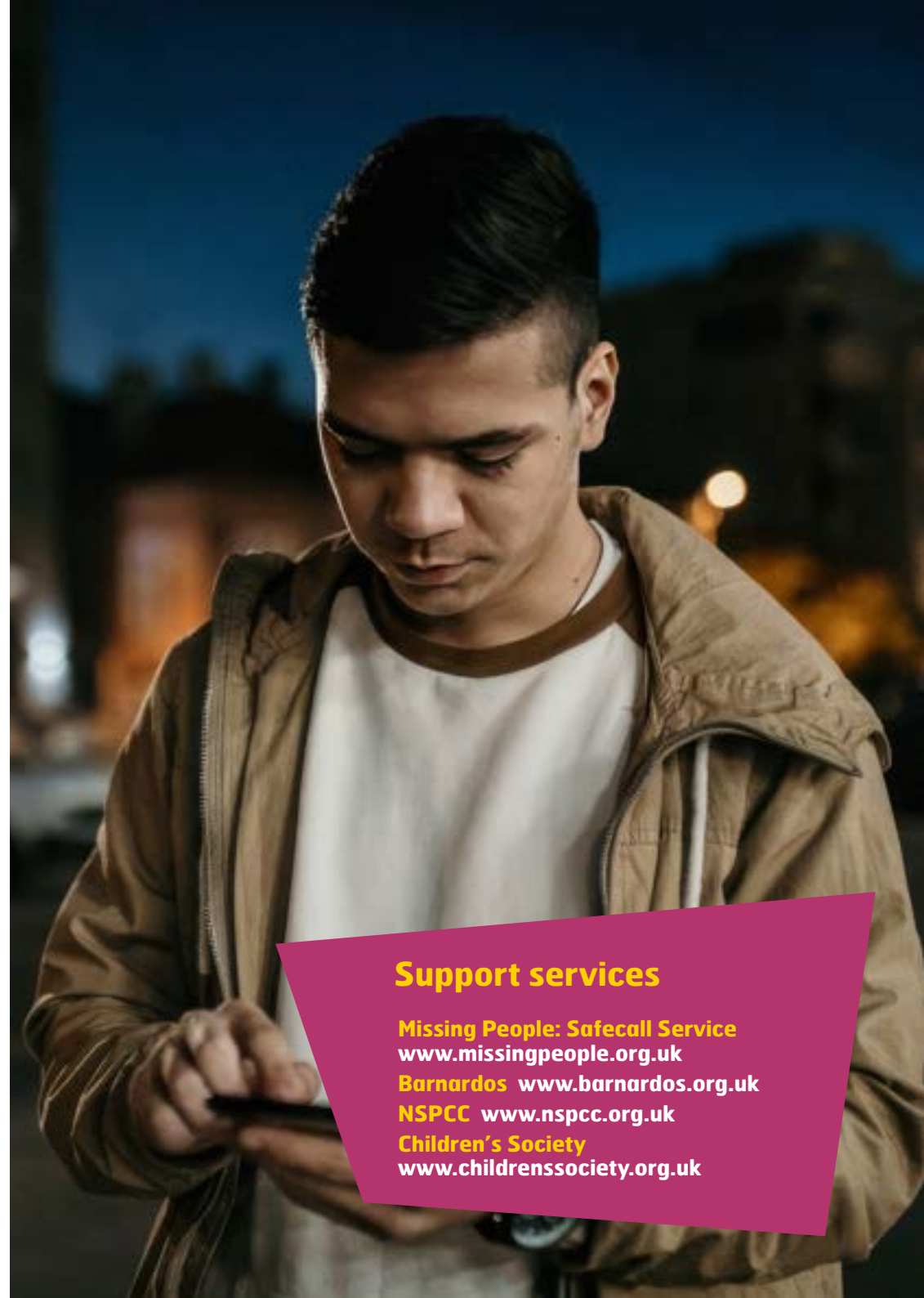
5

Tell young people that our service is there for them.

You can also use the Fearless Playing Cards, which can be downloaded from our website, as a prompt for having conversations with young people around knife crime

www.fearless.org/en/professionals/resources/downloads

We have a team of Fearless Outreach Workers across the country, delivering workshops to young people and professionals. To find out if there is a Fearless Worker in your area, please email **fearless@crimestoppers-uk.org**



Support services

Missing People: Safecall Service
www.missingpeople.org.uk

Barnardos www.barnardos.org.uk

NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk

Children's Society
www.childrenssociety.org.uk



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