Evening Seminar

Responding to County Lines and ‘Cuckooing’

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23 January, 2019
Academy Overview

- The Academy’s mission is to bring people together to share knowledge, skills and practice and to promote excellence in social justice commissioning.
- The Academy was created in 2007 and now has over 4200 cross sector members.
- Services are designed to support the development of social justice commissioning and include nationwide events, eLearning, commissioning themed learning groups and web pages offering commissioning information.
Responding to County Lines

Jack Spicer – PhD Researcher

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The Drug Market Context

- Anything new? Yes and No

- Important to understand how County Lines has changed the shape of the crack and heroin market

- This evolution of the ‘retail’ end of the market leads to harms

- But it may also indicate success – a more ‘localised’ market should lead to less harm
Push & Pull Factors

- A potentially valuable way of situating responses, drawing on the work of Morselli (2011) and the mobility of mafia groups

- Stresses the need to focus on the social conditions/drivers

- Some ‘Push’ Factors: How are young people becoming involved?; Where?; Why?

- Some ‘Pull’ Factors: The local customer base; Available properties to cuckoo
Take Away Points

- Placing County Lines in the drug market context is important for understanding what it is, why the harms are present and what success might look like.

- Understanding and responding to the social conditions that drive/facilitate it is key to dealing with causes rather than symptoms.

- Taken together this can then help to better operationalise responses to vulnerability, resilience etc.

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EVOLVING VULNERABILITIES AND EXPLOITATION: ‘CUCKOOING’, COMMUTING AND ‘COUNTY LINES’ DRUG MARKETS

Dr Leah Moyle
Royal Holloway, University of London
Academy for Social Justice Commissioning
Weds 23rd Jan, Bristol
**Introduction and Aims**

- **Background:** Interest in drug markets, low-level supply (user-dealing), and the policing of street drug markets.

- **Aims:** How the nature of the local (host) drug market has changed.

- The complexity of experiences and relationships between out-of-town dealers and county lines involved labourers.

- Evidenced-based policy and harm reduction (risk and protective factors)
A Mixed method multi agency approach

**Quantitative analysis:** Arrest data analysis and Forensic Testing of Crack and Heroin

**Qualitative Analysis:** Rapid ethnography, key person and market interviews

Drug market differentiation and opportunity to undertake a tailored assessment of market and evidence-based harm reduction.

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**Drug Market Rapid Appraisal Service**

Southend-on-Sea (2012)
Plymouth (2014)
Torquay/Torbay (2014)
### Differences Between Market Structures

#### Traditional Street Drug Markets
- National wholesale and local retail markets
- Predominantly ‘user-dealers’
- Largely harmonious, closed reciprocal supply
- ‘Crack’ and ‘sorter’ houses
- Unequal relationships between commercial dealers and user-dealers but relatively little violence
- Local heroin and crack users engage in moral economy as ‘runners’

#### County Lines Drug Markets
- Outreach activity: Hubs and ‘satellite’ markets
- ‘Out-of-town’ (OTD) dealers
- 24 hour sales, branded lines and ‘good gear’
- Relies on acquisition of local properties ‘cuckooing’/renting
- New urban groups and associated violence, exploitation
- Local drug users aggressively recruited by OTD as county lines labourers to be cuckooed or for running
ENTRY INTO COUNTY LINES LABOUR

Evidence of both coercive takeovers and ‘renting’ arrangements.

Payment of a ‘few bags’ of heroin/crack per day

Local dealing houses presented opportunities for respondents to meet out-of-town dealers.

Intersection between local drug market and street sex market.

- Unemployed
- Drug dependent
- Reliant on state benefits
- Homelessness/rough sleeping
- Spells of incarceration
- Mental health
- Learning difficulties
- Trauma
VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND COERCION

- Occasions of violence, particularly in cuckooing/’rental’ contexts.
- Frequent reports of intimidation, bullying and anxiety.
- Drug dependency key mechanism for controlling county lines labourers.
- Tapering or withdrawal of drug access.
- Women were coerced or became involved in sexual labour in order to maintain their supply of heroin and/or crack.

They’re sort of like prisoners…you do get the sense of…you poor bastard… this person would be coming out soaking wet giving you a couple of bags…and I would think you’re like a prisoner. They’re stuck cos they want the free drugs…there’s no violence used but they’ve made it so they’re sort of trapped

Craig (44), heroin user, Salisbury.

And then…we got to the point where we didn’t want them there, but we were too scared to say anything. My partner started drinking heavily and the dealer was, like, ‘can you go and take this out to so and so’, but he was drunk, he used to beat him, so the beatings became daily.

Emma (30) heroin and crack user, Salisbury
EVIDENCE OF RESISTANCE & RESILIENCE

• Alternatively renting/running could also be understood as a ‘mutually beneficial relationship’.

• Lack of other legitimate opportunities – sex work/theft/begging (Moyle and Coomber, 2015)

• Evidence of resilience: reputation and levels of street capital (Sandberg, 2008)

• However: the majority of respondents did not possess these resources and many found themselves drawn back into county lines labour.

It just kept going on like that for a while [being asked to ‘run’ without payment], until I ended up saying, ‘no, I’m not taking any more out’. Which they got quite grumpy about, but I just stuck to my guns and said, no, I’m not doing it, if I’m not getting anything for doing it.

Neil (47) heroin and crack user, Salisbury

Yeah…it’s easier just to give in and sleep with the bloke [county lines dealer]…than it is to go out and get in a car and be raped by like 3 or 4 guys and then kicked out on a motorway. You know, I had a horrific time really…but yeah I think my option seemed at the time a lot better than getting into people’s motors that I don’t even know for 10 pound….

Claire (36), crack and heroin user, Salisbury
KEY RESEARCH POINTS

• Enforcement framing of county lines dominated by coercion and violence. The reality is far more complex.

• ‘Spectrum of harm’ – exploitation is widespread but physical violence and coercion not evident in all cases.

• Vulnerability: high incidence of ‘dual status’ offenders BUT this should not preclude them from safeguarding and support (Coliandris, 2015)

• Street-level policing – ineffective/symbolic and likely to arrest and punish the most vulnerable and addicted populations.

• Resources: building resilience and support services can reduce harm.
REFERENCES


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Sammy Odoi, Founder & Managing Director, Wipers Youth CIC
Wipers Youth CIC

Empowerment for youth

Wipers is a social enterprise which specialises in working with vulnerable and disadvantaged young people.

www.wipers.org.uk
Testimonial / Case Studies
the youth justice social enterprise
Perpetrator  v  Victim
Top Tips
Lessons Learned?
Prevention is Better Than Cure!!!
Targeted Intervention and prevention work in primary schools

Relationship Based, Person-centered Interventions
Outreach and community grass roots VCS intervention

Opportunities to Exit
Significant life events / incidents and moments of clarity!
Services

• The Children’s Society

• St Giles Trust & Missing People

• Wipers Youth CIC: Street Scholars Program; Specialist Mentoring (Return to home interviews)

• Bravespace
Resources

• Home Office Guidance “Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults county lines”

• Trapped: Project Phoenix; It’s not Okay

• Catch 22- Running the risks; The link between gang involvement and young people going missing.
Thank you

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County Lines: A Local Authority Perspective

Lucy Macready
Public Health Specialist
Somerset County Council
Content

1. Why is the Council concerned about County Lines?
2. Our Challenges
3. Our response
4. Key messages for Commissioners

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBCY8D0lDiY
‘Drugsland: County Lines’
Why is the Council concerned about County Lines?

• Targets our most vulnerable individuals and families
  • Evidence of local children involved
  • Vulnerable adults, LD
  • Complex needs

• Impacts on service users – D&A, Social Care, Leaving Care

• Requires a multi-agency response to prevent the backfill
  • Prevention
Our Challenges: Why is it difficult to tackle?
Our Challenges

• Two tier Authority
• Fluid business model - different to tradition OCGs
• No dedicated resources
• Offenders and vulnerable children often from out of County
• Practitioners feeling paralysed – CL clouding judgement
• Sharing data is problematic – recording and profiling
Our Response

• A Partnership response:
  • Information sharing
  • Disruption Panel
  • One Teams
  • Protocol

• Training

• Locality Review
Key Messages for commissioners

1. Need to consider vulnerability to exploitation holistically
   • Think Family
   • Form of exploitation

2. Prevention – Need to look at the root causes for offenders and victims
   • A balance between law enforcement and strengthening communities to prevent this social problem

3. Understand the problem – Profiling and Needs Assessment

4. Effective Partnership working arrangements – strategic sign up to strategy

• County Lines has evolved from a crime we need to disrupt, to a social epidemic we need to prevent – like the spread of disease. Need a Public Health approach
County Lines

DCI Kerry Paterson Avon and Somerset Police

23 January 2019
County Lines

• County Lines is a term used to describe gangs, groups or drug networks that supply drugs from urban to suburban areas across the county, using dedicated mobile phones or “deal lines”.

• They exploit children and vulnerable adults to move the drugs and money to and from the urban area, and to store the drugs.

• They will often use intimidation, coercion, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.
Children and vulnerable adults are being used by drug dealers across the country to courier drugs and money*

*This crime is known as county lines

Drug dealers are taking over the homes of vulnerable people to use as a base to deal drugs*

*This is known as cuckooing
County Lines – Signs to look out for

- Has a child or young person gone missing from school or home?
- Are they meeting with unfamiliar adults or is there a change in their behaviour?
- Are they using drugs and alcohol?
- Have they acquired money or expensive gifts they can’t account for?
County Lines - Challenges

- Volume
- Lines are quickly replaced after enforcement
- Fast moving intelligence picture
- Lack of dedicated resources
- Under reporting
- Those who benefit are based elsewhere out of force
County Lines – The Way Forward

• National, Regional, Local Approach
• Force Plan 4p’s Prepare, prevent, protect, pursue
• Target highest threat harm risk networks NCLCC
• Identify and protect vulnerable
• Multi Agency Safeguarding
• Information sharing
• Building Children’s resistance / early intervention
• Encourage reporting
County Lines

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Any Questions ?