

A background image showing a person's hand holding a knife, with other people blurred in the background. The image is in grayscale with a dark overlay.

catch  
**22**

# **GANGS AND VIOLENCE REDUCTION SERVICE**

AWARENESS HANDBOOK

[catch-22.org.uk](http://catch-22.org.uk)

# VIOLENCE REDUCTION SERVICE

## SERVICE - WHO WE ARE

Our pilot community gangs programme was set up in 2011 to test an 'end to end' approach to the issues that gangs and gang-related activities generate.

Young people, adults and their families are supported to address areas of identified risk and are encouraged to engage with constructive activities that promote pro-social opportunities and offer real alternatives that lead to positive offence free futures.

### COMMUNITY MODEL

Our community model uses an end-to-end approach working with individuals, families, schools, custodial estates, and communities in a joined-up approach that aims to reduce gang involvement and its effect on local areas. Our work targets and builds on service users' strengths to prevent them from becoming involved in gangs and provides a range of interventions for gang-involved young people to support them to exit. We use a variety of methods to deter young people from engaging in, or continuing negative behaviours associated with gang activity by providing support to maintain or re-enter education, training, or employment, one to one key working and providing pro-social activity intervention.

### CUSTODIAL MODEL

The Catch22 Gangs and Violence Reduction Custodial Service's work within the prison to promote an understanding of community issues and how these issues may impact a custodial setting. We support prison management by reducing the risk posed by gang-involved prisoners, so that violent incidents are prevented. Run by professionals with an extensive knowledge and understanding of gang culture, the services aim to capitalise on the 'teachable moments' prompted by prison sentences to encourage people to leave gang lifestyles behind. Specifically, the services target coping and communication skills, and identifies positive educational and employment opportunities for people to pursue on release.





# WHAT IS A GANG?

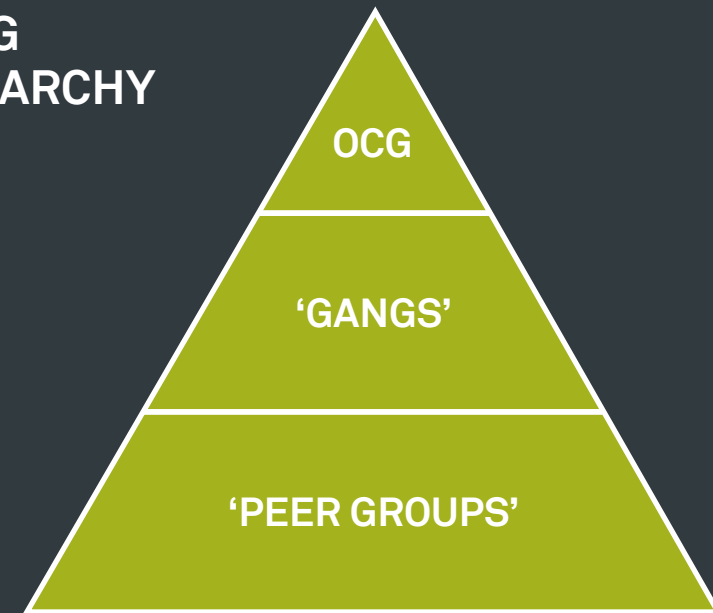
A gang is usually considered to be a group of people who spend time in public places that:

- See themselves (and are seen by others) as a noticeable group, and
- Engage in a range of criminal activity and violence.
- Have some form of identifying structural feature

They may also:

- Identify with or lay a claim over territory, or
- Be in conflict with other, similar gangs

## GANG HIERARCHY



### TOP TIER

The organised crime group (OCG). This is a group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain. The gain is mostly measured in financial terms. Crime is their 'occupation'. The OCG is usually made up of older individuals who organise the importation of and distribution of drugs.

### MIDDLE TIER

The urban street gang (USG). This is usually a relatively durable predominantly street based group of people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.

The USG are aged anywhere from 10-25 and deliver drugs to the wider population.

### LOWER TIER

This is usually peer groups made up of reluctant affiliates or foot soldiers, wannabees and girlfriends who are linked to the USG.

## WHO IS AT RISK OF JOINING GANGS

- Young people with pre-existing behaviour problems.
- Young people who are consistently truant or excluded from school, which leaves them vulnerable to gang recruitment.
- Young people who have, or are currently experiencing stressful or traumatic events also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
  - Young people who have suffered some form of abuse (physical/verbal/sexual, neglect).
  - Young people whose parents misuse substances.
  - Young people who have witnessed or been the victim of domestic violence.
  - Young people who have either one or both absent parents.
  - Young people who's parents suffer with mental illness.
  - Young people who have suffered a bereavement.
  - Young people who have been a victim of persistent bullying.
  - Young people who are from a deprived area or household.
  - Young people who's have family members or friends who are in a gang.

## SIGNS OF GANG INVOLVEMENT

- Having money which cannot be accounted for
- Returning home with new possessions
- Losing possessions
- Multiple phones
- Weapons
- Disengagement from learning
- Violent incidents with other pupils in school
- Truancing from lessons
- Exclusion/refusal to attend school altogether
- Change in language; clothing; gang signs
- Substance misuse
- Not returning home until late at night
- Missing episodes
- Being the victim or perpetrator of violent/property/drug crimes
- Change of friendship group
- Withdrawal from family life
- Sexual maturity
- Having and using 'street names'

## WHY DO PEOPLE JOIN GANGS?

- Desire to belong
- Power
- Peer Pressure
- Sex
- Financial gain
- Identity
- Protection
- Substance Misuse
- Family connections to gangs
- Companionship
- Exploitation
- Vulnerabilities
- Status
- Fear

# THE GROOMING LINE



## TARGETING STAGE

Groomer/gang builds a friendship with the young person. Making them feel like a valued member of the group. Often gifts them with money, alcohol, drugs, lifts to places etc.



## EXPERIENCE STAGE

They then give responsibility to the young person. I.e. – Holding a package overnight – in return they received £50. This makes them feel like the group trust them. The young person may feel in debt to the group gang “for everything they’ve done for them”.



## HOOKED STAGE

The group may then begin to ask the young person to carry out serious crimes, if the young person refuses, the group will then threaten the young person, friends or family.



## TRAPPED STAGE

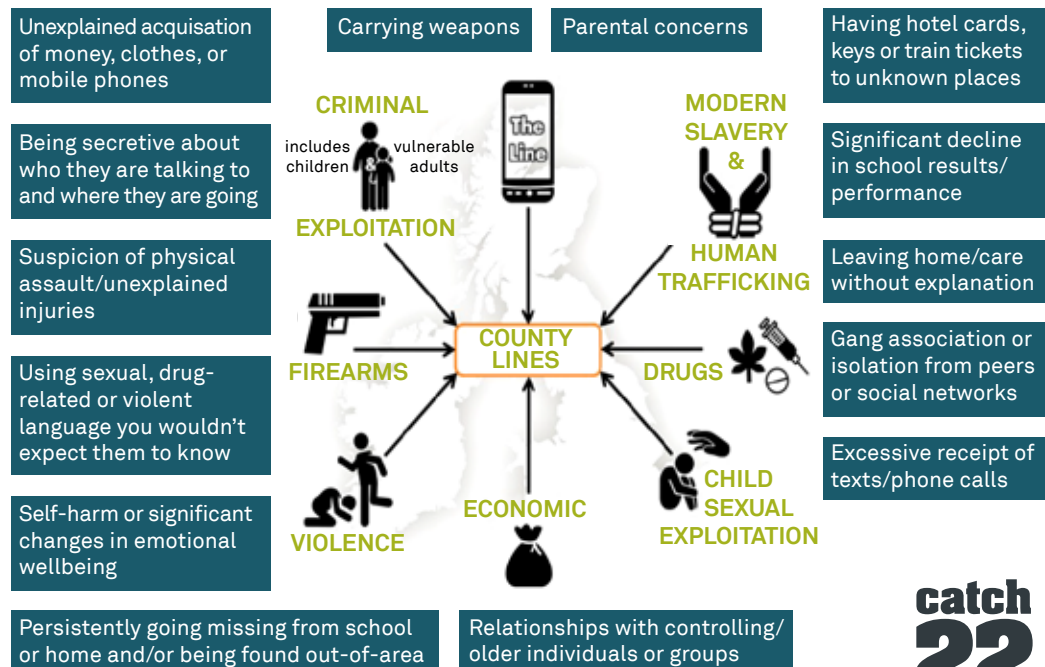
At this stage the young person is entrenched in the criminal group. At this point leaving the gang feels impossible and could result in risk of harm or death.

# COUNTY LINES

County Lines (aka OT / Going County / Opening shop / Trapping) is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by drug dealers or gangs.

The ‘County Line’ is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend.

## KNOW THE SIGNS OF COUNTY LINES AND CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE)

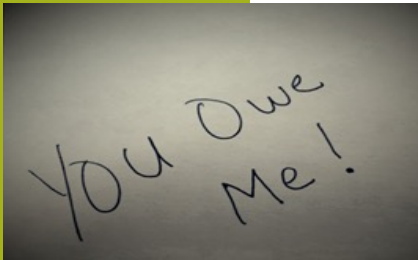


## CUCKOOING, DEBT BONDAGE AND TRAP HOUSES

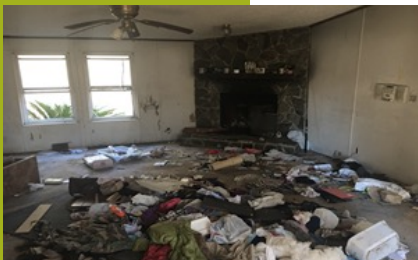


Cuckooing is targeting vulnerable adults to exploit their place of residence for the storing and selling of drugs or accommodating gang members.

Vulnerable adults may be groomed or coerced through debt bondage when their place of residence is cuckooed.



Debt bondage is a form of control whereby victims are forced to do things in lieu of goods or services. Street gangs will often use debt bondage to coerce reluctant affiliates into illegal activities like transporting and storing drugs and weapons or providing accommodation for gang members or clients.



A Trap house is a place where a illegal drugs are sold from. Inside there will usually be things like; Drugs/Weighing scales/Packaging, High Drug addicts, Dealers,, Empty food packages, Rubbish, Cash, Used Needles, Rats/Mice/ Cockroaches, Dirty/Ripped Mattresses on floor, Bad Smells, Used condoms, Weapons = Knives & Firearms and Blood and excrement.





## ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIETY

- Connectivity – people from anywhere can connect with anyone, regardless of location or religion
- Education – it is easy to educate from others who are experts and professionals
- Information & updates – the main advantage is that you update yourself from the latest happenings around the world
- Awareness – social media will also create awareness and innovate the way people live
- Improves government & agencies fight crime – to spy and catch criminals to fight crime



## DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIETY

- Cheating & relationship issues
- Health issues
- Social media causes death
- Cyberbullying
- Hacking
- Addiction
- Fraud & Scams
- Glamorises gangs, drugs & alcohol
- Anonymity—increased risk of catfishing, grooming and gang recruitment
- Security issues

## AGE RESTRICTIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?

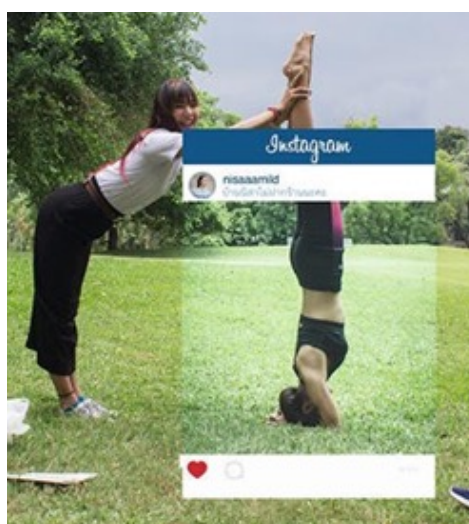
Age Restriction	Platforms
Under 13	Roblox, PopJam, FaceTime
13+	Twitter, Facebook and Messenger, Viber, WeChat, Monkey, Yubo, Dubsplash, Instagram, TikTok, Skype, Google Hangouts, Reddit, Snapchat, Pinterest
16+	WhatsApp, Telegram Messenger, Tumblr
17+	Line, Sarahah, Tellonym
18+ or 13 with parent's permission	YouTube, WeChat, Kik, Flickr, Play Store, Spotify (12 with parental permission)

Due to the vast development of different social media platforms and the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions forcing people to find new ways to communicate remotely, CCE and County lines has moved online. People are not being seen out on the streets as regularly and the distribution and sale of drugs has changed by using social media sites (Instagram, snapchat etc). Young people are more at risk of grooming, gang affiliation and county lines now more than ever.



# PERCEPTION VS REALITY

The images and depictions of the things you see online aren't always the true reality. Social media platforms and posts do not tell the whole story!



“Over the course of a week there were a number of different stabbings and shots fired as a result of a couple of videos they put up against each other; as one video goes up and then a response video and so forth, it just raises the tension and makes things happen probably a lot quicker...”

Drill music is a style of hip hop music that originated in the southside of Chicago but it is now a globalised music genre and shares links between gangs and social media.

Drill broke out in mid 2012 with the success of rappers like Lil Durk, Fredo Santana and Lil Reese.

Drill rap, which is a more contemporary facet of hip hop which has an explicit nature of content/imagery i.e. Young men holding weaponry, live drive by shootings and discussions of violence – usually a member of a gang.

Over the past few years Drill music has developed a bad reputation with videos being banned and rappers jailed following a rise in youth crime since its popularity.



# KNIFE CRIME

## KNIFE CRIME BREAKDOWN

**10 percent decrease in knife crime** in England and Wales on the previous 12 months to September 2021. Knife crime has now fallen for 6 quarters in a row.

**46239 Police-recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument** in the 12 months to September 2021.

**29 percent increase in knife crime** in England and Wales compared to March 2011.

**221 Police-recorded murders involving a knife or sharp instrument** in England and Wales in the 12 months to March 2021.

**27 teenagers were murdered with a knife or sharp object** in 2021 in London.

**Source:** Office of National Statistics Homicide Index recorded for the Home Office.

**44450 offences recorded** in England in the 12 months to September '21.

**10506 offences recorded** in London. This is a 16% drop compared to last year and knife crime offences are now at their lowest level for a decade in the capital. However, London still has the highest volume of knife crime in the country.

**6299 offences recorded** in the Northwest of England. Knife crime has increased by two thirds (66%) in this region in the last decade.

**3,600 knife crime cases** resulted in cautions or convictions between July 2010 and June 2021 in the West Midlands.

**Source:** Office of National Statistics.

## DID YOU KNOW!

- It is illegal to carry a knife of offensive weapon in a public place without a reasonable excuse if the blade is over 3 inches. Reasonable excuses include, those who need them for work such as fisherman, carpet fitters, tradesmen etc. However, this only applies when they are at work.
- Any size blade is illegal if it is intended for use as a weapon.
- Carrying a weapon can hold up to a 5 year prison sentence ,whether you have used it or not!
- As of July 2021 it is now an offence to keep items such as knuckledusters, flick knives, throwing stars, zombie knives, telescopic truncheons and push daggers in your home.
- There is no 'safe place' to stab someone. You can bleed out from being stabbed in any body part.
- Police hold the right to stop and search anyone they think may be carrying a weapon.
- Buying a knife if you are under the age of 18 illegal and is classed as an offence.
- By carrying a knife you are far more likely to get stabbed yourself, possibly with your own knife used against you. Situations involving weapons can quickly get out of control.
- Knives are the most common weapons used in the killing of young people.
- ONE stabbing costs £300,000, this includes ambulance, police investigation, hospital staff, hospital recourses etc.

## ILLEGAL KNIVES FOUND ON THE STREETS



RAMBO KNIFE



BUTCHER KNIFE



MACHETE



PUSH DAGGER



ZOMBIE KNIFE

## REASONS KNIFE CRIME IS ON THE RISE

1. Toxic environments for children, created by austerity
2. Children and young people are afraid of becoming victims
3. Children and young people don't trust the authorities to protect them
4. Gangs
5. Social Media influence
6. Public funding cuts – This leads to youth clubs being shut down and young people finding other ways to occupy themselves or becoming an easy target for grooming.

## REASONS PEOPLE MAY CARRY A KNIFE

- Fear
- Safety/Self defense
- Reputation
- To fit in
- To cause harm
- They do not believe the authority can keep them safe



To find out more information regarding our Gangs and Violence Reduction services and where we are currently offering our services please follow the link below:

[www.catch-22.org.uk/offers/gangs/](http://www.catch-22.org.uk/offers/gangs/)



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