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The Pathfinder work will identify emerging good practice which we can all use to better prevent, identify and disrupt County Lines activity.

What is the County Lines Pathfinder?

The Youth Justice Board's Strategic Plan for 2019-2022 sets addressing Serious Youth Violence as one of YJB's priorities, including an aim to see "a reduction in the number of children being exploited through involvement with county lines". Using NCA data on the number of County Lines across England and Wales, the Youth Justice Board provided Pathfinder funding to support Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire to identify and disseminate emerging good practice in preventing, identifying and disrupting County Lines activity.

County Lines is the term used to describe a form of organised crime where criminals from urban areas set up an illegal drug dealing operation in smaller towns. The drugs are often transported across police and local authority boundaries, usually by children or vulnerable people, who are coerced by the gang.

There are two parts to the Pathfinder, which is funded until March 2022:

- 1) Each county council area will focus on a number of themes - sharing, researching, testing and identifying emerging good practice.
- 2) Once identified, these findings will be disseminated widely across England and Wales.

Pathfinder Outcomes

We hope the work of the Pathfinder will contribute to a reduction in serious youth violence and in the number of children being exploited by the County Lines Business Model through:

- 1 Improved awareness of County Lines across a wide professional base
- 2 Improved identification of children & young people involved in, or at risk from, County Lines
- 3 Reduced need for County Lines-related statutory interventions
- 4 Greater range of practice and approaches in place for professionals to utilise
- 5 Improved understanding and collaboration between sectors and agencies
- 6 Increasingly relevant and effective practice informed by the voice of stakeholders
- 7 Increased confidence in tackling County Lines across a wide range of stakeholders
- 8 Improved practice in disrupting County Lines activity

Get Involved!

One of the first Pathfinder tasks is to map County Lines activity and we would like to invite you to contribute to this mapping exercise. We are seeking insight and expertise from across sectors and services to help us fully identify and understand the complexities of County Lines. The aim of these maps is to provide a benchmark against which any change in County Lines activity or operations can be demonstrated and inform future work to support the young people affected.

You can contribute to this mapping by completing a short online survey which will be disseminated soon. We are also seeking a number of partners to participate in a short focus group which would take approximately one hour of your time and involve our evaluation partners, Traverse. It would involve a virtual workshop with other contributors discussing the dynamic nature of County Lines activities. We are planning to hold the virtual workshop in June 2020, with the maps produced in July 2020. Please note, no identifiable information will be used in the final County Lines maps.

Please contact Hattie at Traverse on Hattie.Moyes@Traverse.ltd if you would like to participate in the focus group, or have any questions about this.

Meet the Team

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Please don't hesitate to contact us if you require further information on the Pathfinder Programme.