

01 March 2022

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I would like to introduce myself to you as the North Worcestershire Local Policing Commander, responsible for policing across Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove and Redditch.

During the week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022, you will notice that West Mercia Police will be publicizing some of the dangers that young people face from criminal gangs. These gangs will use and criminally exploit young people, taking advantage of them for financial gain in the sale of illegal drugs.

You might have heard of the term 'County Lines', where criminal gangs from our larger cities will use and exploit young people to sell drugs for them in our smaller towns. This is often under the threat of physical or sexual violence. Those young people are being exploited and the Police will always deal with them as victims of crime, offering as much support to them and their families as possible. It can be a very traumatic experience for all those involved, so we need to get the message out that help is always at hand.

A large majority of young people do not get involved in County Lines or have anything to do with illegal drugs. However, sadly, some do. This could be selling drugs such as cannabis, or harder drugs such as heroin. The young person is used and is often forced to sell as a way of paying off debts owed to a gang.

Unfortunately, some young people use drugs such as cannabis on a regular basis. Sadly, other, harder drugs are also being experimented with by a small minority.

All of our schools have very good safeguarding teams. If you have any concerns about your son/ daughter around the use of drugs or have seen behaviour changes that you suspect could be as a result of drug use, please let them know your concerns. They can signpost you to appropriate support. There is also support through your GP surgeries and information regarding drug use can found on websites such as [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Our youth engagement team regularly visit schools and colleges, delivering workshops about County Lines / exploitation, the law around drug possession / supply and the dangers involved. We try and give as much information to young people, so that they can make the right, informed decisions and choices, so as not to become a victim of crime or in rare instances, becoming involved in criminality.

Regards,

Superintendent Mel Paley  
North Worcestershire LPA Commander



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