



RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON TO THE HMICFRS REPORT BOTH SIDES OF THE COIN: THE POLICE AND NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY’S RESPONSE TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN ‘COUNTY LINES’ DRUG OFFENDING

Chief Constable’s comments

Wiltshire police and partner agencies are committed to tackling the problem of County Lines drug offending as highlighted by the HMICFRS report.

Recommendations	Wiltshire response
N/A	<p>In September 2019 we were subject to a visit from the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) which identified that in relation to the County Line problem the force showed a “fully committed dedication to tackling associated criminality”. It recognised that Wiltshire is significantly impacted by County Line criminality, but saw this as a positive reflection of how the force and partners were able to identify the extent of the problem and put measures in place to combat the issue.</p> <p>A number of recommendations were made by the NCLCC which are subject of an improvement plan and being introduced. These include more use of the Modern Slavery Act as outlined in the HMICFRS report and an improved Tasking Process. The latter has been subject of review and is due for implementation in early 2020.</p> <p>The force has seen significant success in its enforcement towards County Lines. In October 2019, a Swindon based initiative - Operation Jetway - resulted in the arrest of 63 people and was hugely successful in dismantling a number of County Line criminal groups. It’s primary focus was the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children who had been exploited by the offenders.</p> <p>We are fully involved in the mapping of County Line offenders as Organised Crime Groups and work with the ROCU during the national intensification weeks. Over the past year our dedicated team which focuses on County Lines and other exploitative drug networks have arrested 131 people.</p>

	<p>This year, Wiltshire Police together with Swindon and Wiltshire Community Safety Partnerships held a practitioner learning conference on Child Exploitation, County Lines and Slavery, attended by 250 people which showcased new Safeguarding practices. In Sept 2019, we worked with partners across Safeguarding, Education and Youth Offending Services to provide input on County Lines, exploitation and weapons to all schools and colleges in Swindon and many in Wiltshire with tailored input for children, teachers and parents. Focused workshops took place with children at increased risk or involved in criminality, complimented by a communications campaign to raise public awareness of these issues.</p>
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Police and Crime Commissioner's comments

County lines is an appalling crime and often involves serious violence. All too often, we are seeing vulnerable people being caught up in this type of crime and the force and my office fully recognise that it is not just about enforcement, but education and protection. This requires a multi-agency response in order to best reach those who really need our help. That is why protecting the most vulnerable people in society is one of my priorities outlined in the Police and Crime Plan 2017-21.

The success of Op Jetway last year was testament to the dedication of our officers and staff in dismantling county lines. These statistics send a clear message to the wider community that we take their concerns seriously. I'd continue to urge members of the public to help us stamp out these gangs by using your eyes and ears and reporting any concerns to 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Cc: Wendy Williams, HMI
Chief Constable Kier Prichard, Wiltshire Constabulary