



## **Sussex Police local perspective to support the 'County Lines' theatre production**

- Sussex police estimate that they have approximately 65 active county lines. In addition to this there are other local dealers who operate in the area.
- In total Sussex estimates that there are in excess of 350 telephone numbers (known as deal lines) which are used to facilitate the supply of controlled drugs.
- Key Sussex areas for County Lines operations are:
  - Hastings
  - Eastbourne
  - Bognor
  - Brighton
  - Worthing
- Exploitation of vulnerable adults is common feature:
  - Cuckooing – *where drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for drug dealing*
  - Debt bondage – *where deception, threats, or other forms of intimidation are used to force children to work off debts that can never be repaid*
- Exploitation of children is common feature:
  - 17% of lines have trafficked children i.e. out of force
  - 10% of Sussex lines use children in their operations
  - 3% use children for sexual purposes
  - The youngest child the police have identified is only 13 years old.
- Signs of involvement in drug distribution vary significantly from person to person but can include:
  - Social withdrawal or extrovert behaviours
  - An increase in school and home absences
  - New clothing and possessions
  - More than one mobile phone
  - A change in peer groups
  - A sense of being distracted or loss of interest in previous hobbies
  - Poor hygiene
  - Tiredness and lethargy
  - In the worst cases, the carrying of or suggestion of the carrying of weapons

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