



RESCUE AND RESPONSE COUNTY LINES PROJECT:
SUPPORTING YOUNG LONDONERS AFFECTED
BY COUNTY LINES EXPLOITATION

YEAR 4
STRATEGIC
ASSESSMENT
2022



FOREWORD

London children and young people are still being harmed and exploited – which we all know is a totally unacceptable situation. The development, design and delivery of Rescue and Response in 2018 was the collaboration of a unique group of individuals, organisations, leadership and above all the relentless commitment to stop and prevent harm through exploitation on County Lines.

Rescue and Response has grown from strength to strength in these 4 years; demonstrating through every day practice that building relationships, working with children and young people, taking the time to listen, hear and support does make a difference – a difference about the options each young person has and a supportive safety net to help them along those paths. This programme has shown with exceptional data (which this strategic needs assessment is the 4th edition of London County Lines), understanding the evidence of what works and putting this into practice does lead to positive outcomes.

Year 4 of project delivery resulted in 92% positive outcomes and 90% of engaged children and young people reducing or completing ceasing their County Lines involvement. The programme model is clear: a child-centred response from all, a case management intervention that navigates systems, which still today are complex, a learning environment which is wide-reaching to support all of those working with children

to ensure awareness, responsiveness and consistency. Above all, a model that connects, delivers, does not give up, shares and learns.

This strategic needs assessment indicates that London is experiencing fewer children involved in or coming to notice for County Lines, which could be as a result of the step change in organisations taking a preventative, diversionary and early help approach. Despite this, we are seeing children with greater levels of complexity than ever; increased risks and safeguarding concerns.

In response to this emerging concern and the interconnected issues, Rescue and Response have introduced new specialist roles, which include an Emotional Wellbeing Advocate and two new Partnership Coordinator roles to focus on education and vulnerability in the young adult cohort (18-25).

The London Strategic Board continues to provide systems leadership, thinking and grip to ensure all aspects of preventing harm and exploitation from County Lines is connected and prioritised, playing a collective and collaborative role to improving the system and improving outcomes for children and young people.

The success of the programme has led to an extension of funding from MOPAC until March 2024, which is very welcomed. Continuing to support vulnerable

children harmed and exploited by County Lines is and will be a priority across London; Rescue and Response is a key and critical part of the overall response to preventing and reducing harm and violence in the capital. Every child deserves a childhood free from harm and exploitation and I am proud of the work of everyone involved in Rescue and Response. Thank you.

Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney

Chair of Rescue and Response Strategic Board

COUNTY LINES DEFINITION

National Police Chiefs Council (2018 Home Office Serious Crime Strategy)

County Line 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.

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DATA SOURCES

- Data extracted from the Rescue and Response (R&R) referral Platform EC Connect
- Data extracted from the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) County Lines Database (CLICM – County Lines Intelligence Collection Matrix)
- Data extracted from the Rescue and Response (R&R) case management platform ECINS
- Data extracted from the Rescue and Response (R&R) output tracker
- Research carried out on MPS intelligence systems

DATE PARAMETERS

For any Year 4 analysis (i.e. 2021/2022):
01/04/2021 – 31/03/2022

For project length Year 1-4 (i.e. 2018-2022):
01/09/2018-31/03/2022

PROTECTIVE MARKING

OFFICIAL

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DATE CREATED

December 2022

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INTRODUCTION

Rescue and Response is a pan-London County Lines support service for vulnerable CYP (Children and Young People) up to the age of 25 who are caught up in County Lines drug distribution networks and subject to criminal exploitation. The project was launched in 2018 by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and is the first County Lines support service to operate at scale, across the whole of London.

Rescue & Response is delivered through a third-sector consortium of St Giles Trust, Safer London and Abianda. They provide a credible case-working service that can engage with CYP at the time of need, including immediate safety planning for the CYP and their family or network. St Giles Trust, Safer London and Abianda have combined their expertise in working with high-risk vulnerable CYP, deploying their complimentary and unique models of practice to increase the likelihood of engagement and positive outcomes. This will often include the provision of caseworkers who have lived experience of relatable situations, which can help to demonstrate authenticity and contribute towards building a strong rapport.

An out-of-hours callout 'Rescue' service allows for an immediate response from St Giles Trust caseworkers when a CYP is picked up in the counties and suspected of County Lines involvement. We utilise these 'teachable moments' to effectively engage with CYP and gain their trust to then deliver ongoing support. 'Rescues' will usually take place once a CYP has come into contact with authorities and is in a safe place, such as a police station custody suite.

This year we have introduced an Emotional Wellbeing Advocate role embedded within Safer London, which is in response to the detrimental impact of the pandemic on CYP's mental health and wellbeing. The role is designed to deliver both direct support to CYP with additional mental health needs and support to colleagues across the R&R partnership through case consultations and drop-in surgeries.

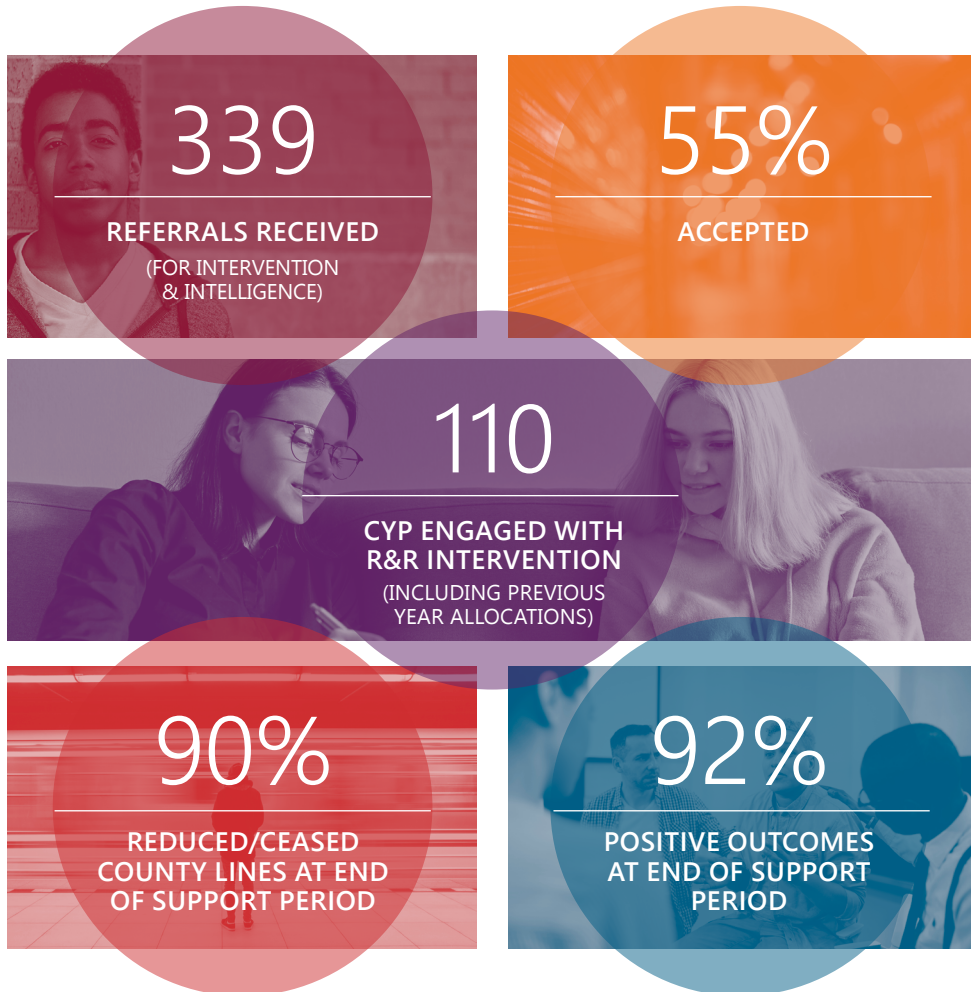
Through our partnership with Abianda we provide gender specific interventions for County Lines affected females, which are rooted in evidence based practice, addressing the barriers that young women and girls typically face in accessing services. This includes a Senior Gender Consultant role, who provides bespoke training packages focused on the needs of young women and girls and case consultations for professionals, helping them to make informed decisions at referral stage and then support the CYP to transition beyond our service.

Our dedicated core Brent team acts as a front door for the R&R service and consists of both Partnership Coordinators and Analyst teams. Our Partnership Coordinators provide the coordination and response to all referrals into the project, ensuring wrap around services are deployed. Partnership Coordinators will work closely with the professional network around each CYP referred into the project, ensuring that our service meets their needs and also advocating for the CYP to receive effective contextual safeguarding.

This year two new Partnership Coordinator roles have been introduced to the team, specialising in the areas of Education and identifying vulnerability in young adults (18-25). The Analyst team work closely with the Metropolitan Police Service intelligence command, National County Lines Coordination Centre and Op Orochi. The information gained from the project is fed in to create the yearly Strategic Assessment, which outlines the extent and scale of the issue affecting London and the surrounding counties.

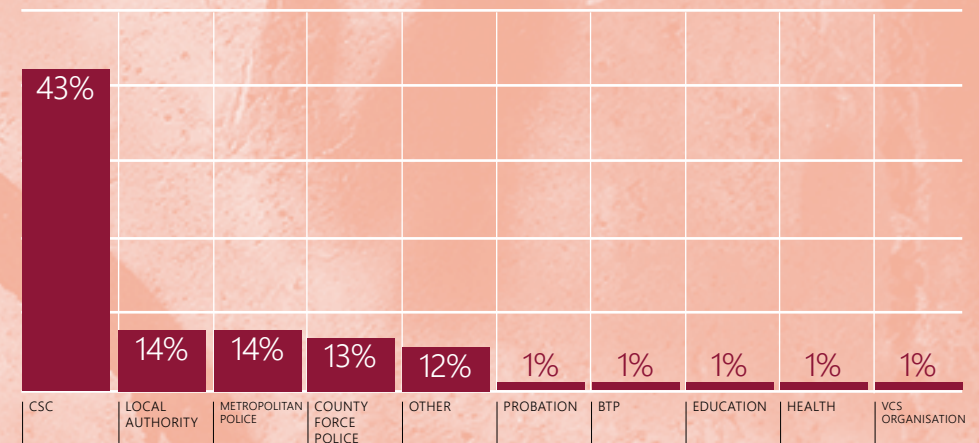
RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT: YEAR 4 IN FOCUS 2021/22

OVERVIEW



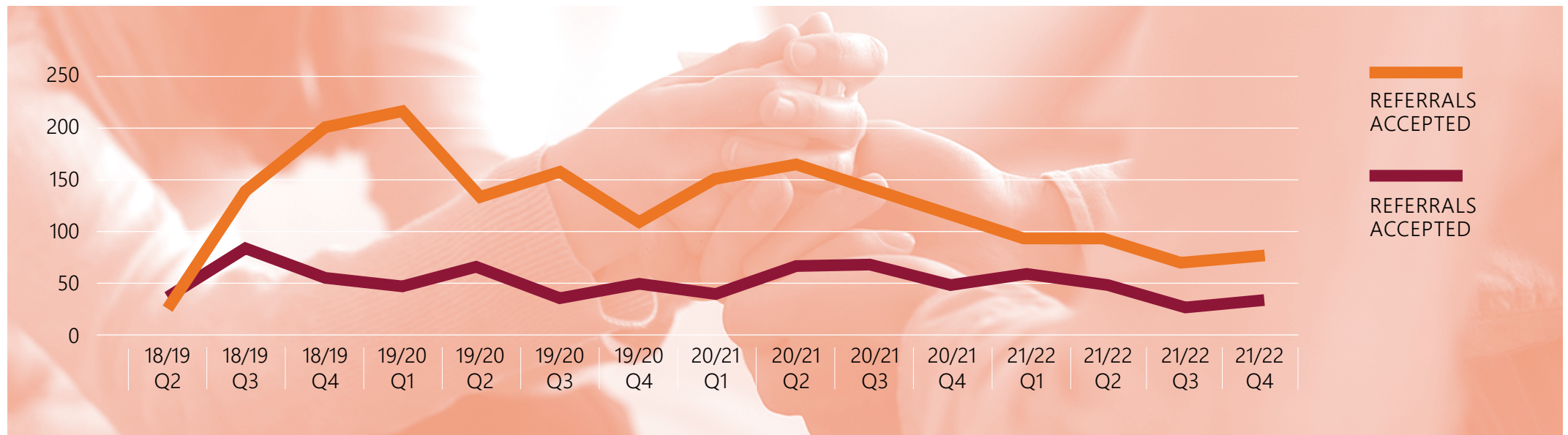
REFERRING AGENCIES IN YEAR 4

- Children’s Social Care (CSC) remained the top referring agency, accounting for 43% of Year 4 referrals, followed by Local Authority and MPS, both with 14%.
- Increase in referrals from MPS from 9% to 14% this reporting year. This follows enhanced efforts to develop working relationships between R&R and the County Lines specialist teams such as Operation Orochi and the National County Lines Coordination Centre.



RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT REFERRALS

REFERRALS ACCEPTED FOR INTERVENTION



- Long term analysis shows that there has been a decline in referrals in 2021/22 compared to previous years, whereas the number of accepted referrals has remained broadly consistent. There was a 43% reduction in referrals from 2020/21 to 2021/22, from 598 to 339.
- The primary inference regarding the decline in referrals is that there was a reduction in overall individuals involved in County Lines. This is corroborated by the reduced number of individuals identified through the MPS CLICM (County Lines Intelligence Collection Matrix) in 2021/22, which documents all known individuals from London linked to County Lines

(See page 9). This number dropped by 27% in 2021/22 compared with 2020/21, from 1,784 to 1,301.

- This suggestion is also supported by CLICM data showing a 16% reduction in unique County Lines 'deal lines' originating from London, from 1056 in 2020/21 to 885 in 2021/22.
- In 2021/22 Rescue and Response experienced the highest proportion of accepted referrals that the project has seen to date at 55% (185). This was a 14% increase from previous year 2020/21.

- We no longer have an allocation waiting list and service providers can be assigned more quickly, therefore reducing risk to the CYP.
- Last year, 80% of the referrals received were for intervention (20% for intelligence), whereas this year the proportion has increased to 86%.

STRATEGIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY FINDINGS

OVERALL REDUCTION IN R&R REFERRALS AND CLICM INDIVIDUALS

- In 2021/22 R&R experienced a significant reduction (43%) in overall referrals into the project compared with 2020/21. The NCLCC data also shows a significant reduction (27%) in the overall number of London individuals linked to County Lines activity during the same period, as well as a reduction in the number of unique County Lines 'deal lines' (16%).
- This data indicates that we are experiencing fewer people from London who are involved in or coming to notice for County Lines, which could be as a result of the continued efforts by statutory services and third sector organisations to tackle County Lines through preventative, diversionary and enforcement activities.
- Despite R&R experiencing a reduction in referrals in 2021/22, the project accepted similar amounts of referrals to previous years, which led to our highest acceptance rates of the project to date at 55%. This means that referrals received are increasingly meeting the project eligibility criteria and resulting in CYP receiving support sooner, also avoiding CYP being put on a waiting list as experienced in the early years of project delivery.

INCREASED COMPLEXITY IN CASES

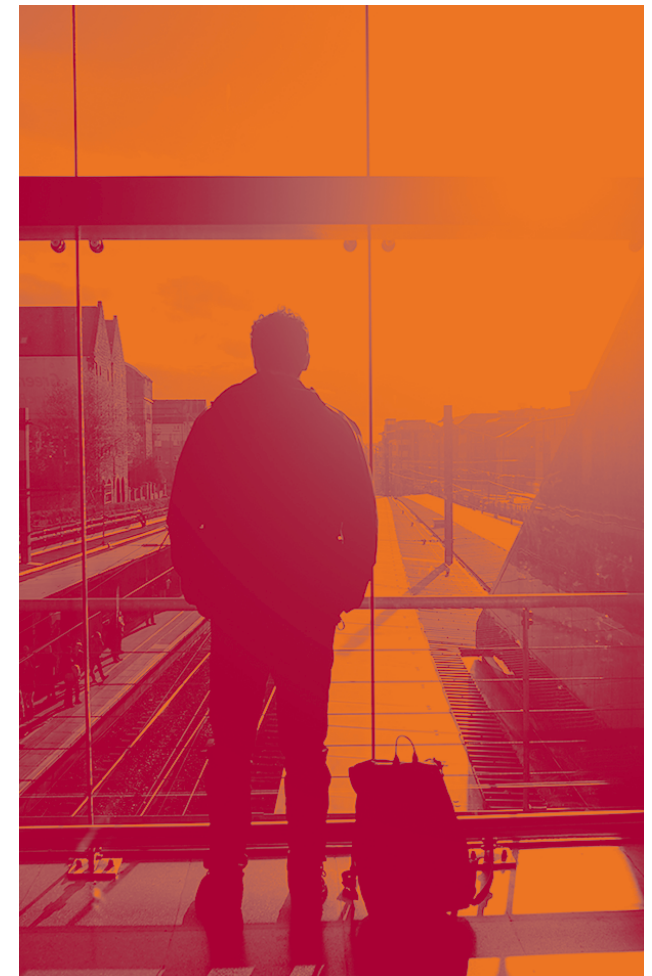
- R&R providers have consistently reported experiencing an increased complexity in cases allocated to them, resulting in greater risk attached to the casework and an intensified

level of safeguarding required.

- St Giles Trust have engaged with CYP who have been associated with more serious levels of violent crime, up to and including murder offences.
- Abianda have experienced increasing complexity linked with CSE, which has included OCG's (Organised Crime Groups) operating across London boroughs and into the counties, resulting in the need for a more complicated multi-agency safeguarding response.
- Safer London have reported working with CYP who present with additional mental health support needs as a result of the pandemic, which can often manifest into a lack of motivation to engage with the service, presenting an additional challenge to caseworkers.

RESILIENCE OF COUNTY LINES MODEL

- The County Lines methodology continues to show resilience against enforcement activities from authorities and preventative partnership work, with CYP still repeatedly reporting experiences of criminal exploitation that are consistent with previously well-known models.
- Data captured on the demographics of our referral cohort shows that the majority of CYP referred to R&R are 15-17 year old Black males. These demographics have shown very little fluctuation in 4 years of monitoring, although in 2021/22 there was an increase in the proportion of female referrals from 15% to 19%.
- In 2021/22 the top 10 county areas linked to London County Lines individuals remained the same as the previous year, further supporting the finding that patterns of behaviour remain consistent.



STRATEGIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

MONITOR THE IMPACT OF NEW SPECIALIST SUPPORT ROLES

- In response to the reported increase in complexity intertwined in County Lines exploitation cases, R&R have introduced three new specialist roles to help meet the needs of the CYP we support. These include an Emotional Wellbeing Advocate and two new Partnership Coordinator roles to focus on education and vulnerability in the young adult cohort (18-25).

FAMILY SUPPORT WORK

- R&R is currently well resourced with regards to the ability of our staffing capacity to meet the needs of incoming referrals, but an area of work that has been identified as needing additional support is the work with families. This need has been felt across the R&R partnership and additional resource for family support work would contribute to a more sustainable prevention model.

RESCUE SERVICE

- The St Giles Trust Rescue service continue to build relationships with county police forces nationally and as far afield as Scotland, often working together with county forces to 'meet halfway' to make a rescue logistically feasible. Collaboration with the Home Office funded Rescue service in the West Midlands and Merseyside areas has also proven to be an effective solution to safely returning a CYP home

to London. However, comparing the CLICM county force data with the Rescue data shows that the Rescue service is potentially being under-used in some county force areas.

- The R&R Rescue team will carry out a 'Rescue Roadshow', using our data picture to target county force areas where engagement levels could be increased, visiting custody suites in person and delivering awareness sessions to police officers and staff.

COUNTY LINES AS PART OF A WIDER RESPONSE TO CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

- Many of the CYP R&R work with have experiences of various harm types, including Gangs, sexual exploitation and Serious Youth Violence. The project has consistently received referrals from frontline professionals for CYP who present safeguarding concerns regarding criminal exploitation that does not yet involve County Lines, such as CSE, more localised drugs supply or knife crime. Often these referrals do not meet eligibility criteria and R&R would look to signpost externally. This approach leads to the operation of a mostly reactive service, working with those already demonstrating a link to, or risk of, County Lines exploitation.
- A joined-up Rescue & Response service dealing with wider criminal exploitation of CYP more broadly would provide clearer referral pathways for frontline professionals and help prevent any CYP slipping through the net and not

receiving the comprehensive safeguarding response that they need. This approach would help deliver a service that is both reactive and proactive at an early-intervention level, without the need for prescriptive eligibility criteria that often unnecessarily requires CYP to be 'put in a box' or labelled to access a service, when their experience is likely to span a multitude of harm types.



RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT: CONTEXTUAL INSIGHT WITH CYP AT THE END OF THEIR SUPPORT PERIOD (2021/22)

In the reporting year 2021/22, R&R revised our outcomes reporting framework for children and young people, concentrating on the following areas;

- 1 Engagement
- 2 Contextual information during engagement and
- 3 Outcomes at case closure.

This 'contextual insight' is information that is contextually relevant to County Lines, which is provided by the lead caseworkers and highlights the key information gathered from the reporting framework.

30 CASES

REACHING THE END
OF THE CYP'S SUPPORT
PERIOD IN 2021/22

5 of the 30
were associated
with a gang

Only 3 of the
CYP were known
to have become
involved in
County Lines
through social
media

Often it is difficult
to determine how
grooming takes place
and only a small
percentage would
disclose this.

27
MALE

3
FEMALE

5 of the 30
had confirmed
to have suffered
debt bondage

Debt bondage is
difficult to quantify as
many individuals may not
want to admit to having a
debt or in some cases they
may not even know if they
have incurred a debt.

Ethnicity
of 30 cases:

Black: 13
White: 6
Mixed: 4
Asian: 2
Other: 5

Most prominent
learning difficulty
or health condition
(diagnosed or
suspected) –
Autistic: 6

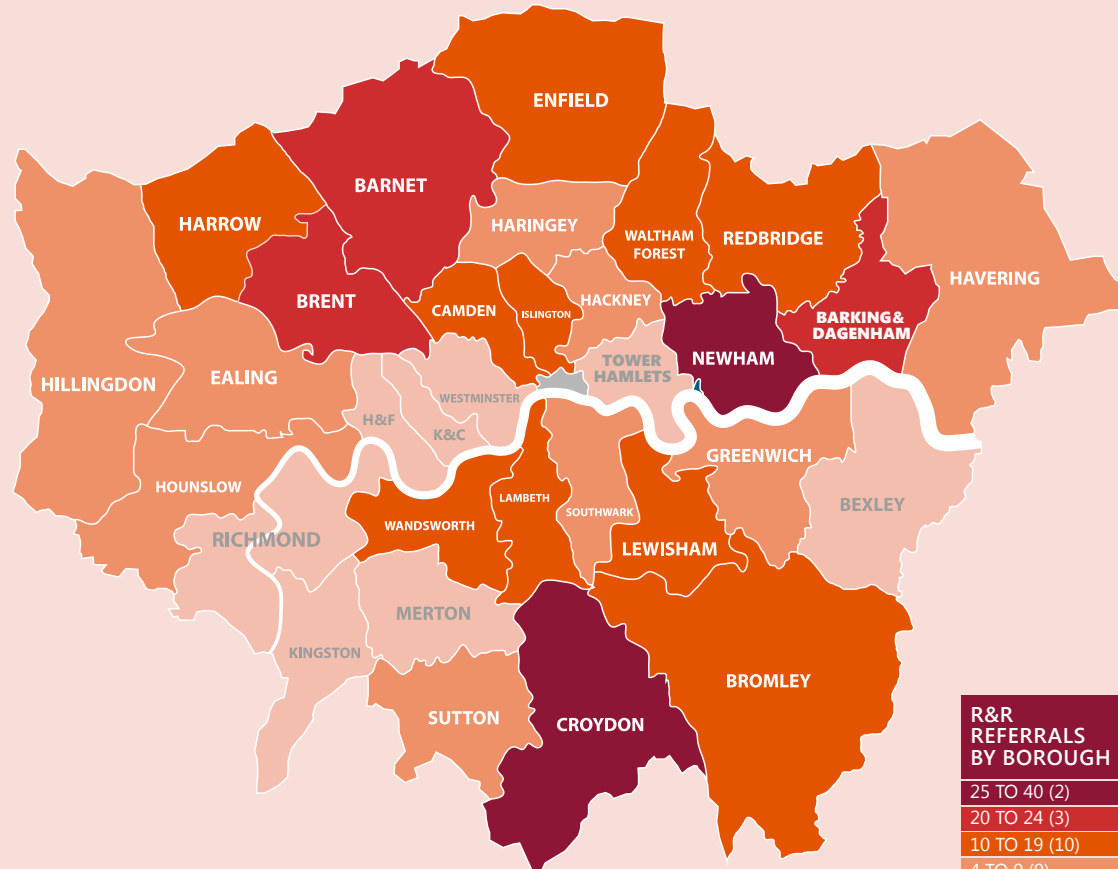
6 of the 30 cases had
suspected or diagnosed
Autism, which may
suggest that CYP that
have learning difficulties
are more vulnerable to
coercion by exploiters.

LONDON MAP SHOWING ALL REFERRALS INTO R&R BY BOROUGH

2021/22

During year 4, a total of **339 referrals** were received by the Rescue and Response Project between April 2021 to March 2022. This is a **43% reduction** when compared to the same period last year (598).

These are represented below according to the borough that held statutory responsibility for them at the time of referral, and comparisons to the year 3 reporting are shown within the borough table.



BOROUGH	NUMBER OF REFERRALS	
	20/21	21/22
CROYDON	39	40
NEWHAM	48	25
BARKING & DAGENHAM	29	21
BARNET	24	21
BRENT	35	20
LEWISHAM	15	17
ENFIELD	23	16
LAMBETH	42	15
BROMLEY	19	13
HARROW	26	13
REDBRIDGE	15	12
CAMDEN	4	11
WANDSWORTH	15	11
ISLINGTON	14	10
WALTHAM FOREST	17	10
GREENWICH	13	9
HAVERING	23	8
HOUNSLOW	9	8
SOUTHWARK	24	7
SUTTON	6	7
EALING	30	6
HARINGEY	27	6
HILLINGDON	19	6
HACKNEY	10	5
BEXLEY	7	3
TOWER HAMLETS	8	3
WESTMINSTER	4	3
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA	7	2
RICHMOND UPON THAMES	7	2
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM	2	1
KINGSTON UPON THAMES	17	1
MERTON	4	1
OUT OF LONDON	16	6

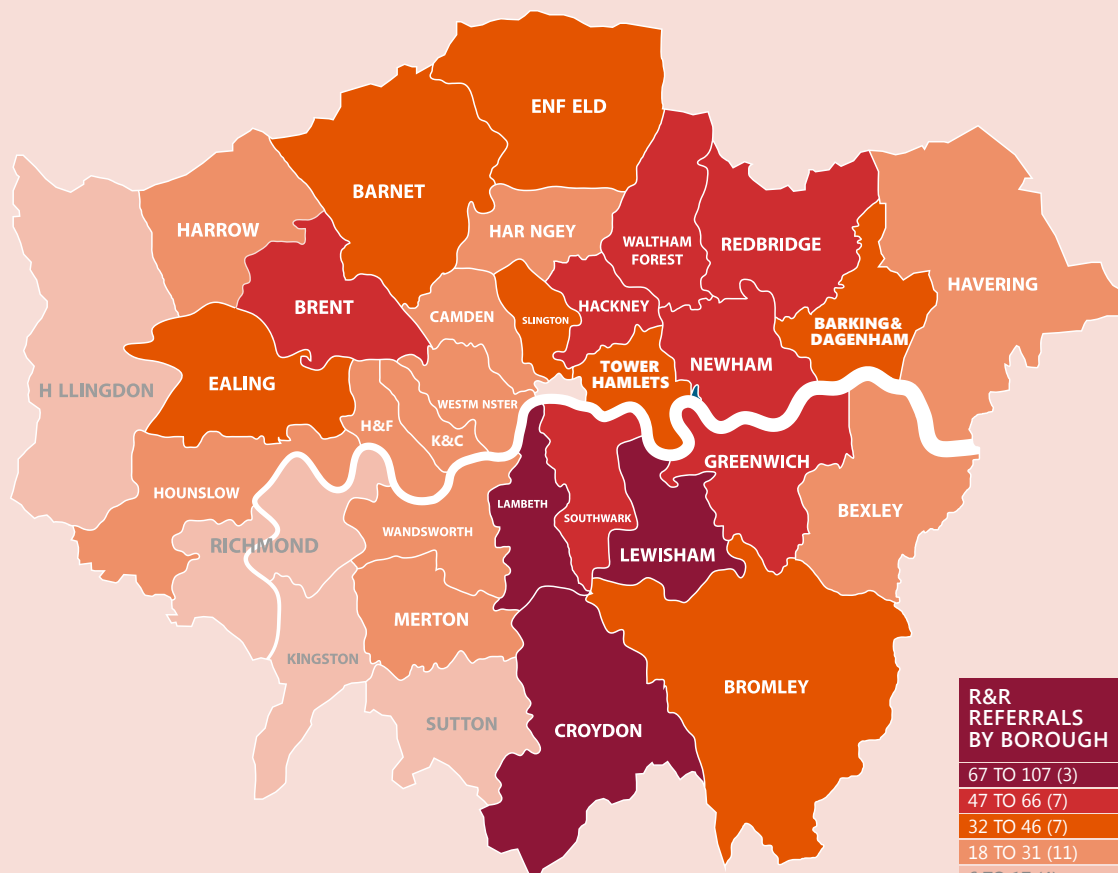
LONDON MAP SHOWING ALL INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES BY BOROUGH

2021/22

During year 4, a total of **1,301** individuals have been identified as having a link to County Lines. This is a **27% reduction** when compared to the same period last year (1,784).

All 1,301 individuals are represented by borough, based on their residence at the time of identification.

Those with a recorded link to County Lines have been collated by the NCLCC, and reflect submissions from R&R, the MPS and the county forces. The reporting practices have remained the same as 20/21 and this is not a contributing factor to overall reductions, as previously experienced.



BOROUGH	20/21	21/22	DIFFERENCE
CROYDON	138	107	-31
LAMBETH	108	93	-15
LEWISHAM	92	79	-13
BRENT	103	66	-37
NEWHAM	107	64	-43
GREENWICH	84	63	21
WALTHAM FOREST	67	57	-10
HACKNEY	70	54	-16
SOUTHWARK	103	53	-50
REDBRIDGE	65	52	-13
EALING	79	46	-33
ENFIELD	68	45	-23
ISLINGTON	46	41	-5
BARNET	41	40	-1
BARKING & DAGENHAM	49	38	-11
BROMLEY	31	37	6
TOWER HAMLETS	41	36	-5
HARINGEY	58	31	-27
WANDSWORTH	52	31	-21
CAMDEN	35	29	-6
HOUNSLOW	41	29	-12
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM	31	27	4
WESTMINSTER	22	27	5
HARROW	26	24	-2
HAVERING	21	22	1
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA	34	22	12
BEXLEY	47	21	-26
MERTON	31	21	-10
HILLINGDON	45	17	-28
KINGSTON	16	12	-4
SUTTON	18	11	-7
RICHMOND	7	6	-1

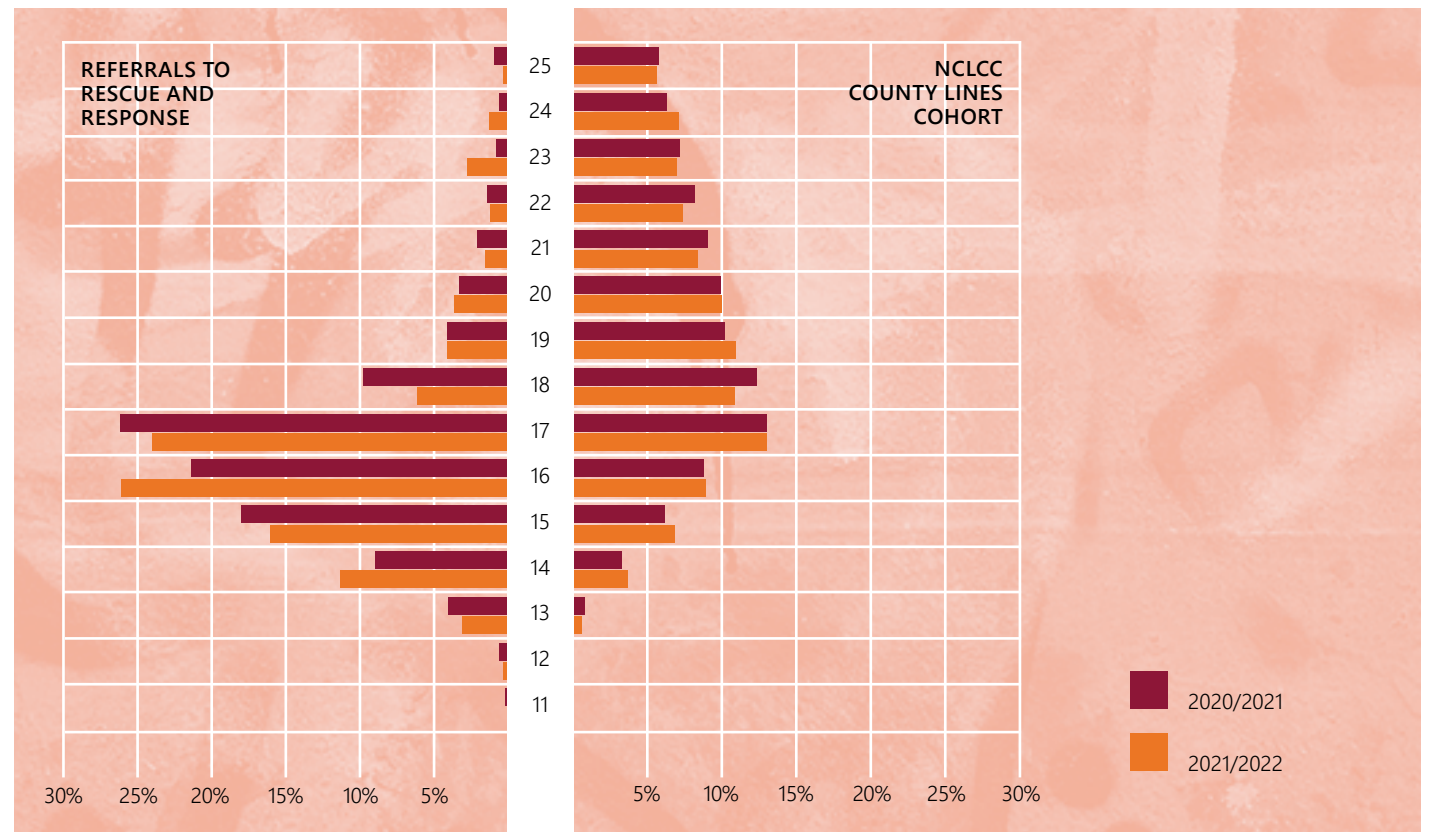
DEMOGRAPHICS FOR R&R REFERRALS AND LONDON INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES

2021/2022

AGE

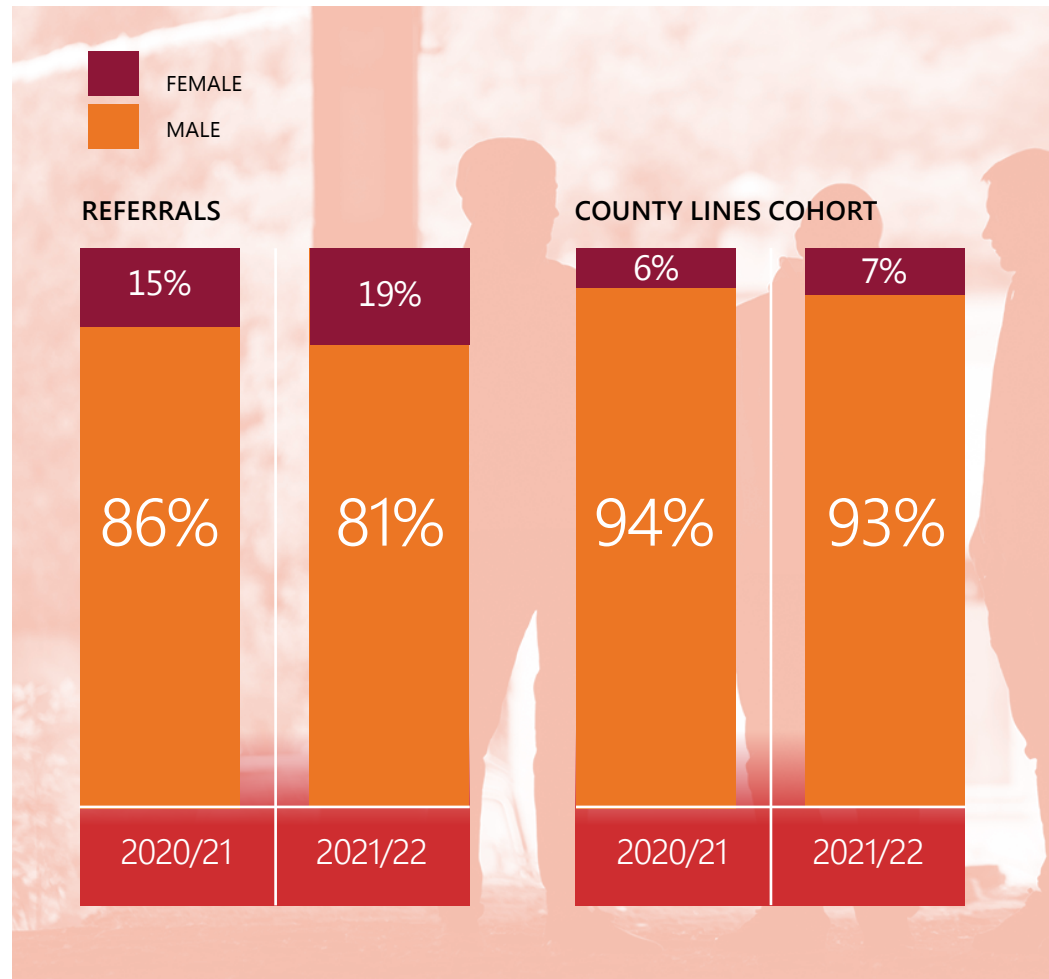
The graph shows that only **20% of referrals** are **aged 18-25 years** whereas, 67% of all individuals under 25 years on the County Lines cohort are aged 18-25 years old. The proportions are consistent with the previous year.

The sharp drop of referrals for 18+ year olds has led to the introduction of a **Young Adults Partnership Coordinator** in August 2022 in order to raise awareness and generate more referrals for vulnerable adults in that age group.



DEMOGRAPHICS FOR R&R REFERRALS AND LONDON INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES
2021/22

GENDER



GANG ASSOCIATION

24% of children and young people had a gang* link recorded by the referrer at time of referral. This is compared to 27% in 2020/21.

TABLE SHOWING GENDER BREAKDOWN OF REFERRALS WITH GANG ASSOCIATION

MALE
26%

*See Page 29 for definition of a 'gang'.

DEMOGRAPHICS FOR R&R REFERRALS AND LONDON INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES 2021/22

ETHNICITY

REFERRAL OBSERVATIONS

The demographic breakdown has continued to have similar proportions to previous years. There has been a 2% reduction of referrals for Black children and young people, and a 2% increase of referrals for Asian children and young people. However, there is still very clear racial disproportionality with the over-representation of Black individuals in both the referrals and County Lines cohort.

COMPARISONS TO THE LONDON POPULATION

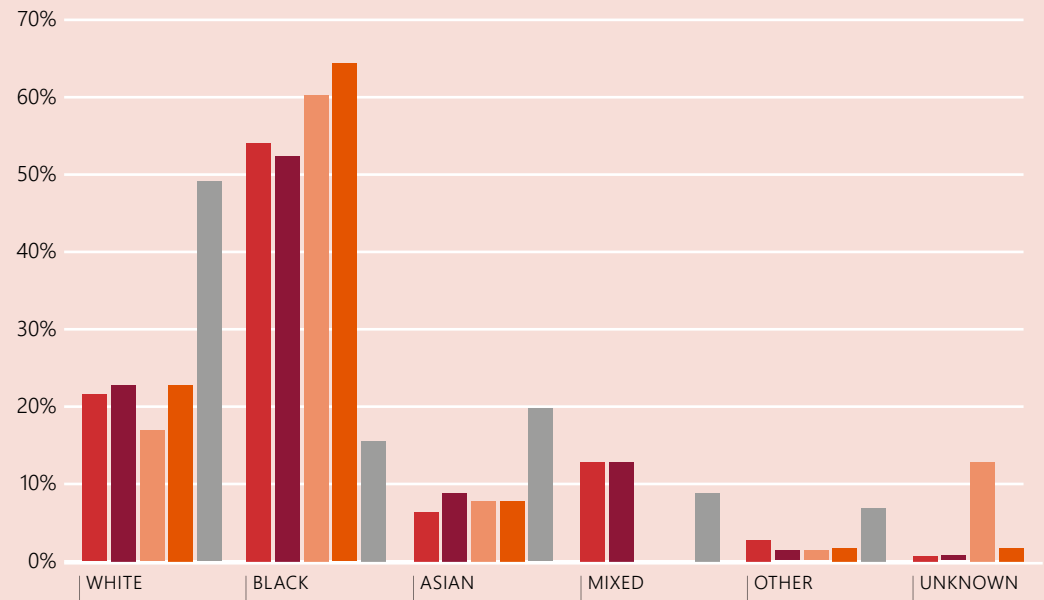
Referrals for White, Asian and Other ethnicities are under-represented compared to the

London population. Referrals for Black or Mixed ethnicities are over-represented compared to the London population.

COUNTY LINES COHORT OBSERVATIONS

There has been a 6% increase of white individuals and a 4% increase of black individuals linked to County Lines. The increases are believed to be linked to further research conducted to identify the ethnicity of those previously classified as unknown.

		WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	MIXED	OTHER	UNKNOWN
REFERRALS	20/21	22%	54%	7%	13%	3%	1%
	21/22	23%	52%	9%	13%	2%	1%
COUNTY LINES COHORT	20/21	17%	60%	8%	0%	2%	13%
	21/22	23%	64%	8%	0%	2%	2%
LONDON POPULATION AGED 10-25YRS*	2021	49%	16%	20%	9%	7%	0%



- REFERRALS 20/21
- REFERRALS 21/22
- COUNTY LINES COHORT 20/21
- COUNTY LINES COHORT 21/22
- LONDON POPULATION AGED 10-25YRS*

*Source: GLA - London datastore

DEMOGRAPHICS FOR R&R REFERRALS

2021/22

SOCIAL CARE STATUS

55% of children and young people referred had a Social Care status at the time of referral i.e. Child Looked After (CLA), Child in Need (CIN), or Child Protection (CP).

This is a slight increase from 53% recorded in 2020/21.

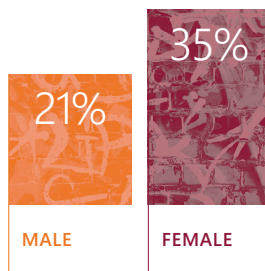
24% of referrals were for children and young people who were CLA or leaving care, which is an increase from 18% recorded in 2020/21.

Gender comparisons show that 35% of referrals for females were CLA or leaving care whereas this was only 21% for male referrals.

TABLE SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A CLA STATUS IN 21/22

16%	UNKNOWN
60%	NO
24%	YES

TABLE SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A CLA OR LEAVING CARE IN 21/22 BY GENDER OF REFERRAL



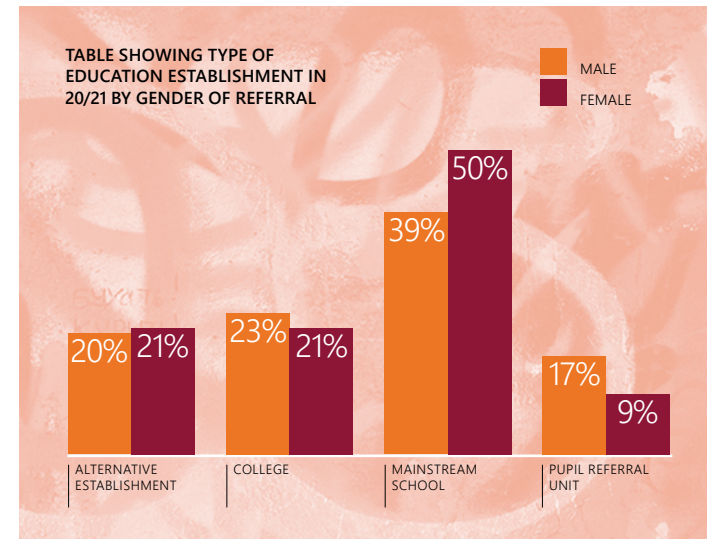
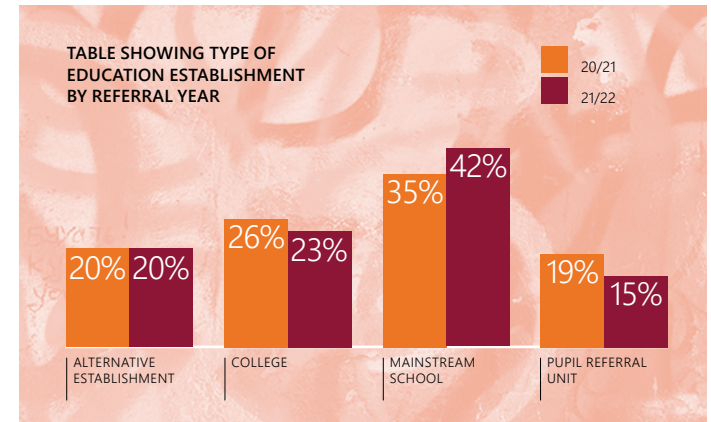
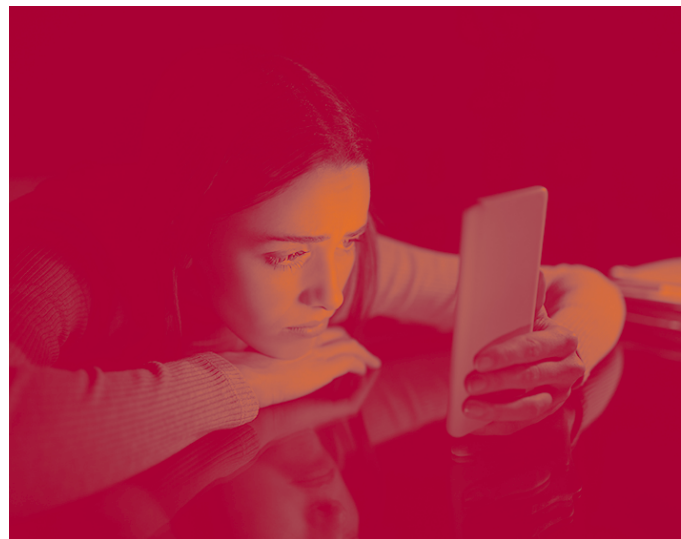
EDUCATION

40% of children and young people referred were in education at the time of referral and this has remained consistent with 2020/21 (41%).

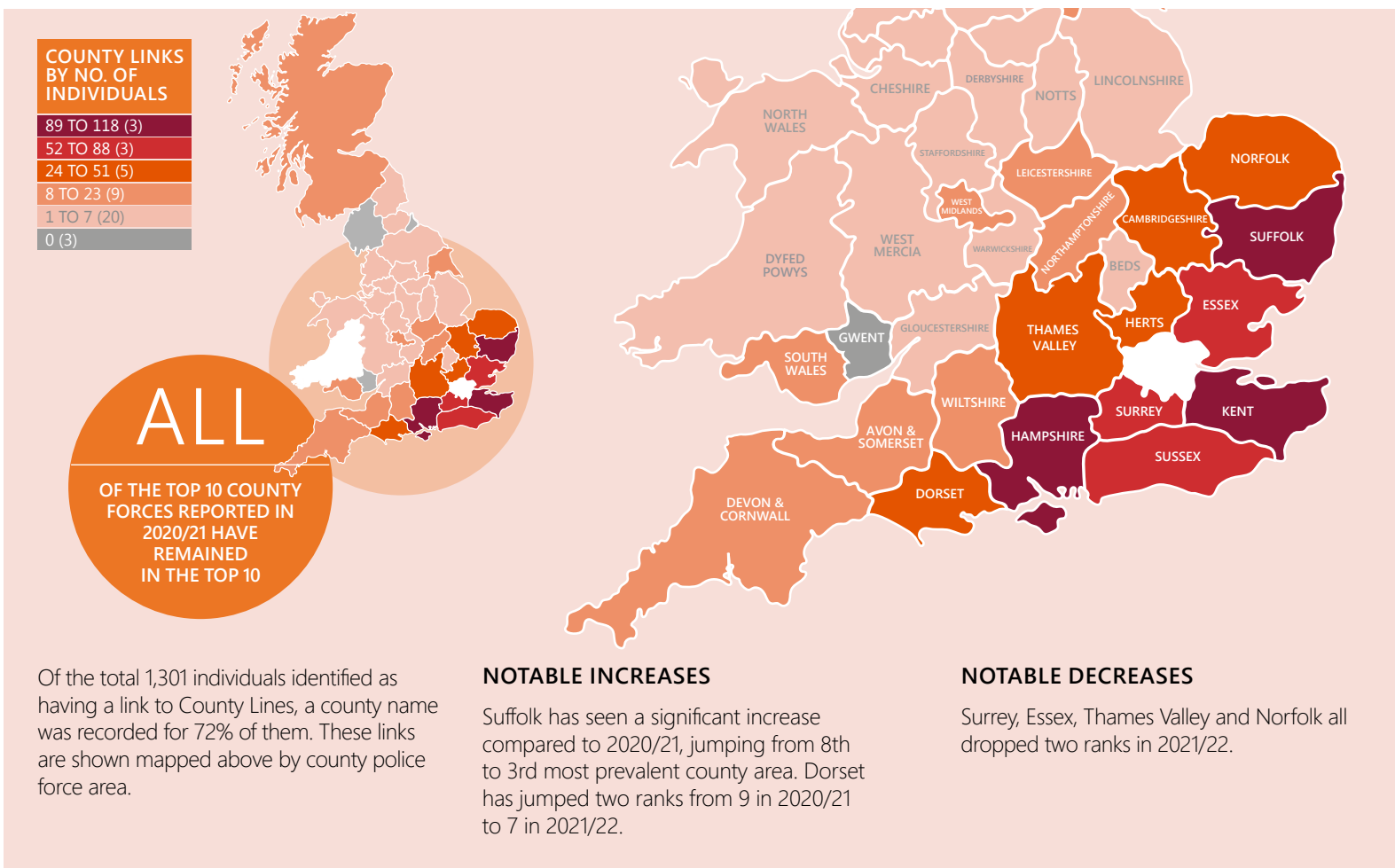
Of those that were in education, 42% attended a mainstream school. This is an increase from 35% recorded during 2020/21.

Gender comparisons show that of the 103 males attending education, 23% attended college, which was an increase from 2020/21 where only 9% attended college.

Of the 34 females attending education, most were attending mainstream school. Females attending a PRU had dropped from 38% in 2020/21 to 9% in 2021/22.



UK MAP SHOWING LONDON INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES BY COUNTY FORCE AREA 2021/22



WHICH WERE THE MOST PREVALENT COUNTY AREAS IN 2021/22?

The county areas closest to London in the South-East of England continue to have the highest recorded links to London County Lines individuals.

The counties of Hampshire and Kent continue to rank first and second respectively.

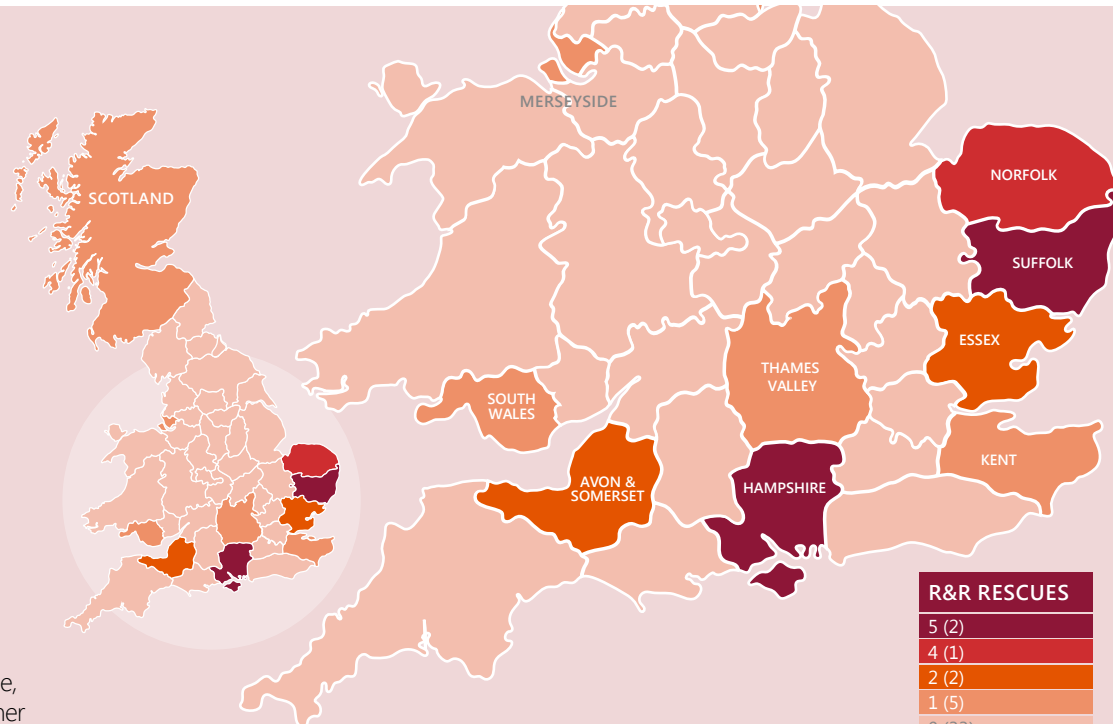
TOP 10 COUNTY FORCES	INDIVIDUALS LINKED	21/22 RANKING	20/21 RANKING
HAMPSHIRE	118	1	1
KENT	109	2	2
SUFFOLK	97	3	8
SUSSEX	88	4	5
SURREY	78	5	3
ESSEX	77	6	4
DORSET	51	7	9
THAMES VALLEY	42	8	6
NORFOLK	41	9	7
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	37	10	10

RESCUE AND RESPONSE: RESCUE SERVICE

2021/22

23
RESCUES COMPLETED

A total of 23 rescues were successfully completed between April 2021 and March 2022. These are represented in the map and table, which show the number of rescues that have taken place in these counties.



RESCUE & OUTREACH TEAM OVERVIEW

The Rescue Service continues to develop strong working partnerships with the police, statutory services, local authorities and other charities within the UK to guarantee a safe return for the Child or Young Person (CYP). The service continues to advise all partners to explore the escalated risk factors such as 'road debt', possible gang* involvement and consider contextual safeguarding. One of the main objectives is to ensure that CYP, their families,

local authority and the police are supported and assisted with a safety plan to help reduce risk and then continue the 'follow up' process by notifying the professional networks with regular updates. The Outreach Team visits regional counties promoting the Rescue Service to prominent police stations with

new and updated literature. The team deliver County Lines awareness training webinars and have planned an R&R road show for 22/23. The Outreach Team also carry their own caseloads, where they work with CYP who engage with the service following a rescue.

WHERE IN THE UK DID R&R RESCUE CYP FROM?

RESCUES COMPLETED

Most of the rescues conducted were from Hampshire and Suffolk (5). Top 5 counties have accounted for 78% of all rescues completed. It is important to highlight that all London CYP who are subject to a rescue request are referred into R&R and offered 1:1 casework, regardless of whether or not the rescue went ahead.

COUNTY FORCE	RESCUES
HAMPSHIRE	5
SUFFOLK	5
NORFOLK	4
AVON & SOMERSET	2
ESSEX	2
KENT	1
MERSEYSIDE	1
SCOTLAND	1
SOUTH WALES	1
THAMES VALLEY	1

*See Page 29 for definition of a 'gang'.

CASE STUDY

ST GILES TRUST RESCUE SERVICE

CONTRIBUTED BY JO HUDEK, JH CONSULTING

"He trusted us. He could see that we knew what we were talking about and see how we all worked together as professionals – the teams and handovers too."

St Giles

Turning a past into a future



12
HOURS
12 HOUR
OVERNIGHT
RESCUE



SIX RESCUE
WORKERS
INVOLVED



POLICE
SCOTLAND
INVOLVED



SEMI-INDEPENDENT
HOUSING TEAM
INVOLVED

17 YEAR OLD BOY FROM LONDON, RESCUED FROM ABERDEENSHIRE (MERSEYSIDE, WEST MIDLANDS AND LONDON TEAMS).

This highly complex rescue was completed successfully within a 12 hour overnight period. Police Scotland contacted the Merseyside rescue service, liaising with the Merseyside and London managers to arrange the rescue. Once agreed, Police Scotland drove the child to Gretna, arriving at 6.30pm where the Merseyside team met him and took him to an agreed service station located on the M6, arriving at 12.30am where they were met by the West Midlands team. They continued, stopping half way for food and met the London team at Northampton at 2.30am. The London team then returned him to his semi-independent housing in south London at 4.30am. A total of six rescue workers were involved – 5 from the County Lines Victim Support Service (Home Office) and one London R&R.

What this timescale doesn't reveal is the constant liaison and updating across the three teams and with service

managers, police and the staff at the semi-independent housing throughout the process. Teams arrived at handover points ahead of time to ensure that there was no waiting around for the child, contributing to him feeling safe and secure. Throughout the journey, conversations took place with the child about what he was involved in, "what it was going to lead to and the need to have another avenue. He trusted us. He could see that we knew what we were talking about and see how we all worked together as professionals – the teams and handovers too. He relaxed and in the end starting rapping. To begin with it was all about the drill but we were saying, 'Y'know, do something else' so then he got more real and was rapping about his family and stuff – he's pretty good. He's a really smart boy. He has a really wide vocabulary. But he's been caught up in this for a while – he's got a case pending in Sussex and he's been in Hampshire. He said he moved into the semi-independent because he didn't want to bring this stuff to his family's door. But he comes from a good background." The child is now being supported by his caseworker.

Police Scotland were delighted with this rescue which went so smoothly and enabled "a vulnerable child to be returned home but with the great benefit of expert support". The leading officer commented that "having already experienced the previous rescue from here to Merseyside, this was a lot quicker because we understood how it could work and knew the managers to contact. It means not having children or young people in custody unnecessarily. I really would like to explore the potential for having such a service based in Scotland too."

SPOTLIGHT

YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

CONTRIBUTED BY ALEX HONNAN-MACDONALD,
NICKY HILL, LUCIA BARBER



OBSERVATIONS AND LEARNING

A B I A N D A

1 As County Lines are predominantly male run hierarchical enterprises led by organised crime groups (OCGs) there are inherent power imbalances underpinning the criminal exploitation of young people, this particularly affects young women as they are additionally vulnerable due to their gender.

2 Where there are young men there will be young women; and although they may not necessarily be involved in County Lines/criminal activity in the same way as their male counterparts, they can still be impacted. It is important for professionals not to jump to conclusions when working with a girl or young woman who is in a relationship with or has a family member who is involved in a gang. Labelling a young woman as 'gang affiliated' etc. can create a significant barrier to her accessing support.

3 Typically, young women who have an intimate or familial relationship with young men who are involved with grooming, see themselves as dating or only see their familial connection, which makes them harder to identify.

4 Young women regularly experience sexual violence, domestic violence and sexual exploitation alongside criminal exploitation.

5 Young women are exploited to perform a range of 'roles' not always understood as harmful, such as the provision of accommodation to men as well as financial, emotional and practical support.

6 Young women may not self-identify as being involved in or connected to a 'gang'* or criminal activity.

7 Young women who are in a relationship with a network member, are often targeted by other networks. This leaves them more vulnerable to intra-gang coercion, exploitation and violence.

8 The gang label has negative, long-lasting implications and criminalises young women which, if the harm they are experiencing is through criminal networks and/or via a partner who is involved, will further alienate them.

9 The gender biases that exist in society and within services, contributes to the vulnerability of young women being able to fly under the radar and this is widely known by exploiters and criminal networks.

10 Because young women 'fly under the radar' their associations are harder to track.

*See Page 29 for definition of a 'gang'.

11 There is often an overlap of CCE and CSE, however, professionals who do pick-up signs of exploitation, will often focus on or assume CSE when safeguarding young women, meaning some young women are going unnoticed and unsupported for CCE. The interventions put in place do not address the specific harms experienced by young women who are being criminally exploited, which leaves them vulnerable for the criminal exploitation to continue. Services continue to not fully understand the gendered difference in experiences for young women who are exploited through criminal networks and County Lines.

12 Young women in an intimate relationship with an exploiter face an additional emotional obstacle in escaping the relationship as well as the exploitation.

13 There is a clear need for universal services such as health and education to better identify young women at risk to ensure support can be put in place before they meet the threshold for statutory social care intervention or are in the criminal justice system.

14 Wider data collection and analysis methodologies often miss young women meaning their needs are not always considered at a system and policy level. Rescue & Response, alongside MOPAC, is working to address this but a greater focus is needed on young women across different systems.

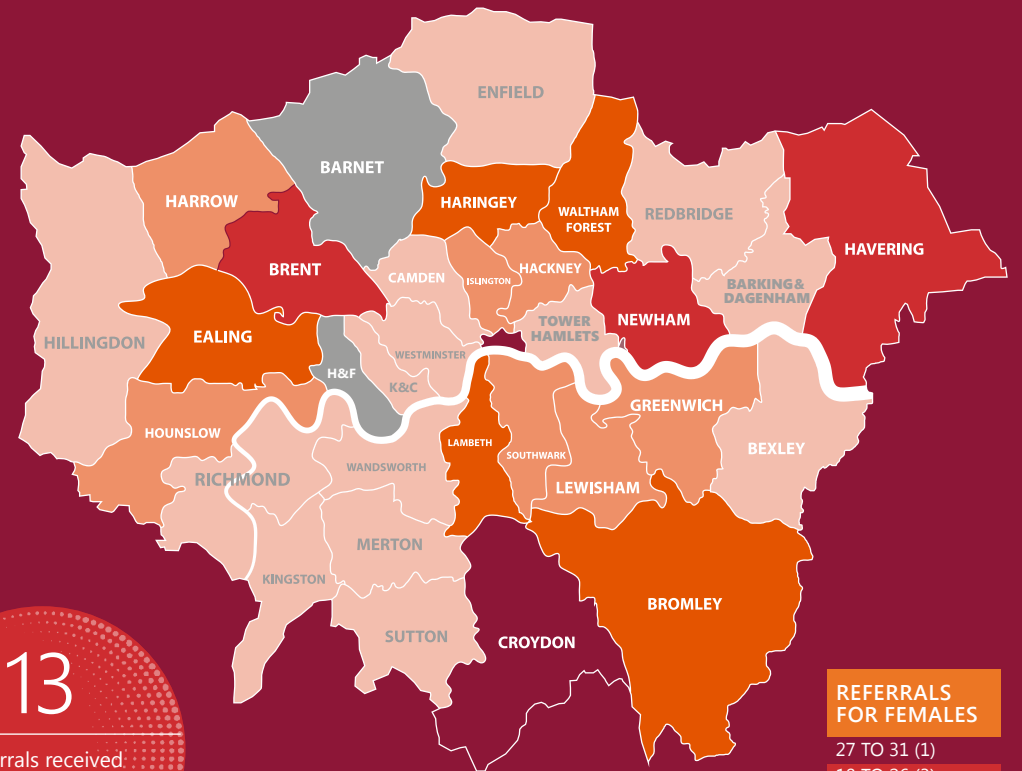
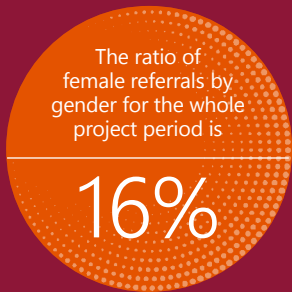
SPOTLIGHT YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS



REFERRAL DATA FOR YOUNG WOMEN & GIRLS

A B I A N D A

Since the Rescue and Response project began in 2018 to June 2022, we have **received 333 referrals** for young women. The average number of referrals for young women is 20.8 per quarter (since project start). The proportion of referrals for females has increased from 15% in 2020/21 to 19% in 2021/22. The following information is based on information known to the referrer at the point of referral.



REFERRALS FOR FEMALES	
27 TO 31	(1)
18 TO 26	(3)
13 TO 17	(5)
9 TO 12	(7)
1 TO 8	(14)
0	(2)

SPOTLIGHT YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS



UNDERSTANDING VICTIMISATION

A B I A N D A

CONTRIBUTED BY ALEX HONNAN-MACDONALD,
NICKY HILL, LUCIA BARBER

As a society we must work to disable the binary thinking that 'Victim' and 'Perpetrator' are always two distinct roles. Young people can be both a victim of criminal exploitation and also the perpetrator of a criminal offence. By looking at criminally exploited young women through a binary lens their voices are not heard and their victimisation is overlooked. This serves to create a barrier where exploited young women are not coming forward for fear of being criminalised and thus their vulnerability remains hidden.

For young women who are being exploited by criminal networks the risk of experiencing sexual and domestic violence is high. Sexual violence and coercive control are powerful invisible weapons used to exploit women. The signs can be hard to spot which significantly contributes to the invisibility of women who are exploited by 'gangs'*.

Due to the nature of grooming, young women who are criminally exploited do not always recognise themselves as 'victims'. This is especially prevalent within the context of an intimate partner relationship where there are additional dynamics of power and control at play. Some young women recruited by 'gangs'* may not realise they are being exploited as they have been groomed to believe that the relationship they are in is genuine.

*See Page 29 for definition of a 'gang'.



CASE STUDY

SAFER LONDON

“Adopting a non-judgemental approach and taking the time to build that trusting relationship was key to success with this young Londoner – because he had never had that before.”

saferlondon

OVERVIEW

A 17-year-old male, was referred to Safer London following numerous missing person reports. There were concerns he was being exploited through County Lines.

RESPONSE

- There were many complex issues surrounding this young Londoner. His transition to adulthood was not like many others his own age. It was met with many barriers including homelessness, having no bank account and no identification. This all limited his opportunities to establish independence and decreased his outlook on life.
- When the case was referred to Safer London there was no engagement for the first two months. It was clear there was a distrust of professionals, so we knew we wanted to work on building on epistemic trust with him, as this is key to our success with any child or young person we work with.
- We focussed on building a relationship with this young Londoner, one that was built on trust. We took the time to get to know what he liked and what made him feel good about himself. It so happened he was an incredibly talented rapper and songwriter. He'd never had an opportunity to nurture or develop this talent. Working

with a partner organisation, we were able to arrange some time in a music studio. The sessions increased his self esteem, which helped build trust. As his trust developed, his engagement with the service increased – and more importantly, the more he was willing to disclose.

- An incident occurred at home which resulted in him becoming homeless. He worked closely with our housing support officer, who worked hard to support him through the homelessness assessments, as well as provided valuable emotional support with navigating the application during a stressful time. Although he chose to remain in an unsafe area due to the proximity of his support network, our housing officer was able to work with the police and other statutory services who acknowledged the risks to him and provided extra support.
- To further support the young Londoner, we referred him to our DWP partners who supported him to access the benefits and support he was entitled to. We worked together to build his CV, making sure he had something he could take with

him that could open more opportunities in the future. This combined will help him to become more independent and secure in himself, as well as increase his overall safety.

OUTCOME

- As the relationship with Safer London progressed, he allowed us to explore and discuss his emotional wellbeing. He engaged with CAMHs and shared that he may be ready for therapeutic support. Subsequently, this has led to additional ongoing support identified from Safer London's specialist emotional wellbeing team.
- During his final needs assessment, he stated “[my caseworker] listened to me and actually tried to help . Often children and young people express they feel let down by professionals. Adopting a non-judgemental approach and taking the time to build that trusting relationship was key to success with this young Londoner – because he had never had that before.

SPOTLIGHT

FAMILY SUPPORT

St Giles

Turning a past into a future

In July 2020, a family support worker joined the St Giles Trust team on the Rescue and Response Project. This role was introduced to support the parent/carer/guardian of a child/young person (CYP) at risk of or linked to County Lines exploitation.

The family support worker can work with the parent/guardian whilst the CYP receives support from a Rescue and Response case worker.

The family support worker would work directly with the parent/guardian independent of the case worker working directly with the CYP. It would be explicitly communicated that any information disclosed by CYP or the parent/guardian would not be shared with either party to support an open dialogue with the family support worker and case worker.

Following an initial meeting, the support worker and parent/guardian, develop a support plan around their needs and emotional support. During the initial assessment, money and safety were the areas that parents and guardians were most concerned about.

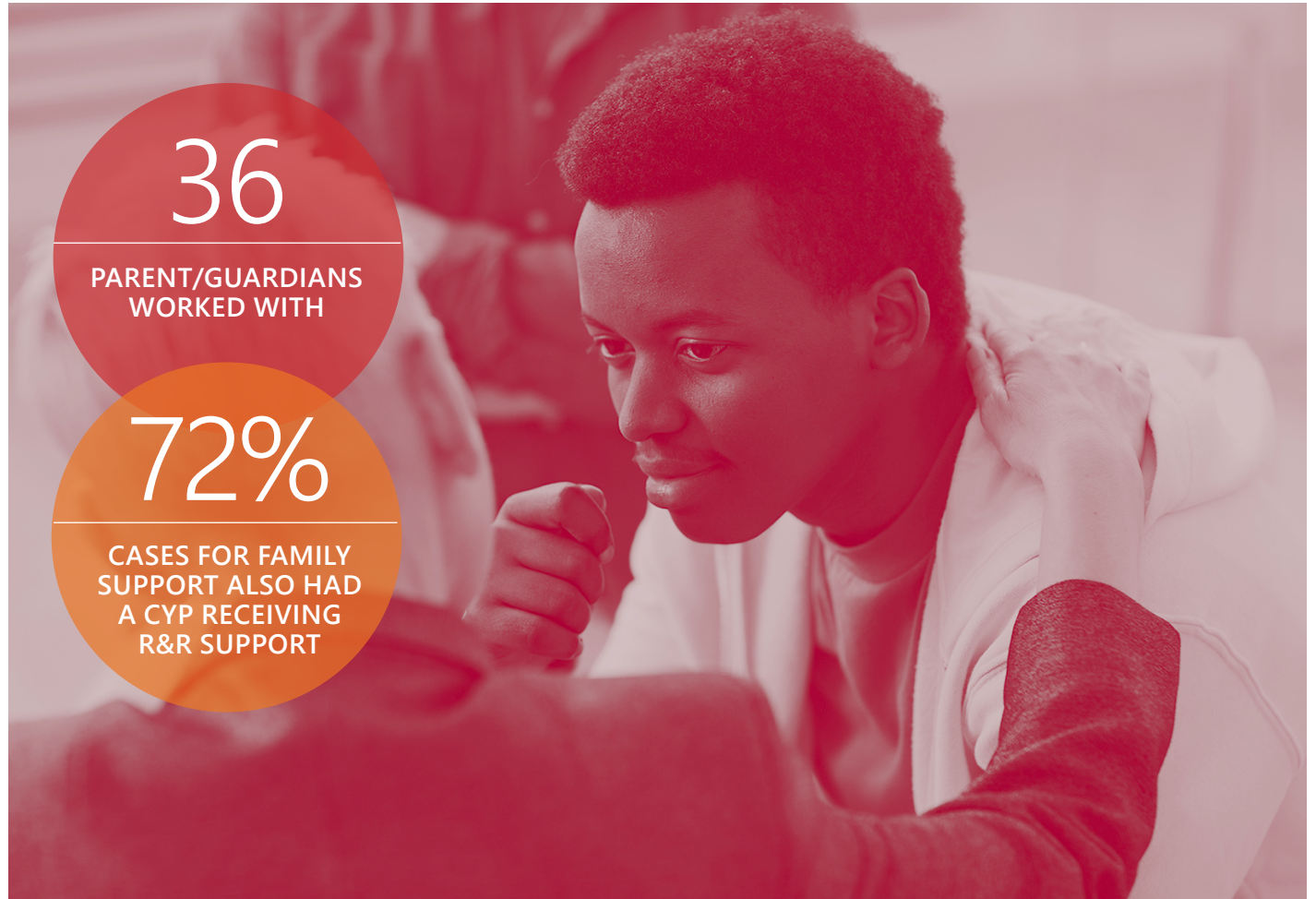
Of the thirty-six parents/guardians worked with, support was given to one father, one grandmother and thirty four mothers.

36

PARENT/GUARDIANS
WORKED WITH

72%

CASES FOR FAMILY
SUPPORT ALSO HAD
A CYP RECEIVING
R&R SUPPORT



RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT: CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING?

“Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.” (*Contextual Safeguarding 2022*)

As part of the R&R intelligence response, analysts map associations, including peers, education establishments, frequented locations and venues. This information identifies various contexts of harm and guides safeguarding action in the form of targeting extra-familial locations and partnership working.

The projects’ front line practitioners actively work with and support CYP to understand safe and appropriate ways to navigate these spaces and seek to empower them by not changing their behaviour, but to

focus more on addressing the ‘rules at play’ or social conditions in that context. This can range from engaging CYP in peer and safety mapping to allow better understanding of their experiences of both safety and protection within the different contexts of their life.

Practitioners also provide information to professional networks relating to the contexts impacting on a CYP’s experience of safety or wellbeing, such as tailoring workplans to address identified needs in extra-familial contexts and creating safety plans which help address some of the safety concerns.

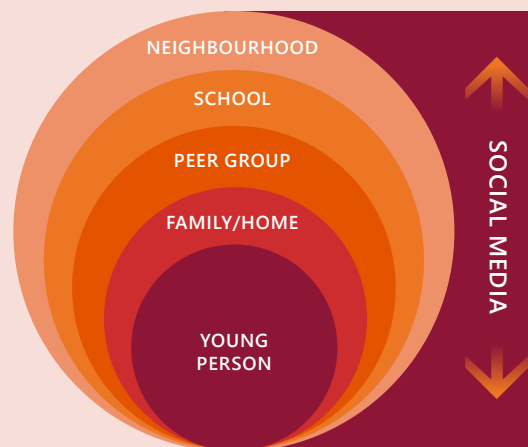


Image adapted from Firmin, C., 2013

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

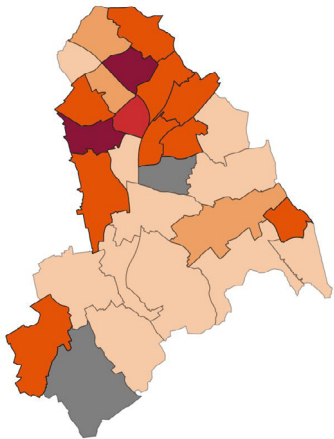
- As part of our processes, the R&R Partnership Coordinators and Analysts contribute to Contextual Safeguarding during strategic/operational MACE meetings and cross borough Contextual Safeguarding meetings, which deal with all forms of exploitation and serious youth violence, which includes the offer of support in identifying hotspot areas to facilitate targeted early interventions.
- A range of professionals become involved with those discussions, whether directly via attendance at the meetings, such as housing, or being informed by those in attendance. The project feeds in contextual information and the boroughs then distribute this knowledge, such as hotspot identification or County Lines trends. The information can then be used by the borough to target intervention resources as well as identify safety related improvements to the environment. This has also allowed for teams not directly responsible for safeguarding to be informed and take action, such as trading standards, in order to pass on advice and address issues coming to notice.
- The project looks to support both professionals and CYP to understand the rules and risks at play when there is movement through the different fields that CYP navigate, and whilst County Lines exploitation is a factor, it takes into account all forms of exploitation. This is achieved by working with parents/carers to understand Contextual Safeguarding and the CYP’s experience of safety in peer groups and other contexts. Also, we advocate for CYP when the context of harm is not being addressed, by supporting wider plans and advocating for relationships of trust and trauma-responsive approaches.

RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT: CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING: HOTSPOTS

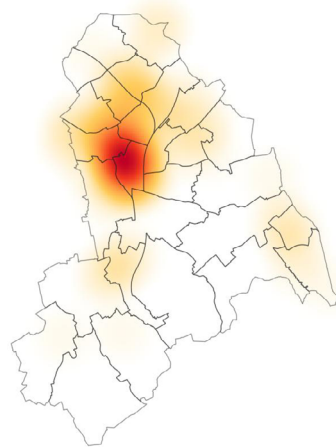
The top two referring boroughs, Croydon and Newham were further analysed to explore whether hotspot analysis could be used to identify areas to implement Contextual Safeguarding at a ward level. Using the home address, and the location of crime reports where the CYP (children and young people) referred were named as victims or suspects* between January 2018 and March 2022.

CROYDON

REFERRALS FOR
CROYDON BY WARD



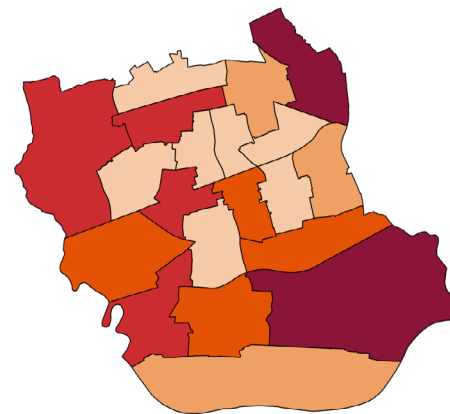
LOCATION OF CRIME REPORTS FOR
REFERRALS FOR CROYDON



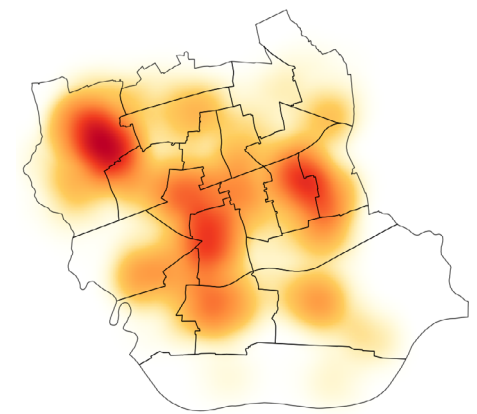
Croydon R&R referrals and locations where CYP have been a victim or suspect of crime are shown within the two maps above. The areas which are darker on both maps indicate a higher amount of both activities. Contextually we can determine that the wards in the NW/CW areas of the borough are more susceptible to having County Lines exploited CYP and the crime data is largely concentrated around Croydon town centre.

NEWHAM

REFERRALS FOR NEWHAM
BY WARD



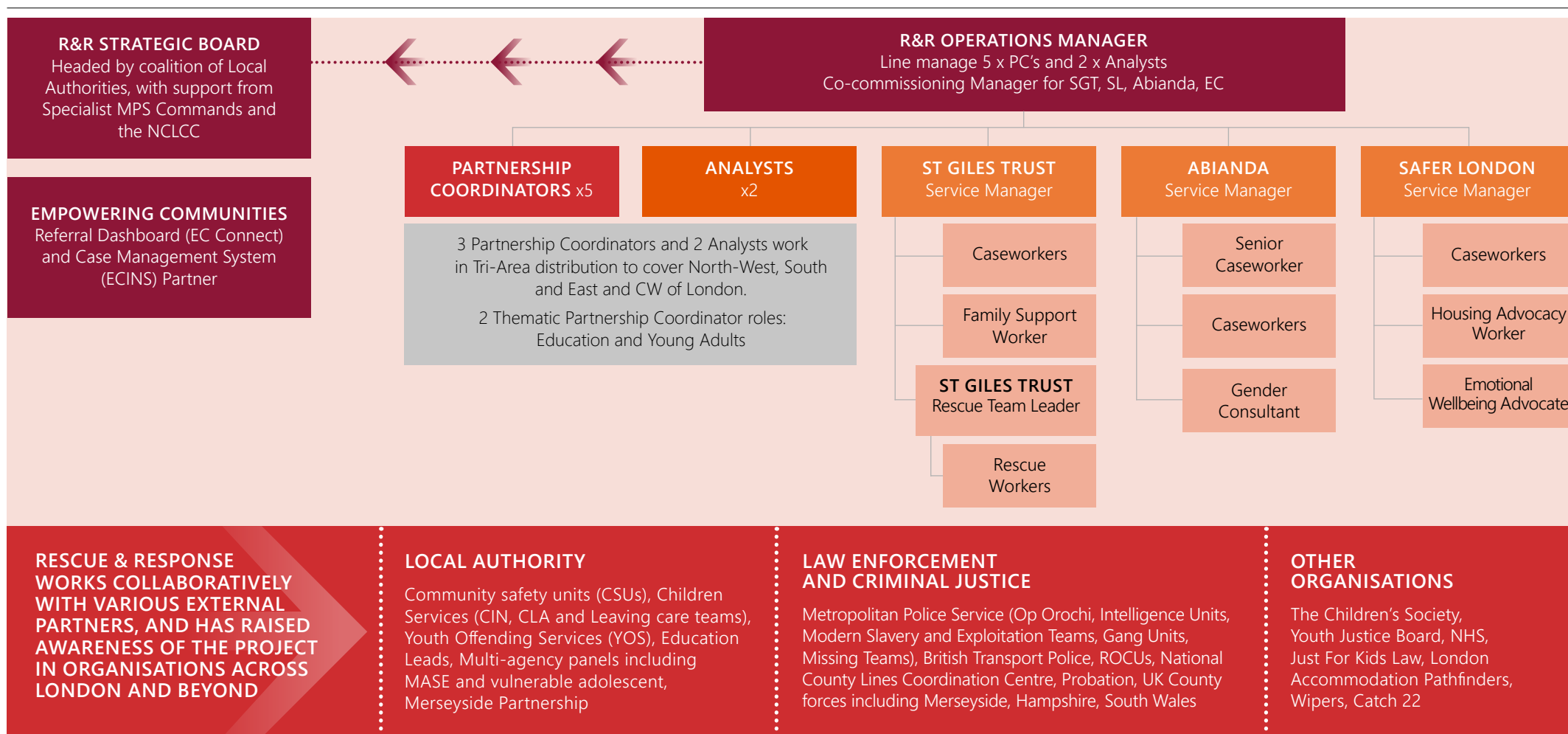
LOCATION OF CRIME REPORTS FOR
REFERRALS FOR NEWHAM



In **Newham**, R&R referrals and locations for crime reports show that Stratford and New town wards correlate. However, the number of referrals are higher in Forest Gate South, Little Ilford and Beckton, whereas the East Ham and Plaistow wards are more densely populated locations for crime reports. This exploration of crime data highlights additional extra-familial locations where young people are at risk of crime as a victim or perpetrator and thus preventative resources can be targeted in these areas.

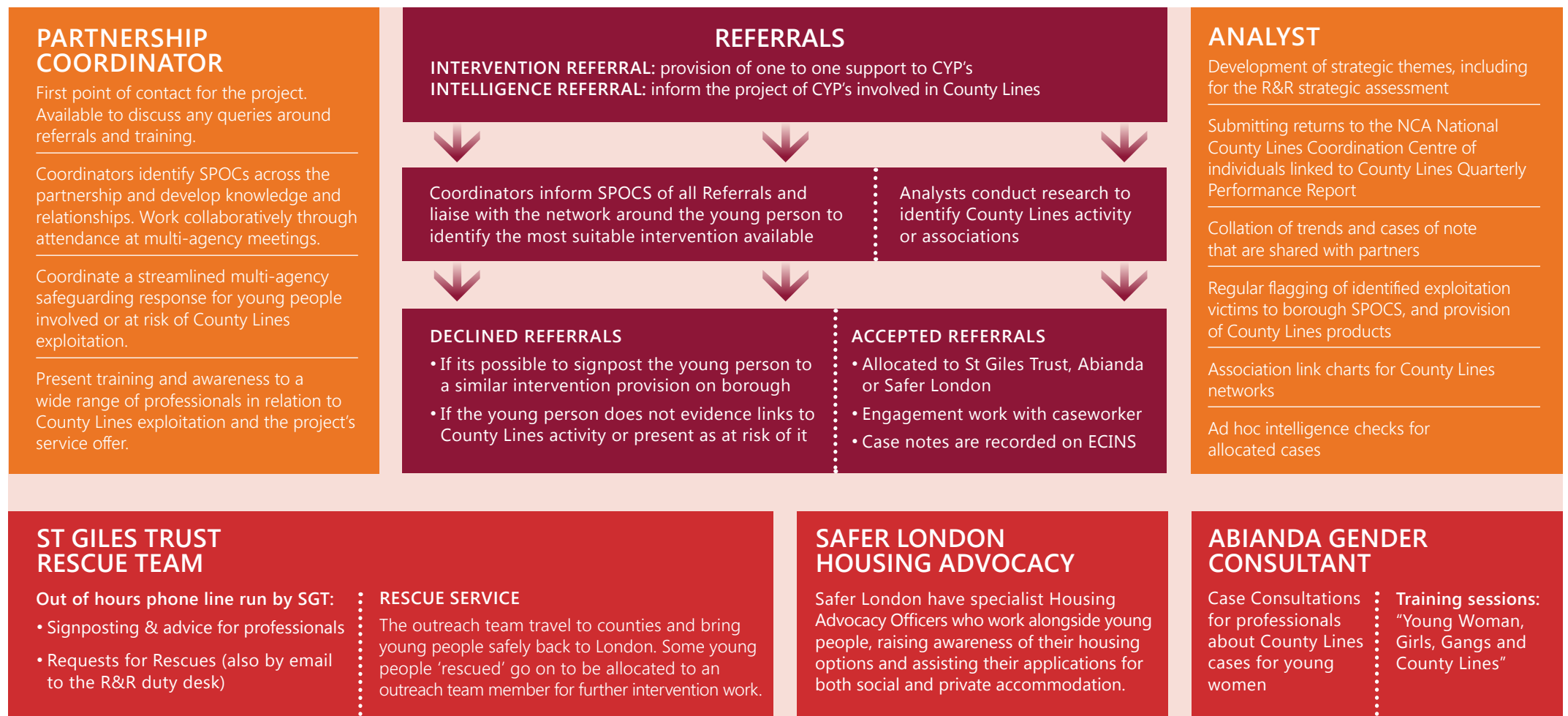
*excluding any crimes with offence location listed as the CYP's home address

APPENDIX 1 RESCUE AND RESPONSE ORGANISATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX 2

RESCUE AND RESPONSE REFERRAL PROCESS



APPENDIX 3

KEY DEFINITIONS

DEFINING WHAT WE MEAN BY A '**POSITIVE OUTCOME**':

- Improved safety and reduced level of risk of harm (professional viewpoint)
- Increased feelings of safety and reduced feelings of vulnerability (service user led)
- Increased knowledge & resilience of the risk factors (ability to understand ways to stay safe through safety planning)
- Increased knowledge and awareness of issues regarding CCE, CSE and victimisation in context of County Lines
- Increased skills to keep safe in different contexts (service user led)
- Increased ability to positively manage relationships and create healthy attachments
- Increased resilience and ability to influence key life decisions
- Increased connectivity to other services (service user led)

DEFINING WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM '**GANG**':

This is the definition used by government and the MPS. It was defined in the Centre for Social Justice's 2009 report 'Dying to Belong': A gang is defined as 'a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

- 1** See themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group;
- 2** Engage in criminal activity and violence;
- 3** Include an illegal economy territory);
- 4** Have some form of identifying structural feature; and
- 5** Are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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PROJECT FUNDER

M O P A C

MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

PROJECT SERVICE PROVIDERS



St Giles

Turning a past into a future



A B I A N D A

saferlondon

DATA SYSTEM PROVIDER



FURTHER READING

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AGENCY/REPORT

[Rescue and Response Year 1 Strategic Assessment](#)

[Rescue and Response Year 2 Strategic Assessment](#)

[Rescue and Response Year 3 Strategic Assessment](#)

[Rescue and Response Referral Form](#)

[St Giles Trust](#)

[Abianda](#)

[Safer London](#)

[Contextual Safeguarding Research Programme](#)

[Home Office County Lines Programme Overview 2022](#)

[County Lines: Breaking the Cycle Report by Crest 2022](#)

[County Lines Pathfinder: Emerging youth justice practice in the prevention, identification and disruption of county lines exploitation 2022](#)

[Children's Society – County Lines specific information for professionals](#)

[ECINS – Empowering Communities with Integrated Network Systems](#)



