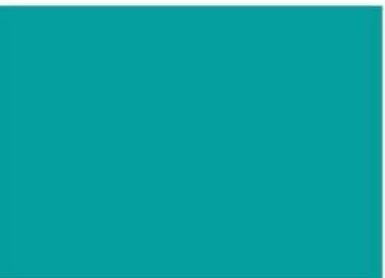
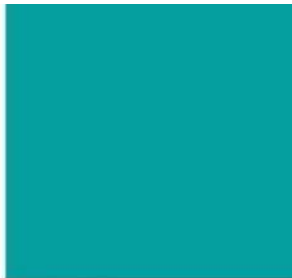




**East Sussex
Safeguarding
Children
Partnership**

County Lines – East Sussex Multi Agency Response

People Scrutiny Committee 24th March



COUNTY LINES

WHAT ARE 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 form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.
- Running a County Line involves establishing a dealing location in a County town, transporting drugs to the location and taking orders by mobile phone.
- The methodology employed for each stage of this operation varies greatly. Some line holders transport the drugs themselves by vehicle, others put runners on a train with the drugs. Likewise, some dealers ‘cuckoo’ addresses, whereas others deal from vehicles.
- To evidence the activities of the entire network, a variety of techniques must be employed and will vary depending on the methodology of the line. This is often a resource intensive process that takes a number of months to complete. Invariably, a large amount of time is spent evidencing the activities and criminality of runners and cuckooed subjects. Cuckooing checks also lead to disruption of the line.
- There is one constant in every County Line, however; the drugs line. The following method is designed to focus on this point of weakness. This method can be employed on any drugs investigation, not just a County Line.
- To record a county line it **MUST** have evidence of using a phone line and show either the movement of drugs, money or people from one area to another *or* the involvement of gangs or criminal networks. It **CAN** also have evidence of exploitation.

WHAT DOES A COUNTY LINE SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT (SPOC) DO IN AN INTELLIGENCE HUB?

- The County Lines SPOC completes scanning of custody reports but generally intelligence is fed in by the community, be that direct or via Crimestoppers, that a phone number and line name is dealing a commodity.
- The SPOC will identify where it's running to and from and who it's in contact with to try and obtain physical evidence of messages being sent from that number advertising drugs for sale. If it's local (in Sussex) Sussex Police would deal with it or if it's travelling out of Sussex then the SPOC will liaise and pass details to Drugs Enforcement Teams in the relevant force area, i.e. The Met, British Transport Police (BTP), Merseyside, etc.
- Once a County Drug Line is identified, a Section 8 Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) warrant can be obtained to recover the handset and arrest the possessor but it is important to demonstrate that it has been in the possession of the defendant for a period of time (ideally including the time that the broadcast messages recovered were sent). Officers have a range of other powers, not just via PACE, that assist in tackling lines. This includes stopping a vehicle / searching a runner during a stop and search (someone who is possibly on foot).
- The ultimate goal is to get the line phone and the SIM card and attribute it to a person (the line holder). Although just one of those items carries weight for a successful prosecution. It matters not how we reach the point where we apprehend the suspect with the line. There are just too many scenarios to show how this is possible.



EVIDENCING THE DRUG LINE



There are a number of features within the call data that can be evidenced to demonstrate the phone is being used for commercial purposes.

The transmission of bulk messages.

Pattern in the transmission e.g. inactivity on phone, messages sent, then busy with calls.

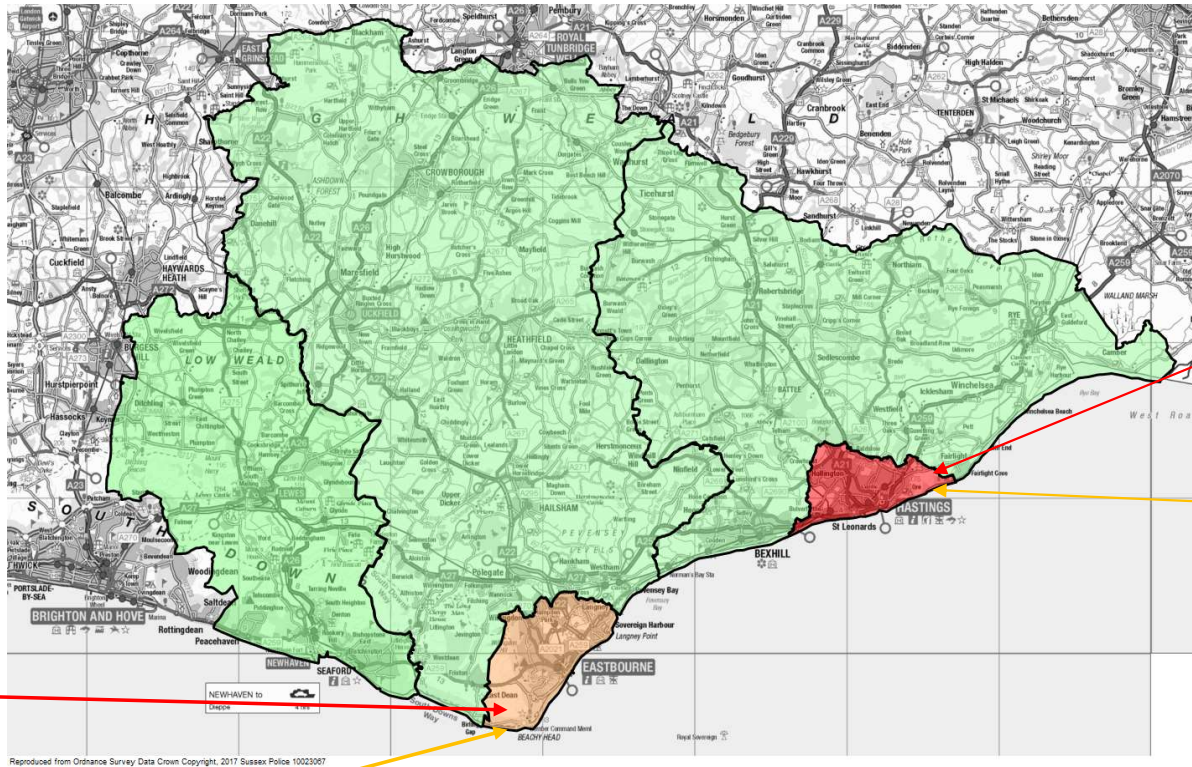
Disproportionate number of sent messages [i.e. not a conversation].

Short average call durations.

This process can be completed using the phone and data, but is much easier with specialist analytical software for handling communications data.

Information and evidence is also found whilst investigating other matters.

CURRENT NUMBER OF COUNTY LINES IN EAST SUSSEX



**ACTIVE LINES IN
HASTINGS (10)**

**EMERGING LINES
IN HASTINGS (2)**

**ACTIVE LINES IN
EASTBOURNE (5)**

**EMERGING LINES IN
EASTBOURNE (1)**

THIS IS EVER-EVOLVING....

NUMBER OF COUNTY LINES DISRUPTIONS (IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS)

Disruptions are recorded on a different system from recorded crime and intelligence. The times relate to the recording/claiming of the disruption and not when each event occurred.

| | October 21 Disruptions | November 21 Disruptions | December 21 Disruptions | January 22 Disruptions | February 22 Disruptions |
|----------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| MINOR | 5 | | | 1 | |
| MODERATE | 2 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| MAJOR | 1 | 1 | | | |

| October 21 Arrests | November 21 Arrests | December 21 Arrests | January 22 Arrests | February 22 Arrests |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 16 | 3 | | 1 | 2 |

| October 21 Weapons Seized | November 21 Weapons Seized | December 21 Weapons Seized | January 22 Weapons Seized | February 22 Weapons Seized |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6 | | | | 2 |

| October 21 Drugs Seized | November 21 Drugs Seized | December 21 Drugs Seized | January 22 Drugs Seized | February 22 Drugs Seized |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| <p>15 wraps of Cocaine.</p> <p>2 x bags of Herbal Cannabis</p> <p>1 x Two black bags containing grey rock powder substance.</p> <p>Several wraps of suspected Crack Cocaine.</p> <p>Wrap of suspected Crack Cocaine - 839g.</p> <p>One wrap of Crack Cocaine – 103g.</p> <p>Block of unknown substance wrapped in cling film – 24.5g.</p> <p>5.1g Crack and 7.35g Heroin.</p> <p>Around 103 wraps of Class A.</p>  | <p>Small wrap of suspected Crack Cocaine.</p> <p>170 Wraps of Class A Cocaine.</p> <p>Herbal cannabis in poly bag.</p> <p>One wrap containing Herbal Cannabis</p> <p>Small wrap of suspected crack cocaine.</p>  |  | <p>30 Wraps of Crack Cocaine.</p> <p>1 Gram of Herbal Cannabis.</p> <p>Clip-seal bag containing Herbal Cannabis.</p>  | <p>Small amount of Herbal Cannabis within clear grip seal bag.</p> <p>8 small grip seal bags containing Herbal Cannabis.</p>  |

Police Operations

- **Operation Wagon** - Police identified a group of young people in Hastings involved in Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) (recovered from London addresses etc) – contextual assessment – resulting in focussed one to one and group work in Hollington.
- **Operation Hyrax** - This is the first Modern Slavery conviction for British Transport Police (BTP) and first time that an individual, under 18 at the time of the offence, has been convicted of a Modern Slavery offence, for County Lines-related modern slavery.
- **Operation Orochi** - At the end of 2019, the Metropolitan Police received funding from the Home Office to tackle County Lines. The Met launched Operation Orochi, which is a dedicated operation to target county lines drug dealers at the source.
- **Operation Centurion** - Centurion is a dedicated central referral team across Surrey Police and Sussex Police, collaborating with the Op Orochi team at the Metropolitan Police to target county lines activity between London and Surrey and Sussex.

Operation Centurion disruptions (since September 2020)

| | <u>East Sussex</u> | <u>West Sussex</u> | <u>Brighton</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| • Lines taken out | 23 | 14 | 15 | 52 |
| • Current live inv. | 10 | 7 | 2 | 19 |
| • Being developed | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 |

Examples of sentences for County Lines-related convictions

- Male (22) operating in Hastings. GUILTY - possession of Class A (crack cocaine) and Class B (cannabis) & possession of knife in public place. Youth Offender Institution (YOI) 21 weeks & 2 weeks concurrent, & imprisonment 6 weeks consecutive with previous conviction.)
- Male (18) operating in Eastbourne. GUILTY - supply of Class A (crack cocaine & heroin). Youth rehab orders, activity requirement, supervision requirement, exclusion requirement not to enter Cambridgeshire, unpaid work requirement.
- Male (21) operating in Hastings. GUILTY - GBH & possession of knife in public place. YOI 6 years + 6 months concurrent.
- Male (43) operating in Eastbourne. GUILTY – Possession With Intent To Supply (PWITS) Class A (cocaine & heroin) & facilitate the acquisition of criminal property. Imprisonment 33 months + 6 months concurrent.)



Safeguarding and Disruption Interface

Safeguarding Children's Partnership – Multi-agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Group

- Sussex Police
- ESCC Children's Services
- Youth Offending Team
- NHS Children's Safeguarding Leads
- Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust
- Schools – Designated Leads
- YMCA

Place based or contextual responses involve district and borough councils, trading standards etc

Child Criminal Exploitation Meeting structure

Multi-agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Hub – screens all safeguarding referrals

MACE Operational – Co
Chaired

Vulnerable Adolescent Risk Panel (VARP) – Co
Chaired

Police Child Exploitation Intel Meeting

Police MACE Escalation –
monthly

Police Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TTCG) – monthly

MACE Strategic – Quarterly
chaired by CS Head of Service and Detective Chief Inspector, Safeguarding Investigations Unit

Managing risk

All cases are subject to a multi agency plan that incorporates safeguarding, risk reduction and disruption measures

Every child has an identified lead professional and a trusted adult

All risk assessed Red cases are discussed at the monthly Police Multi-agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Escalation meeting. They are each allocated to individual Detective Inspectors to own and produce a plan to disrupt

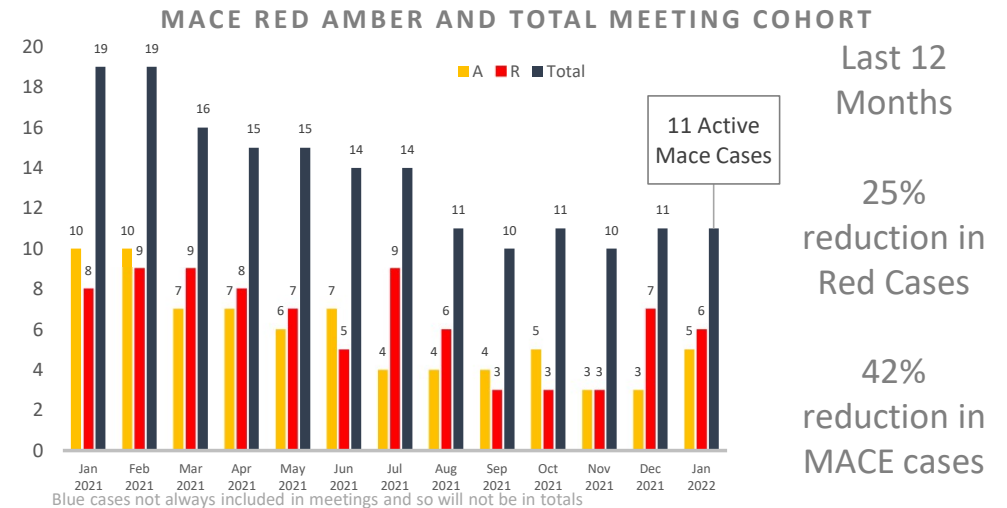
Highest harm / risk subjects are brought to the TTCG for consideration to allocating additional policing resources

All MACE 12 month plus cases are escalated to strategic leads for review

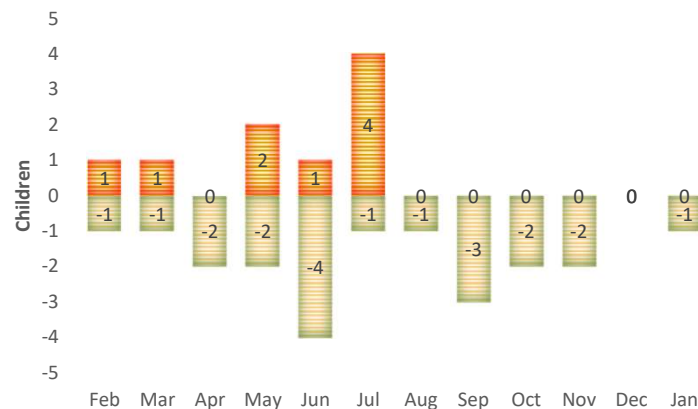
Complex case planning can be convened if cases are high risk and “stuck”

Multi-agency Child Exploitation (MACE) (to end January 2022)

31 children on
MACE
between April
2021 and
January 2022



MONTHLY RAG INCREASE/DECREASE

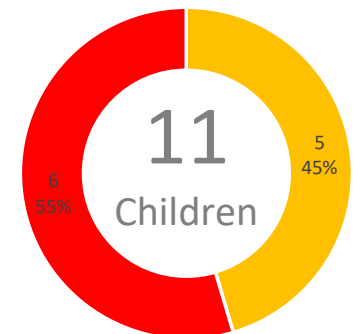


9 Increased
20 Decreased

No children have seen a
RAG rating increase in
the last six months
during which time nine
have decreased.

Number of children each month increasing RAG rating shown in red, decreasing shown in green

Current MACE Children

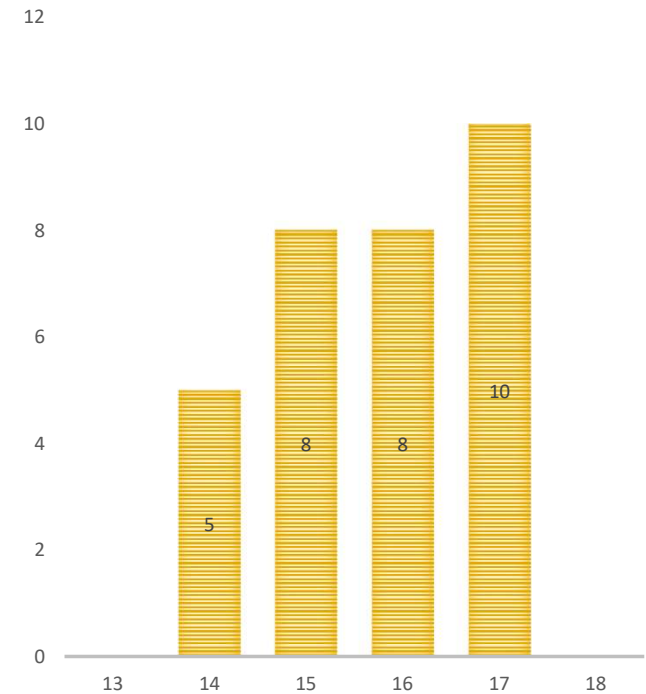


MACE Demographics

- All aged 14 to 17 years in 21/22

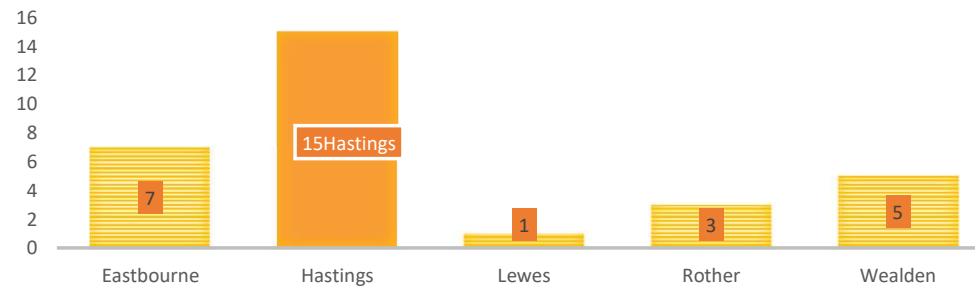
- 15 Female and 16 Males
- Gender variations regarding exploitation profiles

AGE AT MOST RECENT MEETING

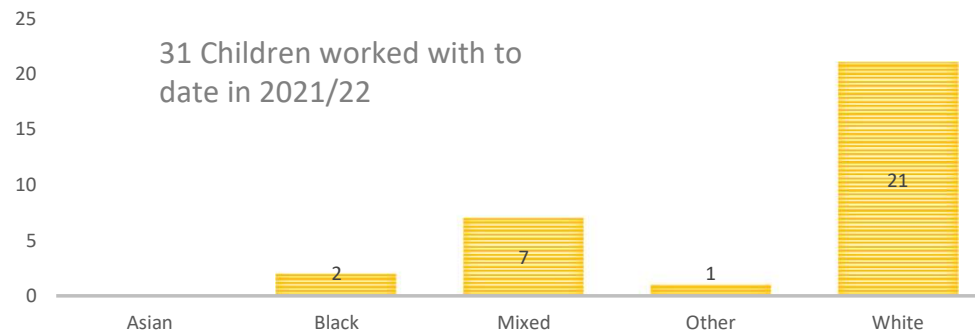


Demographics

RESIDENCY AT LAST MEETING



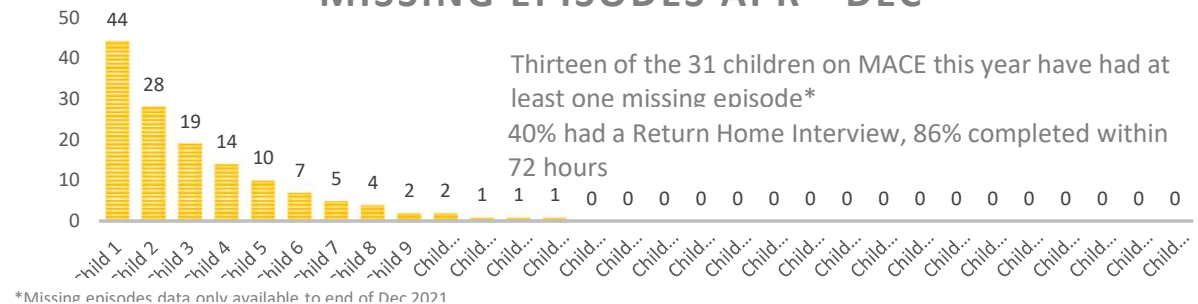
ETHNICITY



Other Profile Factors

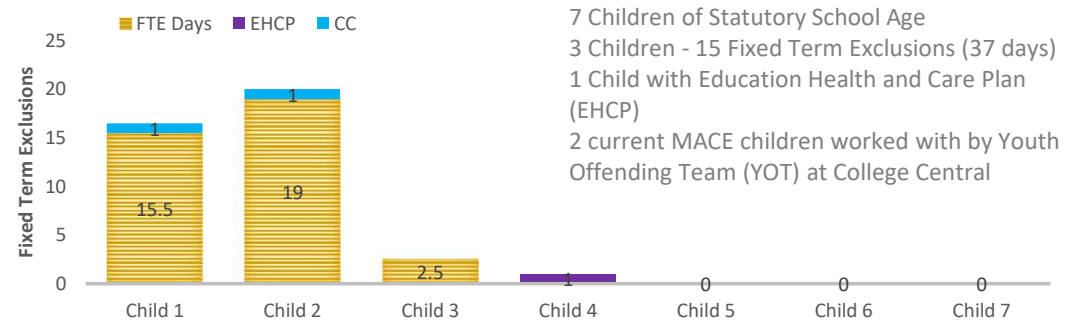
Missing Episodes are frequently reported for this cohort

MISSING EPISODES APR - DEC



Significant school non-attendance

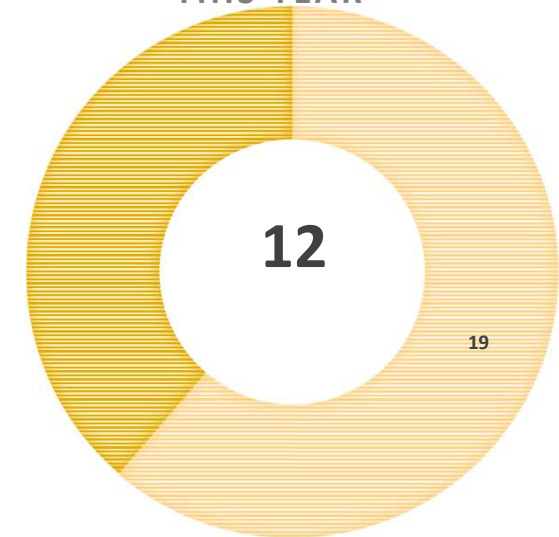
FIXED TERM EXCLUSIONS (DAYS) LAST 12 MONTHS



Disruption

Regarding the 31 children at MACE, 12 disruption measures actioned at the meeting

DISRUPTION ACTIVITY CHILDREN THIS YEAR



■ No Disruption Activity Recorded ■ Disruption Activity

Place based disruption – Hastings, Hailsham and Uckfield

A large orange shape on the left side of the slide, consisting of a rectangle with a quarter-circle cutout on its right side.

Identified areas for improvement

- Too many meetings, some single agency – should there be a multi agency Criminal Exploitation team
- Education
- Positive Youth Activities
- Transitions





Questions?