



SIDMOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM NEWSLETTER

COUNTY LINES

County lines is the name given to drug dealing where organised criminal groups use phone lines to move and supply drugs, usually from cities, into smaller towns and rural areas. A common feature in county lines drug supply is the exploitation of young and vulnerable people. Urban gangs will recruit vulnerable adults and children to act as couriers to move drugs and cash to suburban or rural areas. They will often set up a base in a rural area, taking over the home of a vulnerable person to have as a base to store and deal drugs from. Those exploited by county lines will often be victims of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse.

SIGNS OF CUCKOOING

- An increase in visitors to an address; sometimes at unsociable hours.
- Suspicious or unfamiliar vehicles outside an address.
- Unusual smells coming from a property.
- Increase in noise or anti-social behaviour coming from or near the property.
- Curtains or blinds suddenly remaining closed all the time.
- New faces appearing at the property.
- Residents not being seen or going missing for periods of time.

SIGNS OF COUNTY LINES INVOLVEMENT

- Young people regularly going missing.
- Having money, new clothes, or electronic devices with no explanation to how they got them.
- Getting high numbers of texts or phone calls and being secretive about who they are talking to.
- Disengaging from support services.
- A change in appearance, behaviour, or demeanour.
- Substance misuse and/ or in possession of drug paraphernalia.

WAYS OCG'S USE SOCIAL MEDIA

- Advertising drugs by sharing photos and videos.
- Statuses showing money, new drugs or when the dealer is open for business.
- Dealers sharing 'stories' to followers, using social platforms to expand their network with 'suggested' friends.
- Using hashtags linked to drugs.
- Using emojis as code for drug, violence, and sexual activities, e.g., the snowflake emoji (buying cocaine), 8-ball emoji (for buying an eight of a gram) or the rocket emoji (for purity of drugs).

Early intervention is key to safeguarding young and vulnerable people and in identifying and tackling gang exploitation. The Police work alongside partners to ensure a multi agency approach to effectively safeguard young people and prevent county lines happening in our area.

You can report suspicious activity or concerns to the Police either online or call 101.

If you'd prefer to contact someone anonymously, call Crime Stoppers.

Trading Standards Working in partnership

NO COLD CALLERS

You are requested to leave this property. Failure to do so could be a criminal offence (The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008). Uninvited callers will be reported to the police.



PR1026

ROGUE TRADERS

Trading Standards have warned that Rogue Traders are likely to cash in on last month's storms by targeting people with damaged buildings or fallen trees, offering their services to do work on properties that is not needed.

Rogue traders will knock on the door and state they are carrying out other storm related work in the area and will point out something like a loose tile or damaged fence and then grossly overcharge for the work they undertake. They will come back again and again, taking more money each time and may even charge without completing any work. Victims are often vulnerable, elderly and/ or isolated who know nothing of these scams and are trusting of anyone who is friendly and seems knowledgeable or genuine.

If you experience any suspicious traders who call at your door offering to carry out work, or have been a victim of a doorstep trader, call 101. Contact your local Police team for 'no cold caller' stickers.

UPDATES FROM THE TEAM

Rural East Devon Neighbourhood Team have been increasingly busy over the last month. During a search of an address following the arrest of one individual, a quantity of stolen property was located which was subsequently seized. Some items have been identified as stolen from the East Devon area.

The team have also been targeting vehicle offences, with drivers being reported for offences including no insurance and no MOT. Anti-social behaviour warning letters have also been issued to residents involved in ongoing neighbourhood disputes and others found to be involved in anti-social behaviour. The team continuously work alongside partner agencies to safeguard the vulnerable and resolve ongoing issues within the community.

ONLINE SHOPPING FRAUD: BOGUS E-SCOOTER SALES

In 2021, Action Fraud received over 350 reports about scam websites selling e-scooters. Victims will often buy the e-scooters online, for them to not be delivered. By the time the e-scooter has not arrived, the website it was purchased from has been closed down making it impossible to contact or trace the company. There have also been reports of individual sellers offering e-scooters on online marketplaces or on social media, and once paid for, the e-scooter is once again not delivered, and the account deleted.

If you have visited a website you think is a scam, report it to the National Cyber Security Centre. If you're unsure about the legitimacy of a product listing, arrange to meet the seller in person during the day in a bus, public space.

Whilst e-scooters are legal, private e-scooters cannot be used in public places or on public roads and can only be used on private land with the landowner's permission.

CATALYTIC CONVERTOR THEFT

Nationally, catalytic convertor theft is on the rise. Over the past month in East Devon, there has been an increase in this type of theft from both vehicles on residential and commercial premises. Catalytic convertors contain valuable metals and can be removed from a vehicle in less than a minute.

To keep your catalytic convertors safe, you can ask your car dealer for advice on locks or guards that are approved by the vehicle manufacturer. Alternatively, try to make sure your vehicle is parked in a garage overnight, or if you have a commercial vehicle, park it in a secure compound. If this isn't possible, park in an area that is well lit and overlooked and try to park so the converter can't be easily reached by potential thieves.

You should register your converter and mark it with a forensic marker to make it harder for thieves to dispose of.



Sidmouth Neighbourhood Team



INSPI. 5764 Phil GRAY



PS 5783 Roy HUTTER



PC 6831 Adam SPEERS



PCSO 30664 Phil THOMAS



PCSO 30190 Steve BLANCHFORD-COX

RECORDED CRIME FEBRUARY 2022

SIDMOUTH TOWN & RURAL

Violence with Injury – 4

Violence without Injury – 7

Harassment – 9

Burglary Non- Dwelling – 1

Vehicle Offences – 2

Bicycle Theft – 1

All Other Theft Offences – 3

Criminal Damage – 3

Public Order Offences – 2

Possession of Weapons – 2

Total: 34

[Want to know more about what's happening in your area?](#)

Police.uk is a national website which allows you to view what crimes have been committed in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The website allows you to zoom in on areas and see crimes committed on individual streets, month by month. The website also links to Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Crime Prevention Advice.

Visit:

www.police.uk

CONTACT NUMBERS

Victim Support: 0300 303 0554 (Mon – Fri, 12pm – 6pm)

Out of Hours Victim Support: 08 08 16 89 111

Victim Care Unit: 01392 475900

Samaritans: 116 123

24 Hour Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Out of Hours Noise Complaints EDDC: 01395 516854

Devon Highways: 0345 155 1004

Citizens Advice: 0800 144 8848

 **Non Emergency** - dc.police.uk/contact
If a crime has already happened or to give information about the crime

 **WebChat**
dc.police.uk/webchat

 **Report crime online**
dc.police.uk/reportcrime

 **Email**
101@dc.police.uk

 **101**
Non-emergency

 **999 Emergency** When life is threatened, people are injured, offenders are nearby or immediate action is required