

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



**YEAR 3**  
STRATEGIC  
ASSESSMENT  
2021



# FOREWORD

This third strategic needs assessment has shown with increasing clarity the real landscape of County Lines exploitation across London and the awful impact on London's children and young people. The multi-agency partnership approach adopted by Rescue and Response on a pan London level has been a clear strength of the project. Local authorities have played a vital role in coordinating this response, working

collectively with voluntary sector partners and police to help children and young people move away from the detrimental harms associated with County Lines. I am very proud to have been part of the creation, development, implementation and ongoing delivery of Rescue and Response, which has demonstrated how working together can improve our knowledge, shaping what works and delivering bespoke support

to help improve the lives of children and young people who are exploited through County Lines.

## Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney

Chair of Rescue and Response Strategic Board

Corporate Director Brighter Futures and Children and Young People's Commissioner, London Borough of Newham

## 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).
- Research carried out on MPS intelligence systems.
- Anecdotal information has been obtained during focus groups held with Rescue and Response service providers and project Partnership Coordinators regarding themes, experiences and professional insights.
- Data has been obtained from Local Authority (LA) partners for demographics and themes, through regular data requests and surveys.
- Young people engaged with the project completed an online survey collated by the University of Bedfordshire.

## DATA CAVEATS

The following changes have occurred to recording practices for CLICM (County Lines Intelligence Collection Matrix) submissions, which has contributed towards an overall reduction in individuals linked to County Lines in 20/21 compared to 19/20:

- Individuals are only added to CLICM if they have been linked to County Lines activity within 30 days of submission date, meaning any individuals identified who were linked to County Lines activity prior to the 30 day cut off would not be included.
- The CLICM was initially collated via spreadsheets, but this was changed to a manual input onto the PND (Police National Database).
- Minimum recording standards were put in place for submissions to improve data quality and names without a date of birth were no longer included.
- Intelligence scanning of MPS systems was moved from Rescue and Response and the local borough Intel teams to a central MPS unit, resulting in not all information systems being scanned. Another outcome of this was that young people suspected, but not confirmed, of being linked to County Lines were no longer included.

## DATE PARAMETERS

01/05/2020 to 30/04/2021 Year 3 Analysis (2020/2021)

01/09/2018 to 30/04/2021 3 Year Analysis

## PROTECTIVE MARKING

OFFICIAL

## AUTHORS

William Willson *Operations Manager*  
Farah Dadabhoy *North Area Analyst*  
Zarko Krickovic *East Area Analyst*  
Ravinder Kalsi *South Area Analyst*

## CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Jocelyn Yeboah-Newton *Gender Consultant, Abianda*

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December 2021

## CONTACT

enquiries@rescue-response.com

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## 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 (See Appendix 1 for further information).*



# INTRODUCTION

Rescue and Response is a pan-London County Lines support service for vulnerable 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.

## THERE ARE THREE CORE ELEMENTS TO THE PROJECT:

- **Rescue and Response** - An immediate and flexible rescue service and casework response to young people referred in for intervention.
- **Intelligence Development** – this helps inform our casework, focus resources on those on the cusp of exploitation, and carry out strategic analysis on emerging County Lines themes.
- **Breaking the Cycle Training and Awareness Sessions** – upskilling front line professionals across London to better identify and divert young people away from County Lines exploitation at the earliest possible stage.

The 'Rescue & Response' element 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 young people at the time of need, including immediate safety planning for the young person and their family or network. St Giles Trust, Safer London and Abianda have combined their expertise in working with high risk vulnerable young people, deploying their complimentary and unique models of practice to increase the likelihood of engagement and positive outcomes for young people. This will often include the provision of caseworkers who have lived experience of relatable situations that our young people are currently facing, which can help demonstrate authenticity and contribute towards building a strong rapport.

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 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 young person to transition beyond our service.

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

The 'Intelligence Development' works collaboratively with front line practitioners, third sector providers and police to try and understand the criminal networks and identify vulnerable young people caught up within them. This is delivered by our dedicated analyst team, who link in with the Metropolitan Police Service intelligence command and National County Lines Coordination Centre. 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. 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 young person referred into the project, ensuring that our service meets their needs and also advocating for the young person to be effectively safeguarded.

Every London borough is experiencing the tragic impact of the exploitation of young people by organised criminals. The National Crime Agency have assessed that gangs & Organised Crime Networks utilise vulnerable children because they are inexpensive to employ and easy to control. The main objective of the Rescue and Response project is to ensure that vulnerable young people identified as being exploited through County Lines are protected through both the local safeguarding channels and the Rescue and Response provision.

- See Appendix 2 for the Rescue and Response organisational chart
- See Appendix 3 for the Rescue and Response referral process



# STRATEGIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## KEY FINDINGS

### IMPACT OF R&R AS AN INTERVENTION

- In this years Strategic Assessment we looked at the original project outcomes set for the initial 3-year roll-out of R&R. Overall, the project has succeeded in accomplishing what it set out to achieve, building a central knowledge-base for County Lines exploitation of young people in London and helping those involved to be safeguarded and supported to transition away from harm and into positive outcomes.
- Service providers are engaging with the majority of young people allocated to them and for those that do engage, 83% result in positive outcomes.
- Having dip sampled a group of 50 young people who engaged

with the project during year 2, we looked into their missing episodes and offending behaviour 1 year before and 1 year after R&R engagement, which showed substantial reductions in both indicators. We found that young people experienced a 77% reduction in missing episodes and of those with previous convictions, 75% experienced a reduction in offending. This helps to demonstrate the effectiveness of the R&R intervention in diverting young people away from harm.

- The University of Bedfordshire highlighted the challenge we have had in implementing a consistent contextual safeguarding response, indicating that our work is often focussed on the individual. This challenge has been intensified over the past year of the pandemic, with young people being less visible within public or educational spaces, adding to the difficulty in responding with a more contextual approach.

### IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON COUNTY LINES EXPLOITATION

- Despite the Covid-19 pandemic having a catastrophic impact internationally, from a Rescue and Response perspective, the County Lines exploitation picture relating to London has remained very consistent with previous years.
- Year 3 data is very similar to that of year 2, with personal characteristics of young people referred into the project showing very little fluctuation and overall referral numbers being received at a consistent frequency. (see pages 32/33 for further information)

- However, the mental health and wellbeing of young people has suffered a detrimental impact, with wide reporting from service providers of young people facing additional challenges associated with lockdown-driven isolation, reduced social contact, lack of education/employment/training opportunities and increased anxiety linked with ongoing instability.
- There were subtle changes to County Lines methodology throughout the pandemic, with transport methods or choices of safe-houses shifting to negotiate lockdown restrictions, but the overall operating model remains and young people continue to be groomed through various methods, including both online and in physical spaces.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The need to support vulnerable young people who are exploited through County Lines remains present and consistent with previous years, meaning that multi-agency interventions such as R&R that safeguard young people must continue to meet the needs of exploitation victims.
- In response to the negative impact of Covid-19 on young people's mental health and wellbeing, we must pro-actively seek out ways of providing additional support in this area, by building our internal capacity and comprehensively mapping out the external referral options available across London.

- In year 4 we will use the body of data gathered over 3 years to help us more accurately identify hotspot areas at ward level and facilitate a more contextual safeguarding response, which highlights extra-familial locations that present a risk and therefore an opportunity to implement more preventative activities.

## STRATEGIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### KEY FINDINGS

#### RACIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY

- Most referral characteristics have remained relatively consistent year on year, such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, and social care status. However, year 3 showed an 8% increase in the representation of Black individuals in our referral cohort, from 46% to 54%.
- Disproportionate representation of Black individuals, compared with the London population, is also seen in the NCLCC (National County Lines Coordination Centre) data of the overall number of London individuals linked to County Lines, which was 60% last year, an increase of 7% from the previous year. This demonstrates that the representation of Black individuals in our referral cohort is broadly similar to the overall County Lines picture as understood by the NCLCC.
- It is fundamental that we establish whether the disproportionate representation of Black individuals within R&R and NCLCC County Lines data is accurate compared with the actual number involved, or if this data is affected by issues associated with racial stigma, stereotypes or targeting.
- It is of note that the referral cohort for females looks very different to that of males with regards to ethnicity, with the highest amount of referrals relating to White females. However, comparing this data with the residential population of 10-25 year olds in London, white females would still remain under-represented and black females over-represented (see page 28 for data).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Racial disproportionality within the Criminal Justice System is a well-established problem, particularly relating to the over-representation of Black people. With R&R referrals broadly reflecting NCLCC London data, it would seem that determining the accuracy of this data is beyond the scope of R&R, but crucial that the issue be explored further. R&R and its partners will work with the NCLCC to explore what can be done in the upcoming financial year of 22/23 to advance our understanding and learning in this area.
- If the available data is a true representation of the cohort actually involved, the issue must be dealt with holistically to understand the cause, with a public health lens and focus on early years intervention. However, if the data we have is showing a skewed perspective on reality based on any existing systemic racial bias or prejudice, then County Lines should join the scope of Lammy's (2017) review into Criminal Justice outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and the Mayor of London (2021) 'Tackling Ethnic Disproportionality In Youth Justice' action plan. It is of course very possible that both of these actions would be beneficial to try and achieve improved racial equality.

## STRATEGIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### KEY FINDINGS

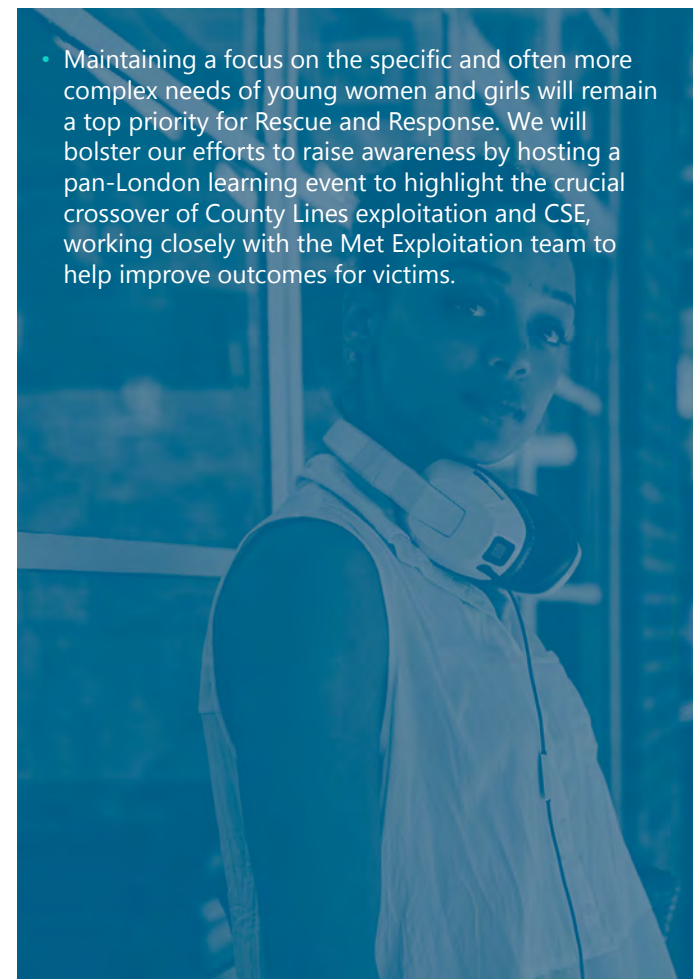
#### YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

- We received fewer referrals for females in the past year resulting in an 18% reduction, from 99 down to 81. Given that our Gender Consultant has trained over 1000 frontline professionals in this year, we would expect that awareness levels around exploitation of young women and girls is at an improved level and partners are aware of the R&R project. This data could indicate that there has been a reduction in the number of females exploited through County Lines in the past year.

- However, our experience is that of rising complexity and greater risk to females who are groomed onto County Lines, with sexual exploitation featuring more prominently in presenting cases, with concerning links to extensive CSE networks.
- There seems to be wider systemic issues in place that create barriers to young women and girls receiving the appropriate safeguarding response. This includes cultural factors that are not considered in the potential differing models of CSE and perceived level of risk and vulnerabilities (see page 27 for further information).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintaining a focus on the specific and often more complex needs of young women and girls will remain a top priority for Rescue and Response. We will bolster our efforts to raise awareness by hosting a pan-London learning event to highlight the crucial crossover of County Lines exploitation and CSE, working closely with the Met Exploitation team to help improve outcomes for victims.

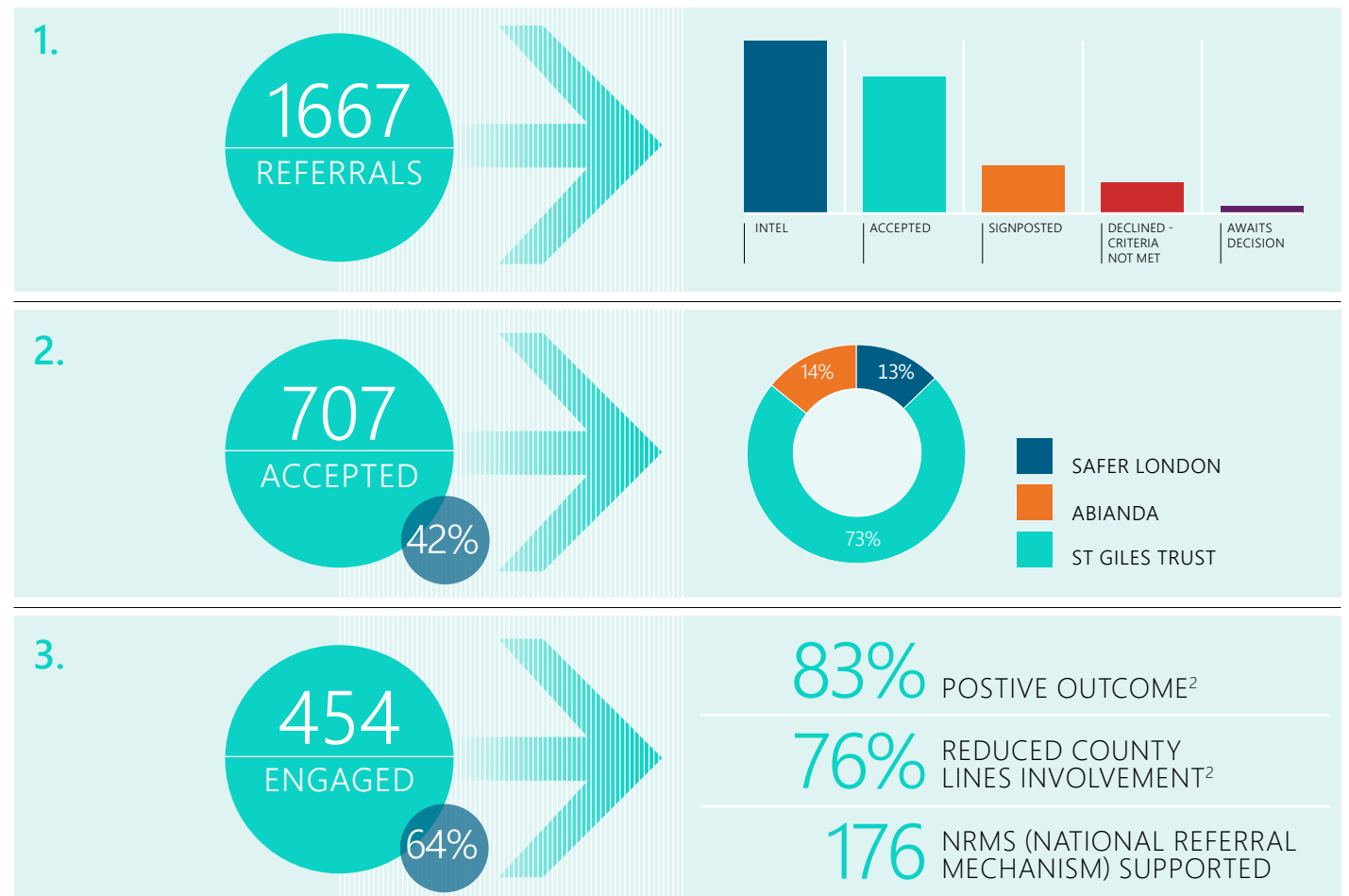


# RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT: 3 YEAR OVERVIEW

The project has continued to receive consistently high amounts of referrals each year, which follow similar peaks and troughs associated with seasonal related behaviours.

We are still encouraging partner agencies to submit 'intelligence only' referrals for those not currently in need of intervention support, which helps us continue to develop a more accurate analytical overview of the London County Lines exploitation picture relating to young people up to the age of 25 (See page 14 for further information).

## THE PROJECT TO DATE<sup>1</sup>

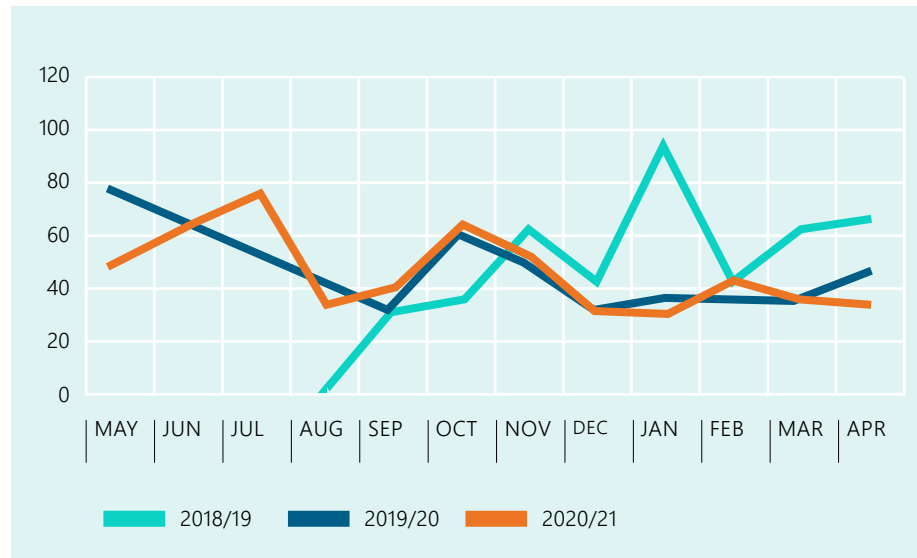




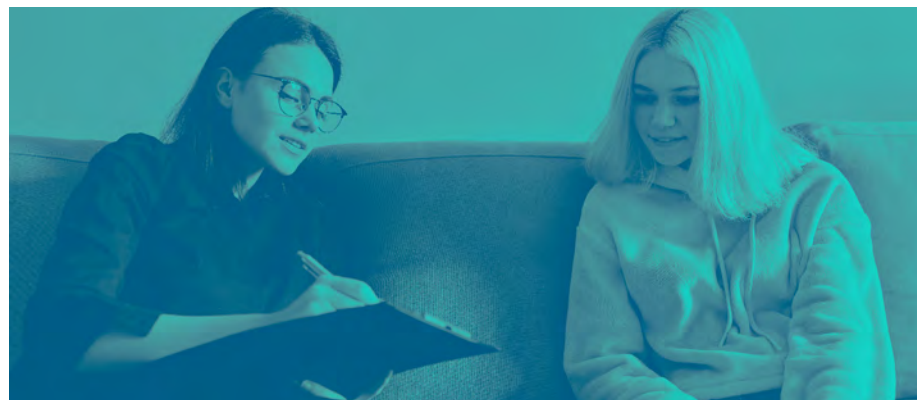
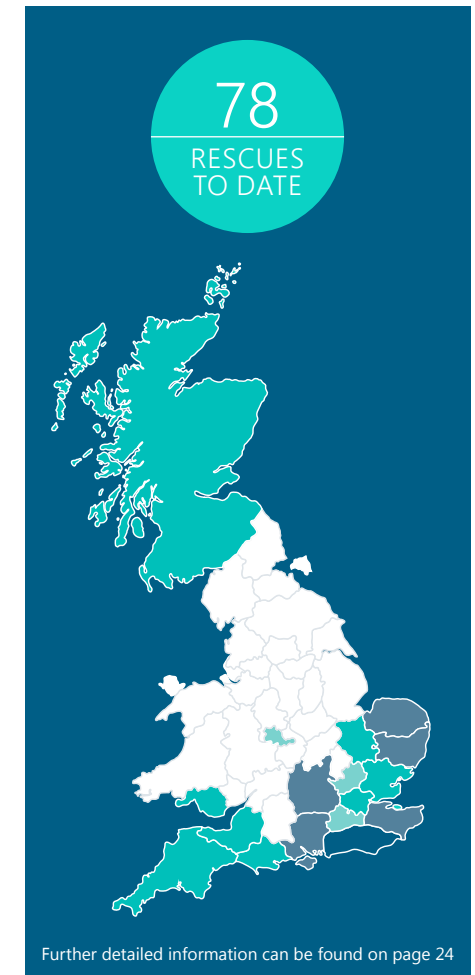
## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT: 3 YEAR OVERVIEW

- Project referrals in the past year 20/21 (598) remained very consistent with the previous year 19/20 (553), despite the additional challenges faced with Covid-19.
- Comparing the last 2 years of referrals reveals some very consistent trends, with a large dip in referrals during August and September and another dip during the colder months December to March.
- The Summer dip in referrals could be attributed to two things. The volume of young people frequenting public spaces in the daytime during school holidays, posing a greater challenge for frontline workers to spot the signs and symptoms of more vulnerable young people who may ordinarily stand out and also reduced consistency of professional workers during a period where many take leave for holidays.
- Fewer referrals in the winter months would be expected when the cold and wet weather drives people into warmer and more secluded spaces, leading to reduced contact with authorities.

### REFERRALS YEAR ON YEAR



### RESCUES TO DATE CARRIED OUT OVER A 3 YEAR PERIOD



## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT: 3 YEAR OVERVIEW

This map shows the distribution of all referrals to Rescue and Response across 3 years by ward, based on the residential address of the young person.

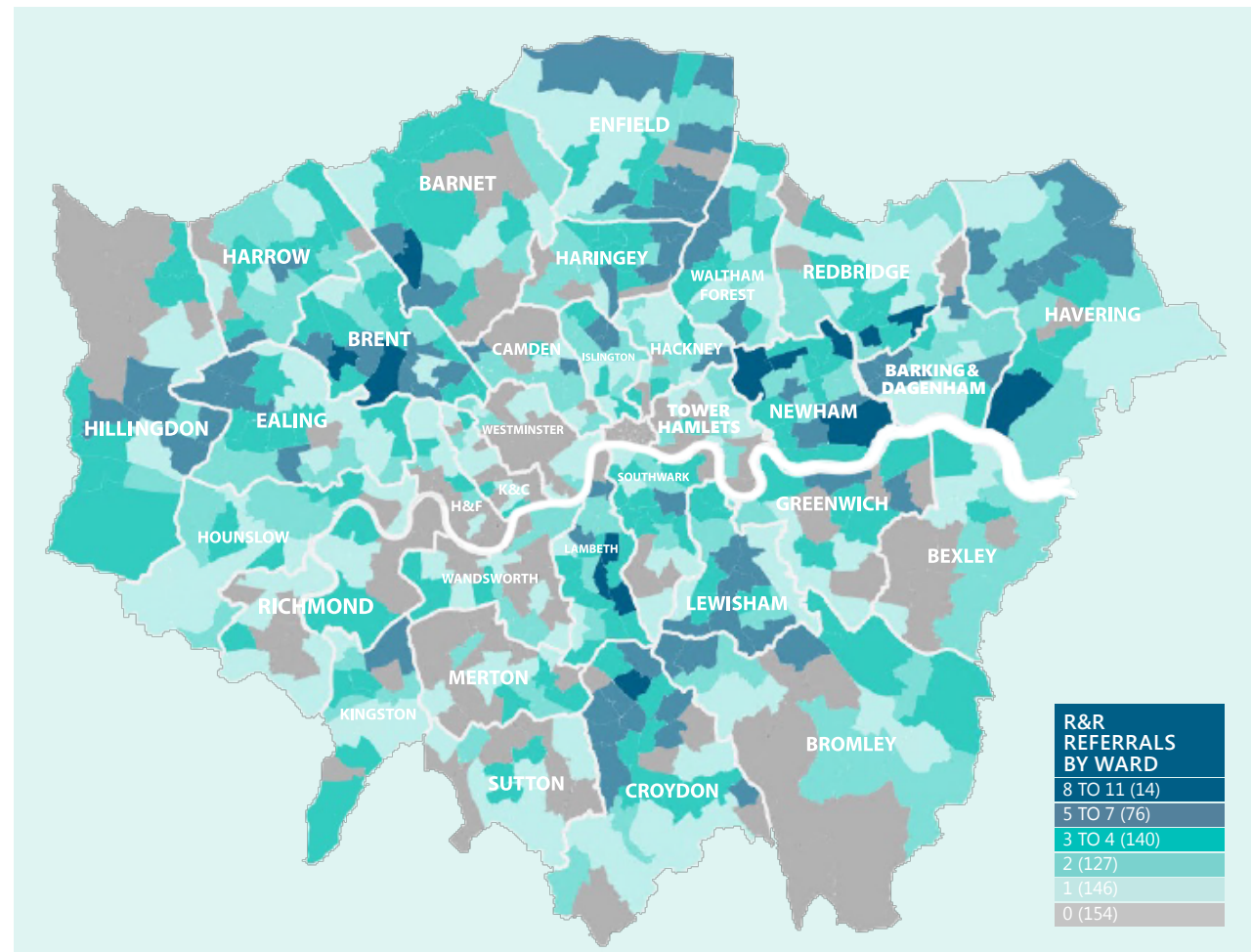
Now that we have a larger body of data collated over a 3 year period, we can better understand the geographical spread of referrals across London, looking beyond the borough borders.

This map shows how R&R referrals are very often condensed into small pockets within London boroughs, demonstrating that the issue of County Lines exploitation is rarely a borough-wide issue. Analysis of this kind can help promote a more contextual response to safeguarding, by targeting limited resources into the areas with the greatest need. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to safeguarding adolescents from harm outside of the family home and that targets the social conditions of abuse; that is the spaces where young people come to harm and the social rules at play in these spaces (See Appendix 4).

In year 4 of the project we plan to use our analytical resource to create products that will support boroughs with their strategic response to County Lines exploitation, indicating highest risk wards and prominent places that have frequently come to notice.

### WARDS WITH HIGHEST REFERRALS

WARD	BOROUGH	REFERRALS
COLDHARBOUR	LAMBETH	11
FOREST GATE SOUTH	NEWHAM	11
LITTLE ILFORD	NEWHAM	11
COLINDALE	BARNET	9
SOUTH HORNCHURCH	HAVERING	9
STONEBRIDGE	BRENT	9
THORNTON HEATH	CROYDON	9
THURLOW PARK	LAMBETH	9
TULSE HILL	LAMBETH	9

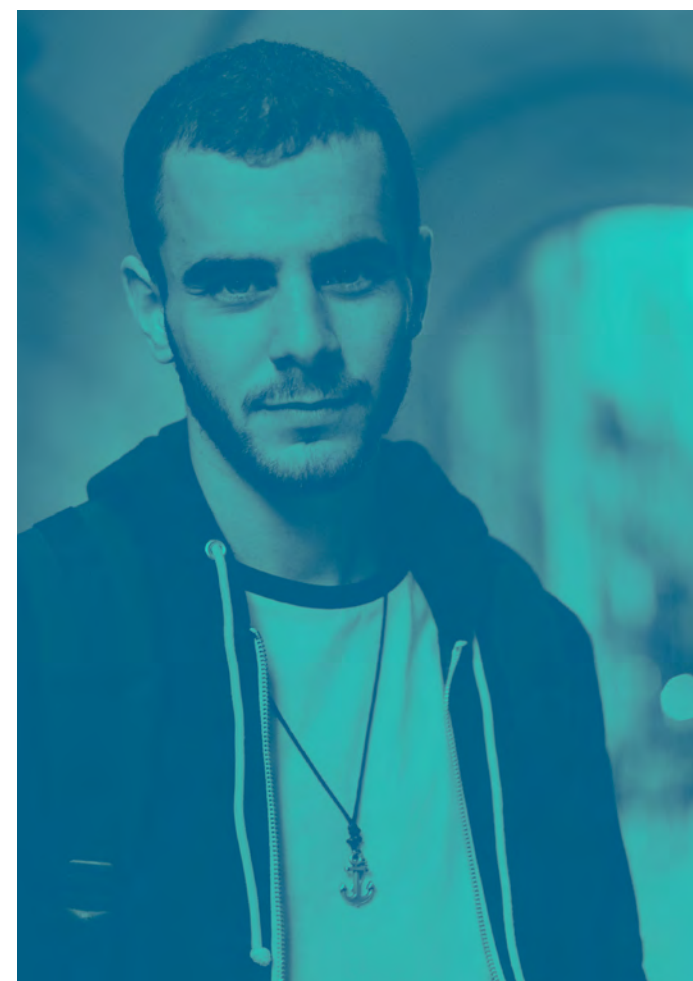
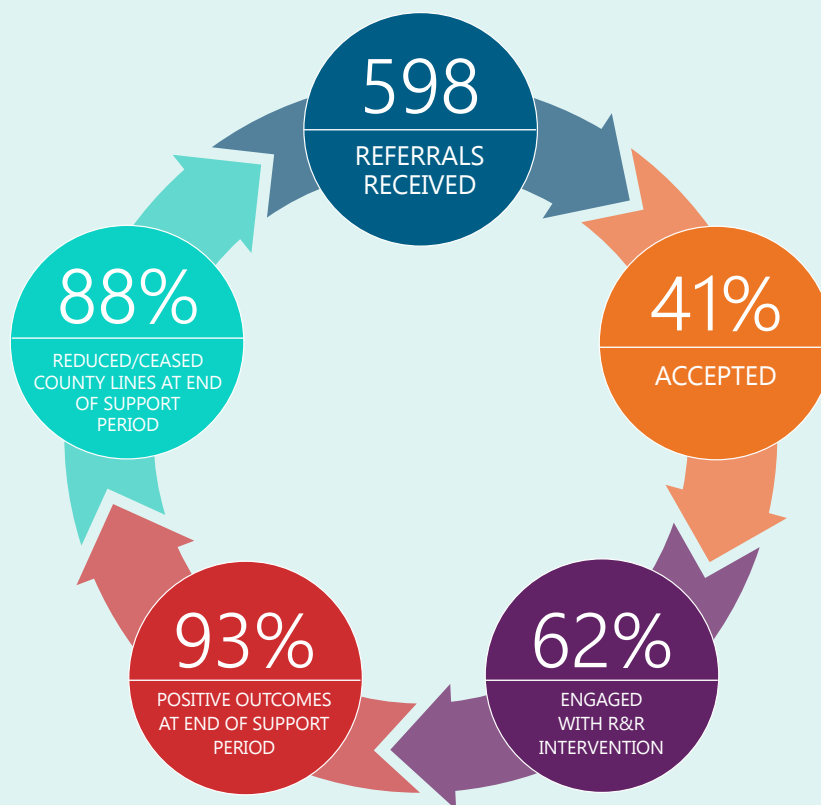


# RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT: YEAR 3 IN FOCUS 2020/21

## 93% POSITIVE OUTCOMES IN YEAR 3

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

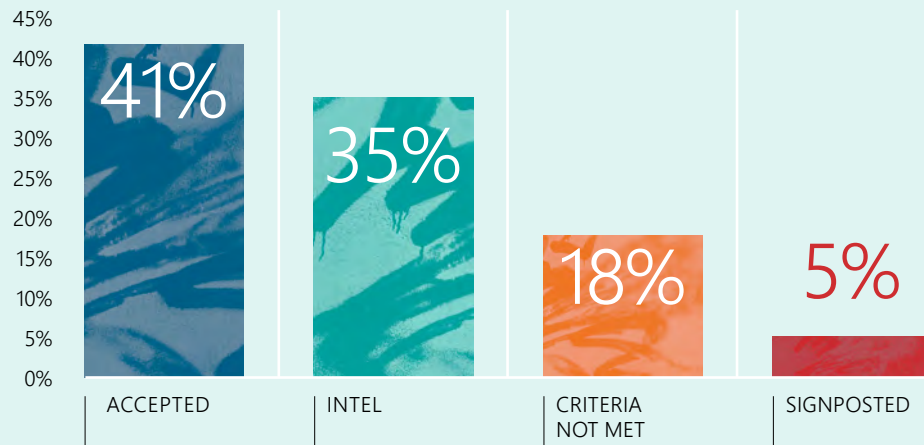
- Increased feelings of safety and reduced feelings of vulnerability (service user led)
- We Improved safety and reduced level of risk of harm (professional viewpoint)
- Increased knowledge & resilience of the risk factors (ability to understand ways to stay safe through safety planning)
- Young person has increased knowledge and awareness of issues regarding CCE, CSE and victimisation in context of County 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).





## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT YEAR 3 IN FOCUS 2020/21

### WHY DO WE NOT ACCEPT SOME REFERRALS?



- As part of our aim to provide an accurate as possible overview of the London picture for County Lines exploitation of young people, we encourage frontline practitioners to make 'intelligence only' referrals into the project for when an individual does not currently need our intervention support. These referrals help us to map out the overall problem across the capital and continue to be the primary source for providing a pan-London overview of County Lines exploitation.
- We also receive many referrals relating to young people who do not meet our criteria of having an association with County Lines, but have shown vulnerability that puts them at risk of exploitation. Due to the team being at capacity throughout the project with confirmed County Lines cases, we have been unable to allocate these individuals internally to date, but will signpost to alternative local provision and in year 4 will be referring local exploitation cases to the Home office funded County Lines Victim Support Service operated by St Giles Trust.

### FURTHER OUTCOMES FOR ENGAGED COHORT

At the close of the year 20/21 R&R had 178 active and open cases, with 29% receiving 6-12 months intervention, demonstrating the longevity of our casework with young people.

We aim to avoid putting deadlines to our casework, seeking to close cases more organically when a young person has been effectively safeguarded and ready to transition into the next phase of their life.

LENGTH OF INTERVENTION FOR OPEN & ACTIVE CASES AT YEAR END 2020/2021	NUMBER OF YP
Less than 1 months intervention	18
1-3 months intervention	43
3-5 months intervention	66
6-12 months intervention	51
TOTAL	178

REDUCTION IN HARM AT THE END OF SUPPORT PERIOD

88%

INCREASED RESILIENCE AT THE END OF SUPPORT PERIOD

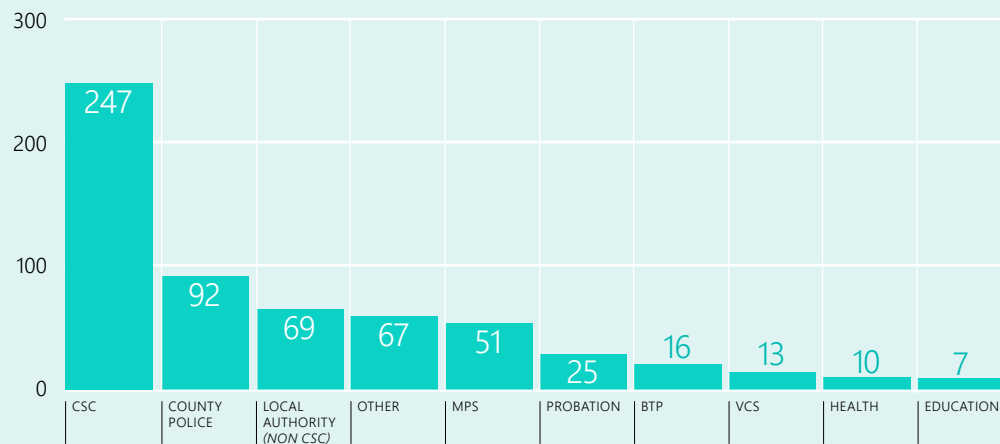
82%

REDUCTION IN NEET STATUS COMPARING PRIOR AND POST SUPPORT PERIOD

42%

## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT YEAR 3 IN FOCUS 2020/21

### REFERRING AGENCIES IN YEAR 3



- Children's Social Care (CSC) continue to be the main referring agency, accounting for 41% of year 3 referrals, followed by County Police forces with 15%.
- Notably, County Police force referrals decreased significantly as the year progressed, with 73% of the referrals coming in the first two quarters.
- A Local Authority team name was provided in 81% of referrals in year 3. 21 different teams referred into R&R in year 3, as opposed to only 10 different teams in year 1. This demonstrates how R&R has developed a wider reach and awareness with Local Authorities as the project has progressed.



# LONDON MAP SHOWING ALL REFERRALS INTO R&R BY BOROUGH

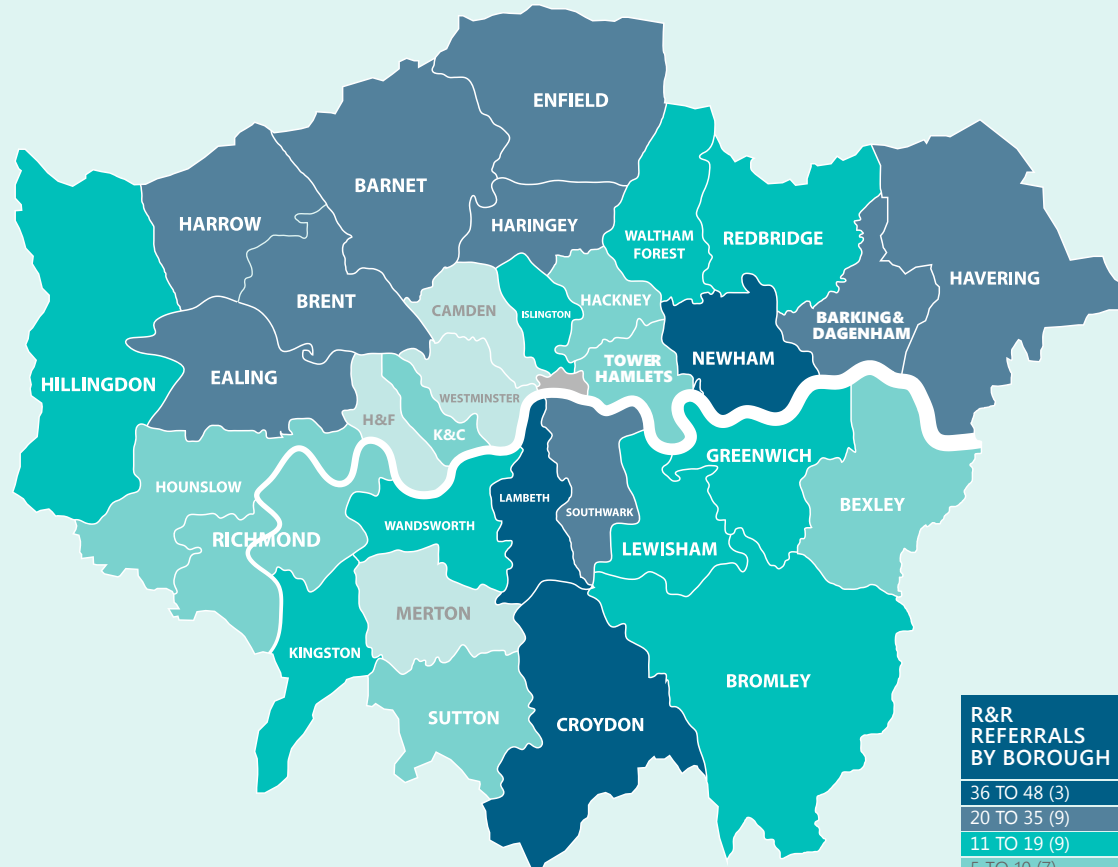
## 2020/21

A total of 598 referrals were received by the Rescue and Response Project from May 2020 to April 2021. These are represented below according to the borough that held statutory responsibility for them at the time of referral, and comparisons to the year 2 reporting are shown within the borough table.

Newham remains our top referring borough again this year

Lambeth had the largest increase in referrals at 75%

Camden had the largest reduction in referrals at 78%



BOROUGH	NUMBER OF REFERRALS	
	19/20	20/21
NEWHAM	43	48
LAMBETH	24	42
CROYDON	28	39
BRENT	37	35
EALING	19	30
BARKING AND DAGENHAM	17	29
HARINGEY	18	27
HARROW	25	26
BARNET	22	24
SOUTHWARK	20	24
ENFIELD	19	23
HAVERING	30	23
BROMLEY	13	19
HILLINGDON	17	19
KINGSTON UPON THAMES	15	17
WALTHAM FOREST	24	17
LEWISHAM	14	15
REDBRIDGE	11	15
WANDSWORTH	5	15
ISLINGTON	21	14
GREENWICH	9	13
HACKNEY	14	10
HOUNSLOW	18	9
TOWER HAMLETS	18	8
BEXLEY	10	7
KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA	5	7
RICHMOND UPON THAMES	4	7
SUTTON	9	6
CAMDEN	18	4
MERTON	4	4
WESTMINSTER	6	4
HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM	6	2
OUT OF LONDON (NOT MAPPED)	10	16



# LONDON MAP SHOWING ALL INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES BY BOROUGH 2020/21

During year 3 a total of 1,784 individuals have been identified as having a link to County Lines. This is a 44% reduction when compared to the same period last year (3,290). 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. There have been some changes in recording practices for CLICM (County Lines Intelligence Collection Matrix) submissions, which has contributed towards an overall reduction in individuals linked to County Lines in 20/21 compared to 19/20. Please see 'Data Caveats' on page 2 for further information on factors contributing to this reduction.

All 1,784 individuals identified in 20/21 are represented in the map across by borough, based on their residence at the time of identification. The top 6 boroughs with the highest amount of individuals linked to County Lines has remained consistent with the previous year.

Croydon, Lambeth, Newham and Brent are also our top 4 referring boroughs, indicating that the boroughs with the most notable County Lines problem are referring to R&R appropriately.



COUNTY LINE INDIVIDUALS BY BOROUGH	
83 TO 138 (7)	
54 TO 82 (6)	
42 TO 53 (5)	
32 TO 41 (5)	
7 TO 31 (9)	

BOROUGH	RANKING	
	19/20	20/21
CROYDON	1	1
LAMBETH	2	2
NEWHAM	3	3
BRENT	4	4
SOUTHWARK	5	4
LEWISHAM	6	6
GREENWICH	8	7
EALING	11	8
HACKNEY	9	9
ENFIELD	10	10
WALTHAM FOREST	7	11
REDBRIDGE	12	12
HARINGEY	13	13
WANDSWORTH	18	14
BARKING & DAGENHAM	15	15
BEXLEY	27	16
ISLINGTON	21	17
HILLINGDON	17	18
BARNET	14	19
TOWER HAMLETS	16	19
HOUNSLOW	19	19
CAMDEN	25	22
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA	24	23
BROMLEY	19	24
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM	22	24
MERTON	29	24
HARROW	26	27
WESTMINSTER	28	28
HAVERING	22	29
SUTTON	30	30
KINGSTON	31	31
RICHMOND	32	32

# DEMOGRAPHICS FOR R&R REFERRALS AND LONDON INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES 2020/2021

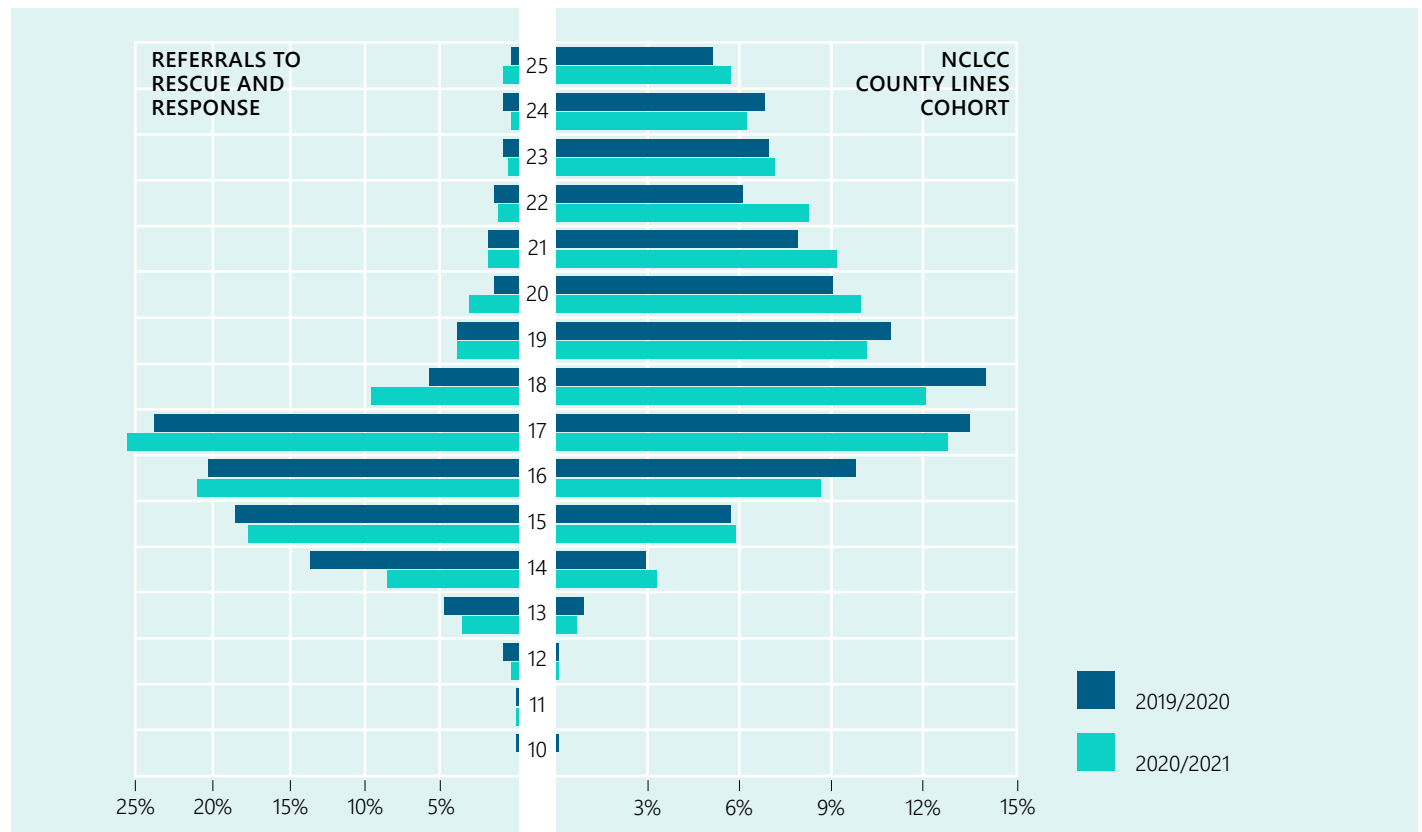
## AGE

Referrals into R&R are significantly younger than the overall NCLCC County Lines Cohort. The graph shows that only 22% of R&R referrals are aged 18-25 years, whereas 69% of all individuals up to 25 years of the County Lines cohort are aged 18-25 years.

### Factors contributing to a decline of referrals for 18-25 year age group:

- Young adults are not viewed as possible victims of exploitation due to their age, instead they are presumed to be perpetrators.
- Children have more services around them, so there is more oversight around risk, safety and vulnerability. This is an issue of transitional safeguarding, where the 18+ cohort experience services dropping away and less responsibility for services to advocate on their behalf as they reach adulthood. We believe that many young adults are having their vulnerability overlooked, resulting in the cliff-edge drop in R&R referrals for 18 year olds.

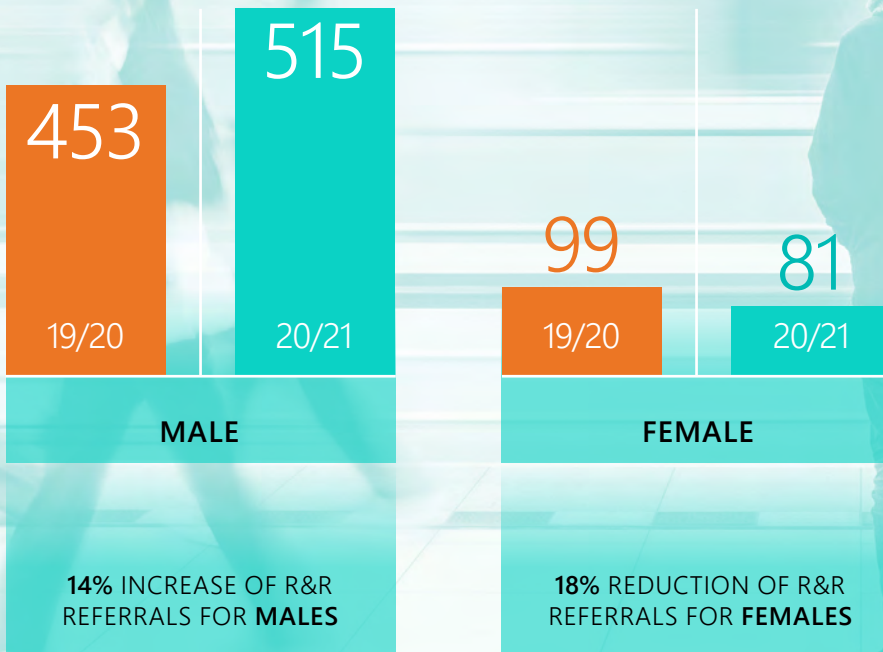
Individuals aged 25 and under account for 76% of the total number of individuals identified as being linked to County Lines.



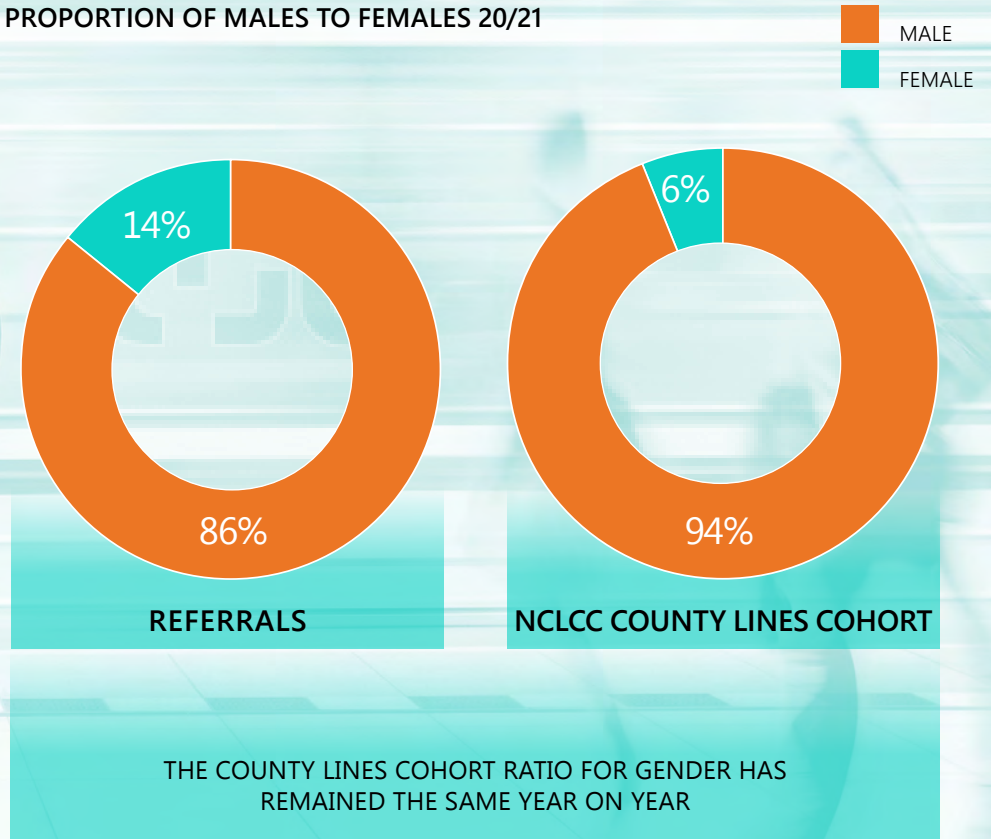
**DEMOGRAPHICS FOR R&R REFERRALS AND LONDON INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES**  
2020/21

**GENDER**

R&R REFERRALS YEAR ON YEAR BY GENDER

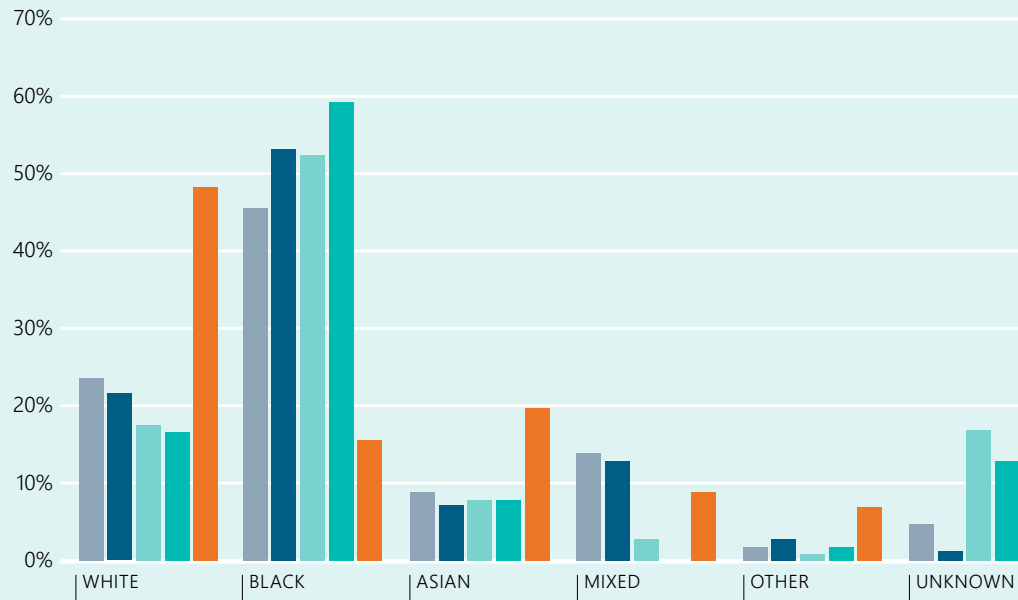


PROPORTION OF MALES TO FEMALES 20/21





## DEMOGRAPHICS FOR R&R REFERRALS AND LONDON INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES 2020/21



- REFERRALS 19/20
- REFERRALS 20/21
- COUNTY LINES COHORT 19/20
- COUNTY LINES COHORT 20/21
- LONDON POPULATION AGED 10-21YRS

### REFERRAL OBSERVATIONS

Year on year, there are small changes to all ethnicities except for Black individuals.

There was an increase of referrals by 8% from 46% to 54% for Black individuals.

There was also increased recording for young people’s ethnicities, with missing information for only 1% compared to the previous year of 5%.

### 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 are a low number of Mixed ethnicity recorded for the County Lines cohort, due to the recording practices of Mixed ethnicities being categorised under Black, Asian and Other categories.

**Black individuals from London aged 10-25 years are 6 times more likely to be referred to R&R for County Lines concerns compared to all other ethnicities of the same age.**

		WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	MIXED	OTHER	UNKNOWN
REFERRALS	19/20	24%	46%	9%	14%	2%	5%
	20/21	22%	54%	7%	13%	3%	1%
COUNTY LINES COHORT	19/20	18%	53%	8%	3%	1%	17%
	20/21	17%	60%	8%	0%	2%	13%
LONDON POPULATION AGED 10-25YRS*	2021	49%	16%	20%	9%	7%	0%

\*Source: GLA - London datastore

# DEMOGRAPHICS FOR R&R REFERRALS

Additional demographic information is recorded at point of R&R referral by the referrer, and the accuracy and availability of this information is dependent on what information may or may not be known to them at that time. The below reflects what was recorded during year 3 and comparisons have been drawn to the reporting from year 2.

## EDUCATION

41% of young people referred were in education at the time of referral and this has remained the same as year 2 (41%). Of those that were in education, 35% attended a mainstream school. This is a reduction from 40% recorded during year 2.

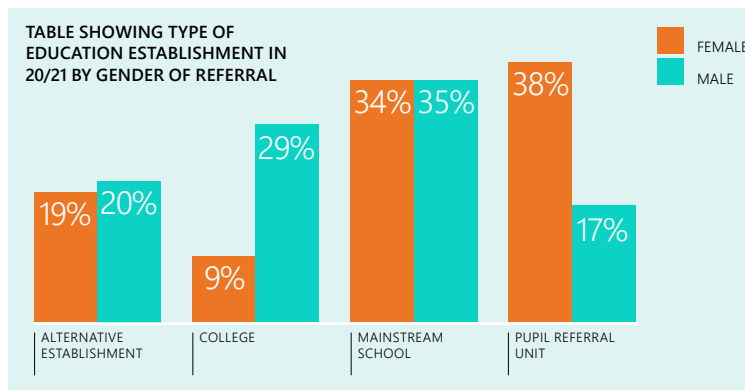
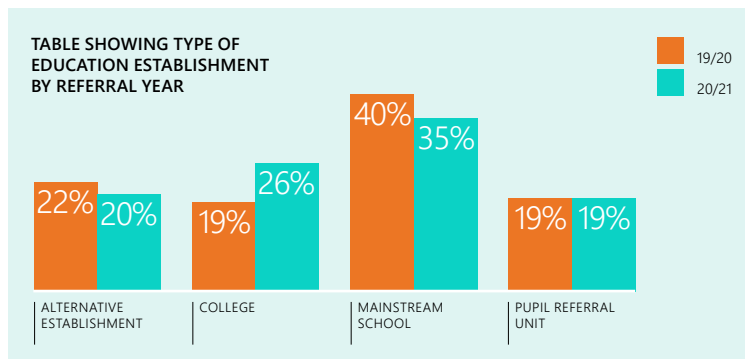
Gender comparisons show that of the 213 males attending education, referred, 29% attended college and 35% attended mainstream school. Of the 35 females attending education, most were attending a PRU, which accounts for a much larger proportion compared with the male cohort.

## COUNTY LINES AND EDUCATION

Grooming can occur outside the gates of schools and colleges.

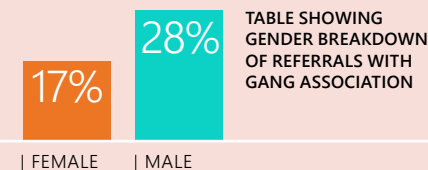
Once a young person has been groomed, the exploiter will use that young person to widen the young people they have access to. The exploiter may not be going directly to school, but once they have one young person who attends school, their friendship or peer group will become a target.

Initially, young people may be identified at education establishments as ‘perpetrators’ as opposed to victims until further digging is done around the complexities and power dynamic of their situation.



## GANG ASSOCIATION

27% of young people had a gang link recorded by the referrer at time of referral. This is compared to 39% in year 2.



## SAFEGUARDING AND DISCLOSURES IN EDUCATION

*“In training, one of the caseworkers would say to professionals: “You need to think to yourself, are you a safe person for this young person to talk to? And by that, I mean, nothing that the young person says, is going to create blame and judgement” It actually works quite well, in terms of getting professionals to look inwards and actually be like, I’m not because I get on well with the kids, but I potentially would not know how to respond, or I wouldn’t respond in the right way, or I wouldn’t be able to hide what my face is thinking.”*

## DEMOGRAPHICS FOR R&R REFERRALS

### SOCIAL CARE STATUS

#### COUNTY LINES AND CARE HOMES AND PLACEMENTS

- Placing young people in care homes and placements can reduce the immediate risk to young people at risk of County Lines or other forms of exploitation. However young people may also make new County Lines and gang links at new placements.
- Risk assessments should explore the contextual risk around the young person

as well at the risks within the placement itself whilst taking into consideration the voice of the young person.

- Staff at care placements may not always be equipped to deal with the complexity of risk and may recruit agency staff which can lead to a transient workforce, and thus continuous training around understanding the complexity of County Lines is needed.
- After two to three placements, young people are very much aware that care homes are a 'holding place' until they are over 18 or able to move out of the social care realm of responsibility. One R&R case worker has stated that no young person they have worked with has ever felt that a care placement feels like 'home'.

53%

53% of young people referred had a Social Care status at the time of referral (LAC, CIN or CP). This is a reduction from 59% recorded in year 2.

18%

18% of referrals were for young people who are Looked After Children. This is a reduction from 31% recorded in year 2.

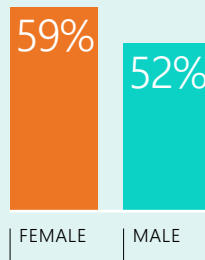


TABLE SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A SOCIAL CARE STATUS IN 20/21 BY GENDER OF REFERRAL

### LEARNING DISABILITIES

#### COUNTY LINES AND VULNERABILITIES

Exploiters will try and identify vulnerabilities and groom accordingly.

Young people that are referred to R&R tend to be bottom of the County Lines hierarchy and often these young people do not have an understanding of the risks involved around working on the lines, rather than them being targeted because of a specific disability or learning difficulties.

Caseworkers have noticed that some young people may be academically gifted, but not as capable in dealing with difficult or dangerous situations associated with criminal exploitation.

#### WITH REGARDS TO LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND MENTAL HEALTH:

- R&R workers have sometimes had to push for assessments to be done. CAMHS waiting lists are high as is the threshold, and cases can be closed if one appointment is closed. Young people exploited in County Lines need patience and services may not always understand.
- Services seemed reluctant to recognise that a young person's involvement with County Lines could be due to a vulnerability such as a learning disability and centred too heavily on the young person's ability to make choices.

12%

12% of young people had at least 1 disability recorded at time of referral. The most common continues to be ADHD, Autism and learning difficulties.

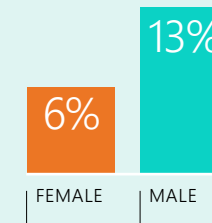


TABLE SHOWING PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A RECORDED DISABILITY IN 20/21 BY GENDER OF REFERRAL

# DEMOGRAPHICS DEPRIVATION

Rescue and Response wanted to explore whether there was a correlation between referrals to the project and deprivation.

The Indices of Deprivation 2019\*, are the Government's primary measure of deprivation for small areas (LSOAs) in England, and the Greater London Authority have calculated summary measures for wards in London.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines measures across seven distinct aspects of deprivation.

**They include:**

**Income, Employment, Education, Health, Crime, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living Environment**

37% of wards with 5 or more referrals for London fall into the highest 20 percent of Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score for London.

The Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient for all referrals to the project against the IMD score is 0.46 which indicates a low correlation.

The maps on the right show the ward comparisons for the top three referring boroughs to Rescue and Response and the borough specific correlation.

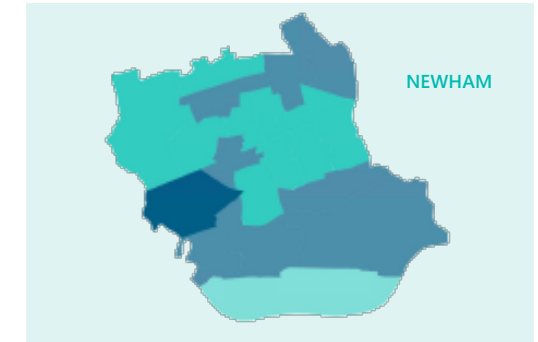
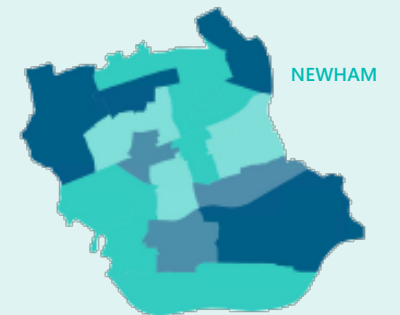
In conclusion, deprivation may be a factor towards County Lines, but it is not a significant enough singular factor to show a causality.

MAPS SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF R&R REFERRALS BY WARD

MAPS SHOWING THE IMD AVERAGE SCORE BY WARDS

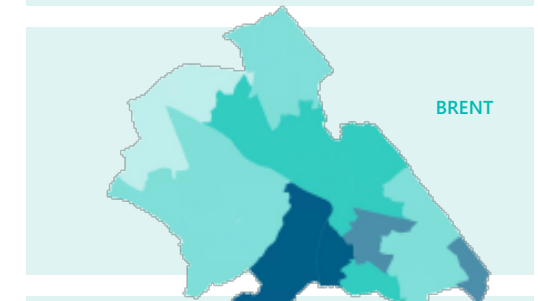
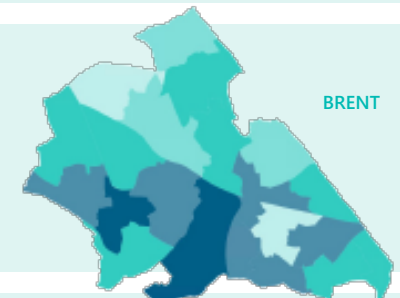
## NEWHAM

- 118 referrals received over 3 years
- is the 3rd most deprived London borough
- Forest Gate South and Little Ilford are second and third highest wards for referrals
- The Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient for Newham is 0.49 which shows a moderate correlation.



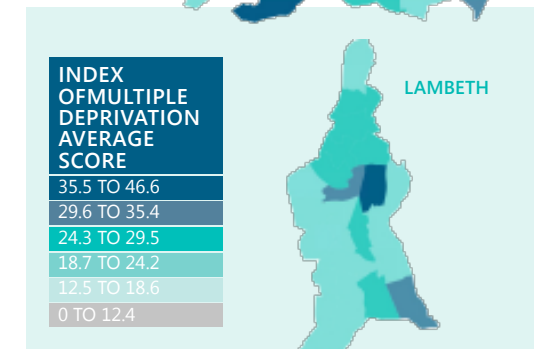
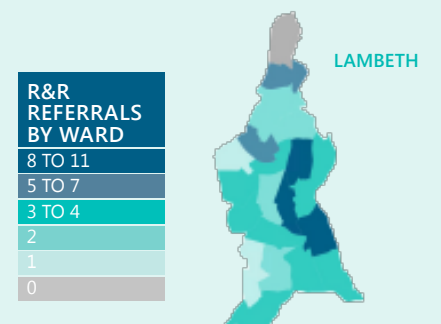
## BRENT

- 107 referrals received over 3 years
- is the 10th most deprived London borough
- The Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient for Brent is 0.24 which shows a low correlation.



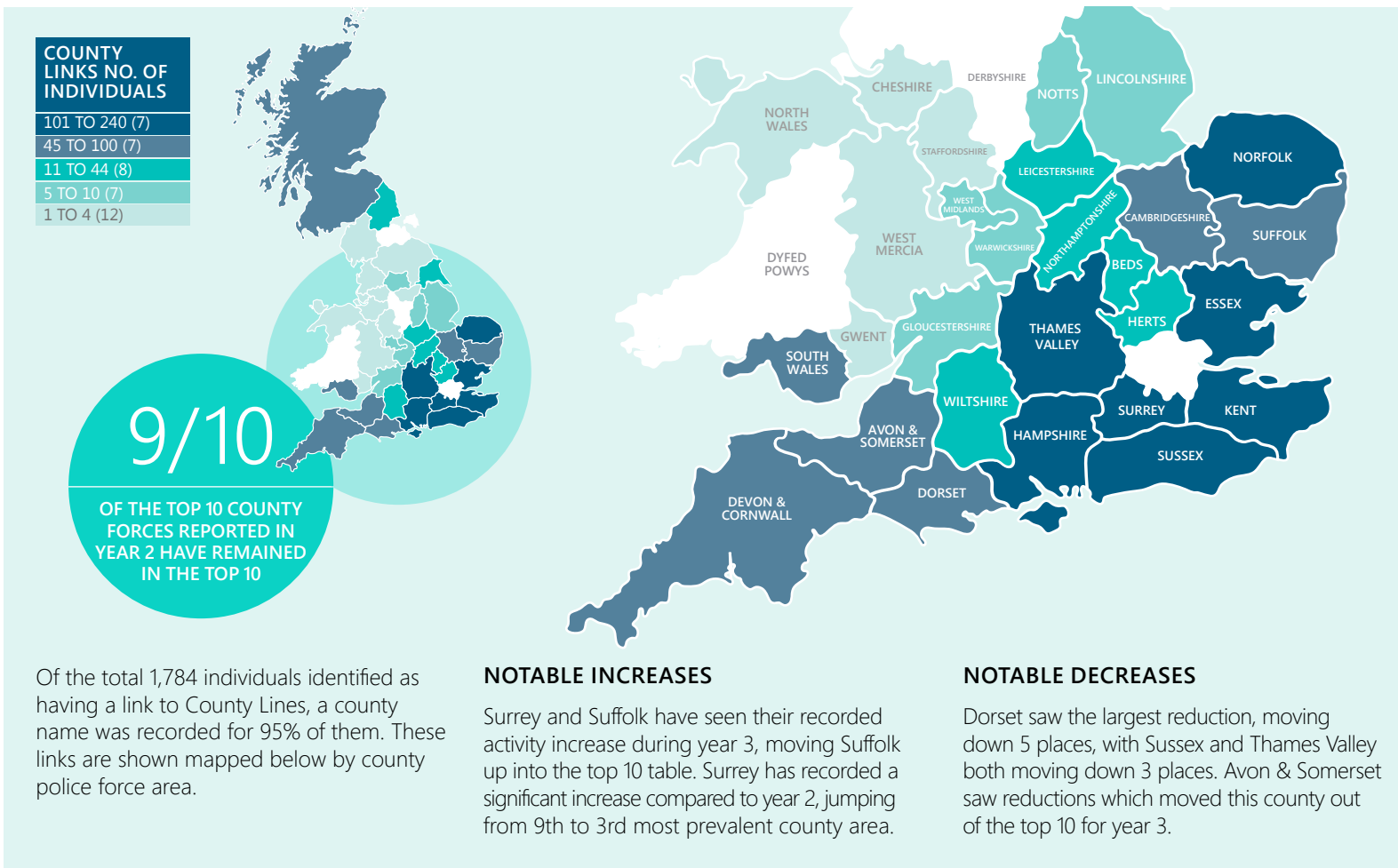
## LAMBETH

- 98 referrals received over 3 years
- is the 11th most deprived London borough
- Coldharbour ward in Lambeth has the highest number of referrals than any other ward.
- The Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient for Lambeth is 0.21 which shows a low correlation.





# UK MAP SHOWING LONDON INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES BY COUNTY FORCE AREA 2020/21



### WHICH WERE THE MOST PREVALENT COUNTY AREAS IN YEAR 3?

The county areas closest to London continue to have the highest recorded links to London County Lines individuals, and again, in particular those along the south coast.

The top county of Hampshire was ranked second in year 1 and first in year 2. Surrey and Suffolk have recorded an increase in the number of individuals in year 3 compared to year 2.

TOP 10 COUNTY FORCES	INDIVIDUALS LINKED	20/21 RANKING	19/20 RANKING
HAMPSHIRE	240	1	1
KENT	162	2	5
SURREY	145	3	9
ESSEX	122	4	7
SUSSEX	119	5	2
THAMES VALLEY	109	6	3
NORFOLK	102	7	6
SUFFOLK	100	8	11
DORSET	83	9	4
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	79	10	8

# UK MAP SHOWING LONDON INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO COUNTY LINES BY ASSOCIATED TOWN 2020/21

### COUNTY LINKS NO. OF INDIVIDUALS

101 TO 240 (7)

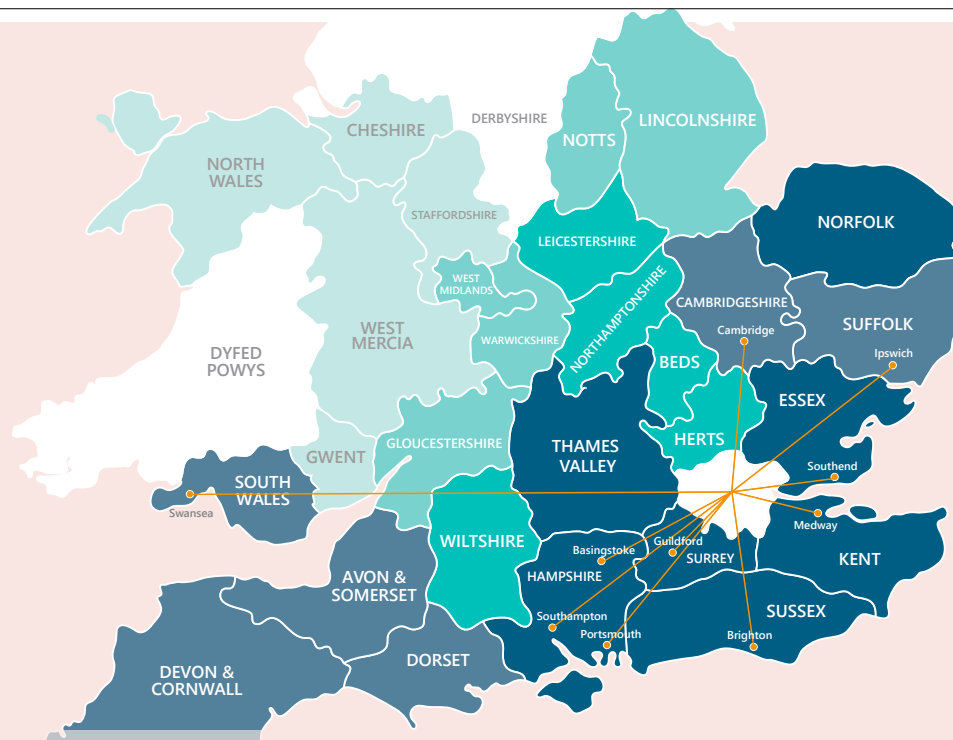
45 TO 100 (7)

11 TO 44 (8)

5 TO 10 (7)

1 TO 4 (12)

**8/10**  
OF THE TOP 10 COUNTY TOWNS REPORTED IN YEAR 2 HAVE REMAINED IN THE TOP 10



### NOTABLE INCREASES

Southend and Guildford have seen a significant increase on the year 3 reporting. This trend has led to these two towns moving into the top 10 county town list.

### NOTABLE DECREASES

Bournemouth and Northampton were ranked 8th and 9th on the last year reporting table; in the year 3 they have seen a significant reduction and are no longer listed as a top 10 county towns.

### WHICH WERE THE MOST PREVALENT COUNTY TOWNS IN YEAR 3?

Brighton has moved from the top recorded town in 19/20 to a ranking of 9, whereas Ipswich now moves to the top most recorded town with a total of 31 London individuals known to be linked with County Lines activity there.

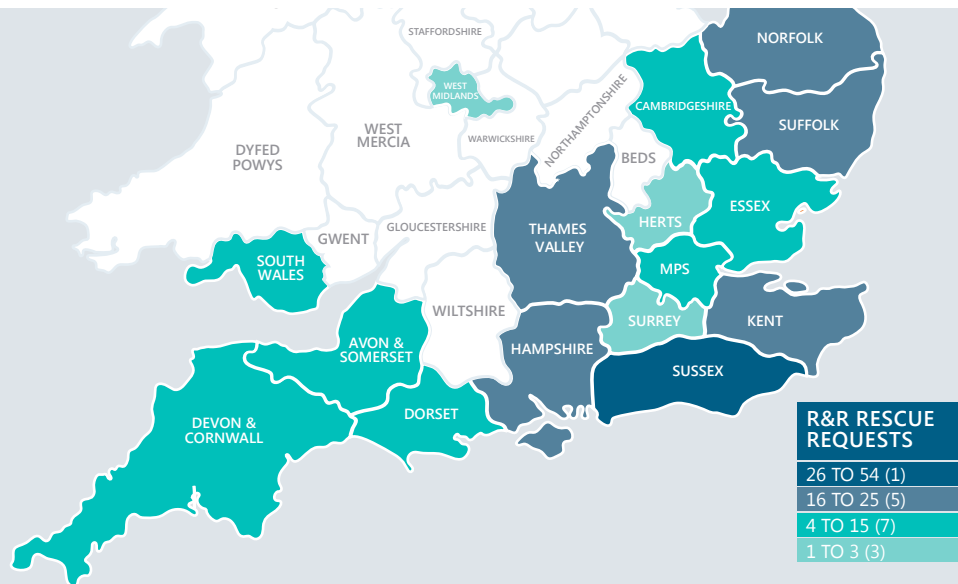
TOP 10 COUNTY TOWNS	INDIVIDUALS LINKED	20/21 RANKING	19/20 RANKING
IPSWICH	31	1	7
CAMBRIDGE	25	2	2
PORTSMOUTH	21	3	4
SOUTHAMPTON	21	4	3
SWANSEA	16	5	10
BASINGSTOKE	15	6	5
GUILDFORD	14	7	52
SOUTHEND	14	8	12
BRIGHTON	13	9	1
MEDWAY	12	10	6

Of the total 1,784 individuals identified as having a link to County Lines, we have specific county towns recorded for 29% of them. This is compared to 59% in year 2. The top ten county towns are reflected below, with the majority of them sitting within one of the top ten county areas.

# RESCUE AND RESPONSE RESCUE SERVICE

The R&R Rescue service is operated by St Giles Trust, who offer an immediate 'rescue' for young Londoners up to the age of 25 who have come into contact with authorities through suspected County Lines in areas outside of London. This could be a young person taken into police protection, coming into contact with British Transport Police or being bailed from a custody suite or court. The Rescue team operate a 24/7 helpline to offer support and will carry out rescues between 9am-10pm, by collecting the young person by car and driving them back home to London. St Giles Trust Outreach workers with lived experience will use this 'teachable moment' to discuss the risks of County Lines with the young person and discuss options for continued engagement with R&R. For rescue requests from counties further afield, the team will sometimes try and 'meet halfway' with county force polices to facilitate a longer-distance rescue.

A total of 208 rescue requests were received and 78 rescues carried out since the beginning of the project to April 2021. These are represented below according to the county that have submitted the rescue request. Table represents the number of rescue requests and rescues that have taken place in these counties.



### RESCUE REQUESTS

Most of the rescue requests were received from Sussex (54) and Hampshire (25). Top 5 counties have submitted 64% of all rescue requests.

### RESCUES

Although not all rescue request resulted in a rescue, the number of rescues has been steadily increasing in 20/21. A total

of 35 rescues were completed between May 2020 and April 2021. The St Giles Trust team operating the rescue service is a small unit and cannot always facilitate a rescue request due to limited capacity, particularly when requests are made at very short notice with significant travel times. Where R&R cannot carry out the rescue, our team will endeavour to facilitate the rescue through liaison with local authorities through our borough SPOCs.

### WHERE IN UK DID R&R RESCUE YOUNG PEOPLE FROM?

Sussex and Hampshire account for a 40% of all rescues completed. This correlates with both counties featuring highly in the NCLCC data on London individuals linked to County Lines, with Hampshire ranking top for the past 2 years and Sussex ranking 2nd in 19/20.

COUNTY FORCE	RESCUES REQUESTS	RESCUES
SUSSEX	54	21
HAMPSHIRE	25	10
THAMES VALLEY	19	7
SUFFOLK	18	9
KENT	18	5
NORFOLK	17	5
DEVON & CORNWALL	10	6
DORSET	9	4
LONDON	9	3
ESSEX	6	3
SCOTLAND	6	1
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	5	2
AVON & SOMERSET	4	0
SOUTH WALES	4	1
SURREY	2	1
HERTFORDSHIRE	1	0
WEST MIDLANDS	1	0

# CROSS-CUTTING THEME

## YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

### OVERVIEW OF ABIANDA GENDER CONSULTANCY BY JOCELYN YEBOAH-NEWTON

In this section we will see a summary of the work and findings of our Abianda Gender Consultant, Jocelyn Yeboah-Newton. In the past year Jocelyn has dealt with some incredibly high-risk cases relating to vulnerable girls, and in doing so, has made a series of observations and recommendations from her experiences of challenges that reflect wider issues concerning our response and safeguarding of young women and girls.

#### CULTURAL CONTEXT

In the complex cases presented, many were from marginalised groups, and were of colour. This often resulted in them being subjected to adultification by professionals, society and perpetrators (The Children's Society, 2018). Creating barriers to early intervention and misinterpretation of trauma-informed presentations and behaviours of young children and womxn.

Imkaan and University of Warwickshire (2015), found that the lack of interrogation across the sexual violence sector into the range of barriers linked to language, poverty, immigration and culture of Black and Minority Ethnic communities is diverse and nuanced. Not understanding these factors and including this insight into the safeguarding and supportive measures of women and girls from these communities can significantly impact how they engage with the support offered and whether they are kept safe.

#### SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Increasing level of complexity young women are experiencing
- Abianda's response to the changing complexity and the potential impact on resources
- The level of systemic injustices some cases have had to navigate
- The need for a more coordinated and strategic response across and outside of the partnership

#### KEY OBSERVATIONS:

- Missed opportunities to investigate potential network of perpetrators/ exploiters
- Indicators of sexual trauma and the initial disclosure of harm were not responded to with the appropriate actions for the vulnerabilities presented
- Intelligence not used to safeguard the children holistically or contextually
- Missed opportunities for earlier intervention at several stages of some cases
- Cultural factors were not considered in the potential differing models of CSE and perceived level of risk and vulnerabilities

- NRMs were either not updated by all respective professionals involved and/or, had no outcomes to report despite a vast amount of professionals involved

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS:

- Professionals actively aware of the victims' age, vulnerability, and cultural context
- Support to escalate case support across the MPS and Social Care
- Collaborative contributions from the professional network for NRMs
- Ensuring consistently proactive support from MPS, including Exploitation Units to help explore intelligence shared
- Professionals aware of indicators of complex trauma and exploitation
- Timely outcomes of NRMs
- Victimless investigations and prosecutions
- Influence in legal advice, housing, and trauma-informed therapeutic interventions + risk mapping



# CROSS-CUTTING THEME

## YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

### GENDER CONSULTANCY

#### TRAINING DELIVERY

The Abianda Gender Consultant role was introduced in July 2020 and delivered 23 training sessions to 1027 professionals during the year 20/21. The training 'Young Womxn, Girls, Gangs & County Lines' helps support frontline professionals to address the specific needs of young women and girls at risk of County Lines exploitation.

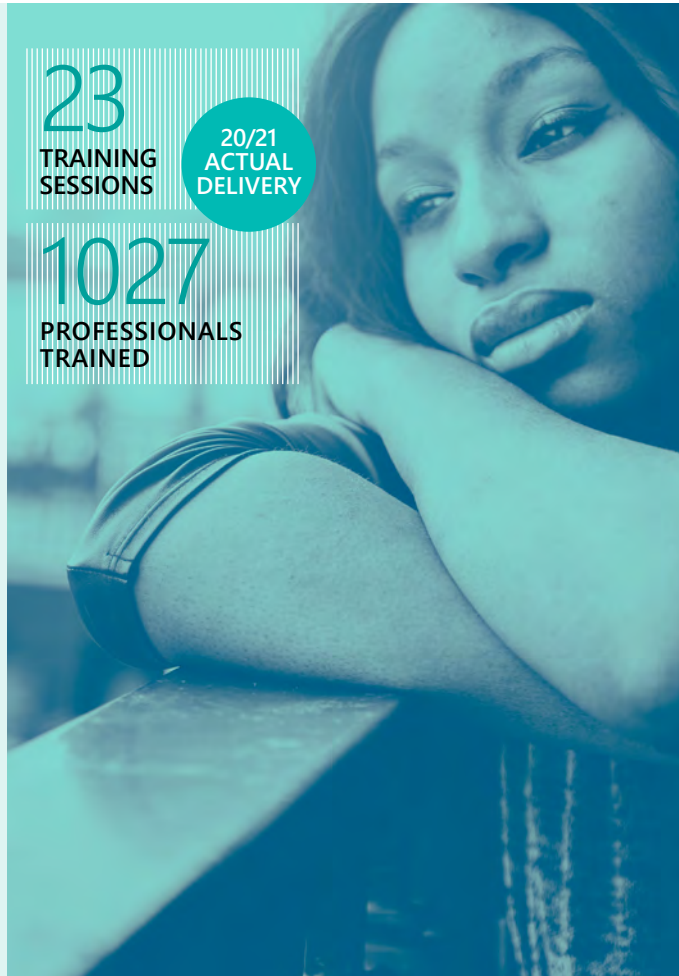
#### CASE CONSULTATIONS

Abianda's Gender Consultancy adds value to the systems change element of the Rescue and Response project. The core element of the role is to offer support to professionals supporting young women and girls who are experiencing County Lines exploitation, strength-based, solution-focused and young women-led tools of support through case consultations and training. This aims to support a much-needed shift in culture and create systems change practice.

23  
TRAINING  
SESSIONS

20/21  
ACTUAL  
DELIVERY

1027  
PROFESSIONALS  
TRAINED



#### PROFESSIONALS ATTENDING THE TRAINING REPRESENTED A BROAD VARIETY OF SECTORS AND SERVICES

**Work Coaches** - DWP, Job Centre Plus

**Child Exploitation Leads** - MPS

**Social Workers** - CSC

**Lawyers** - Just for Kids Law

**Mental Health Nurses** - NHS

**Case Workers + Practitioners** - Third Sector

**Youth Workers** - Community Centres

**Custody Suite Officers** - MPS

**Youth Offending Teams**

**Youth Justice Teams**

**Integrated Youth Teams**

**Teachers across Colleges, Schools and Alternative Education**

**Targeted Early Help**

**Sexual Health Nurses** - NHS

**Social Justice Interns**

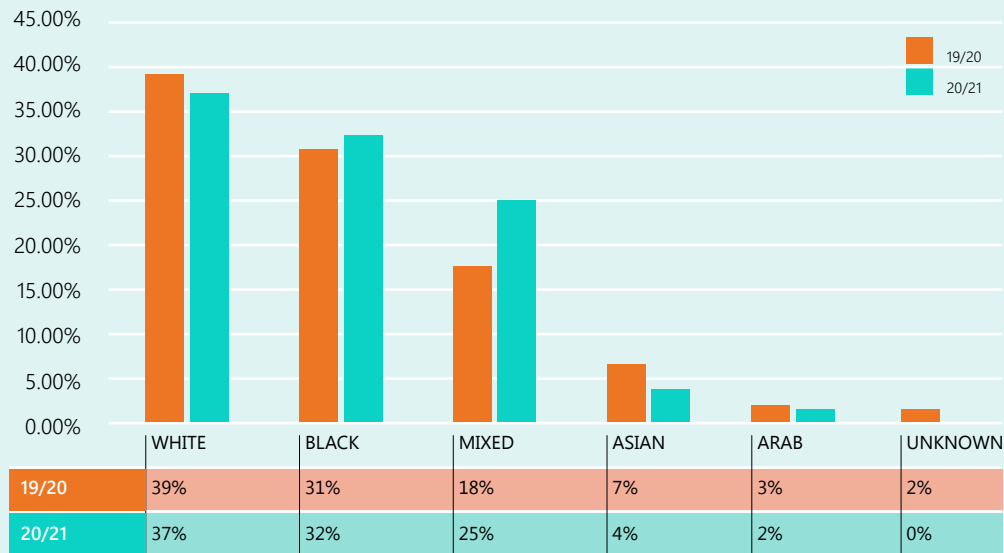
**Social Work Students**

**National Probation Service**

**Safeguarding Leads Across LA, Third Sector, and Education**

# CROSS-CUTTING THEME YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS DEMOGRAPHICS

## ETHNICITY



Ethnicity of female referrals into R&R differs quite significantly from the ethnicity of our overall project cohort. White females have been the most referred group in years 2 and 3, with a slight reduction of 2% in the last year. Black females followed closely in year 2 and year 3, marginally increasing by 1%.

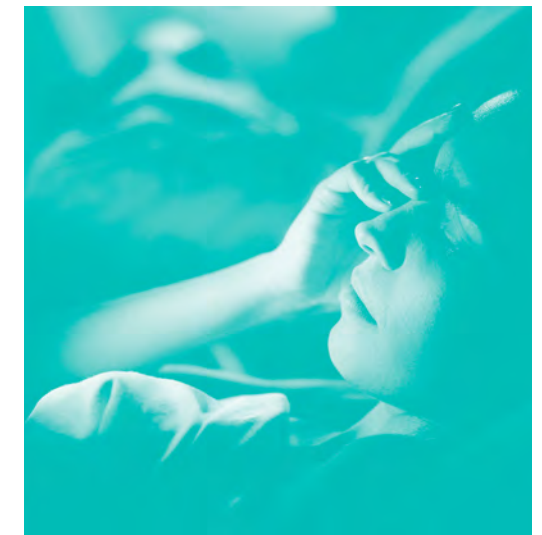
Mixed ethnicity saw the greatest fluctuation, with a 7% increase in year 3. The breakdown of this Mixed cohort in 20/21 is as follows:

- Mixed - White and Asian (1%)**
- Mixed - Other (5%)**
- Mixed - White and Black (19%)**

It is important to recognise that even though we have a larger quantity of referrals for White females, the residential population of White individuals in London is much greater than that of the Black population, meaning that proportionately we have the largest representation of Black females in our referral cohort. The breakdown of the Mixed ethnicity group also shows that the White and Black group is by far the largest sub-group.

*"We're human beings, we support them (young women) to feel safe, to feel able to try to make changes in their life that may, if they hadn't come through this project they may never have been able to do. We provide them spaces to explore their self esteem, their needs, and what they want for the rest of their life."*

**Abianda Practitioner**



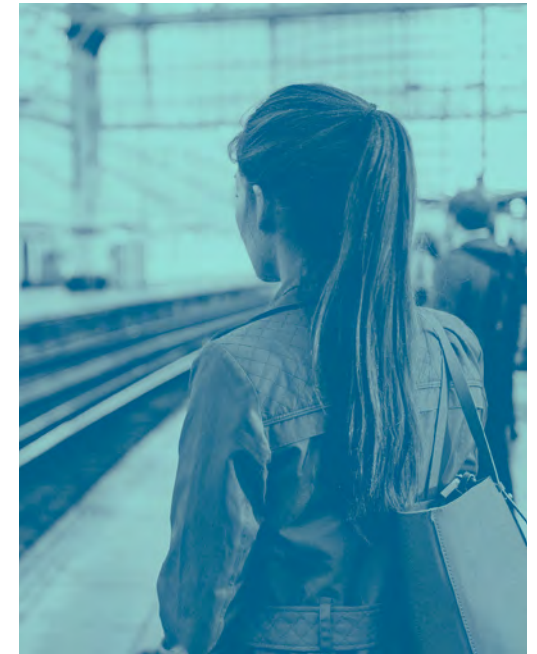
**CROSS CUTTING THEME**  
**YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS**  
**DEMOGRAPHICS**

**AGE AT TIME OF REFERRAL**



As we have seen with the overall age demographic, female referrals significantly 'drop off' after the age of 18, which continues to substantiate our concerns of underreporting in early-adult years.

However, year 3 data demonstrates that we have had an increase in referrals for 18 to 21 year olds compared with the previous year. Furthermore, year 3 saw fewer referrals for the younger female age groups referred into R&R, with reductions in the 13 to 15 year olds range.



# CROSS-CUTTING THEME

## YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

### BOROUGH ENGAGEMENT

#### TOP 10 REFERRING BOROUGHES

From our overall project top referrers in year 3, we can see that the top 10 boroughs are referring young women and girls into R&R at very varied amounts. Many of these boroughs experienced drastic changes in the percentage of YW referred in the past year compared to 19/20.

- Ealing had the largest shift, with a reduction from what was the highest proportion of referrals for YW in 19/20 at 42%, down to 7% in 20/21.
- Croydon also saw a similar shift, having a large uptake in overall referrals but much fewer for YW.
- Newham, Lambeth and Barking and Dagenham were the only boroughs here who increased their proportion of referrals for YW in the past year.
- Barnet have not referred any females over year 2 and 3, which may indicate that further engagement is required to highlight exploitation of females or that Barnet is having a different experience regarding gender and County Lines exploitation.

	2019/20		2020/21	
	TOTAL REFERRALS	% OF YW REFERRALS	TOTAL REFERRALS	% OF YW REFERRALS
NEWHAM	43	12%	48	23%
LAMBETH	24	4%	42	12%
CROYDON	28	32%	39	8%
BRENT	37	22%	35	14%
EALING	19	42%	30	7%
BARKING & DAGENHAM	17	0%	29	10%
HARINGEY	18	22%	27	19%
HARROW	25	20%	26	4%
BARNET	22	0%	24	0%
SOUTHWARK	20	25%	24	13%

#### TRAINING

Training was offered to all London Boroughs and delivered on a quadrant basis (North, East, South and West).

Waltham Forest is an example of a borough with good engagement with our young women and girls service, where Abianda has a strong presence in the Exploitation and Risk Panel, which has seen an increase of young women being identified as at risk of CSE and CL exploitation. Abianda and Waltham Forest have ensured that young women who were appropriate for referral were offered an intervention through R&R. Additionally, Waltham Forest also have a high uptake of the borough training offer.



# CASE STUDY

# ABIANDA



## OVERVIEW

When the young woman was referred into the service, she faced multiple risks including threat to life; challenging and exploitative relationships within the family; ongoing missing episodes, a long history of non-engagement with support services; a history of harm and abuse and multiple criminal charges.

## RESPONSE

The Abianda practitioner was able to provide a safe and trusting space where the young woman could be safe from the current issues, risks and fears in her life, be led by the young woman's felt needs, hold space for the young woman and build trust for conversations to begin, which allowed her to build a rapport with our practitioner.

Once aware of all issues that were present, the practitioner was able to connect with the appropriate services whilst ensuring that the existing professional network understood how to best engage and understand her needs.

The network included social services, police, mental health services and independent advocates. The practitioner played a role in galvanising the network, ensuring the young woman's case remained open to make certain support

would be provided. Support for the family was also sought, as they faced numerous risks due to the young woman's current circumstances. This improved family support and dynamics, having a huge impact on her own family relationships.

## OUTCOME

When the work began, the young woman would not call or text any professionals, whereas now she calls, texts and arranges her own appointments and meetings.

There has been a huge shift in her involvement with her own advocacy, she now engages with her mental health team, social worker and is seen by a specialist service to identify and take care of her own physical and mental health.

*"Thank god she has you, no-one else gets it, they can't see what's happening to her."*

*...a family member thanks us consistently for our efforts to support the young woman in a way that works for her and never makes them feel excluded."*

Her missing episodes have reduced and she is assessing past relationships which were unsafe.

The young woman is now aware how services work and what they require from her to be able to support her. She was previously unable to regulate her emotions or prioritise her own mental wellbeing, now she has hope for the future and is exploring art as a means of grounding. She is now taking her court proceedings seriously and has understood the impact of criminal charges on her life, she continues to engage well with her legal team.

The young woman's emotional wellbeing is improving, she is setting and achieving goals for herself and is able to talk about her wellbeing needs and, seeking out support.

# CROSS-CUTTING THEME

## THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on County Lines activity and the young people being supported through the project, mostly related to their mental health and wellbeing. R&R project referrals have not been affected much by the pandemic, as we received 598 referrals in year 3 in comparison to 553 referrals in year 2.

### THE IMPACT OF THE LOCKDOWN ENVIRONMENT ON R&R

**Factor 1:** Adapting to a new way of working with the young people referred to the project. All activities for young people were coordinated while working remotely. Challenging to engage a young person virtually, with factors such as lack of eye contact having an impact on effective communication and building trust in caseworker relationships.

**Factor 2:** Local lockdowns and the Tier system impacted the way rescues were conducted and special safety measures had to be considered to make the vehicles suitable for continued use. The safety of the Outreach rescue team was also a concern, as we had to be mindful of staff members who presented as having an increased risk or cohabiting with vulnerable people.

### THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MENTAL HEALTH

#### Isolation

Young people reportedly struggled with the isolation that the pandemic had created.

#### Increase in substance misuse

The demand for drugs during the lockdown period was reportedly very high.

#### Safe spaces closed

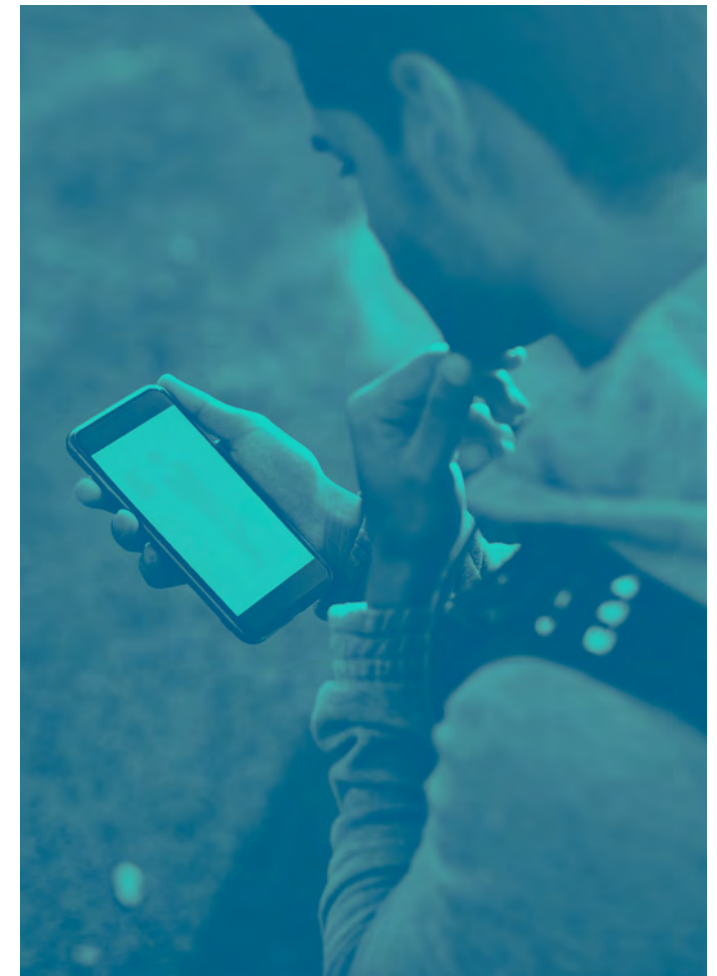
Having nowhere to go caused young people to be more stressed and affected their behaviour.

#### Opportunities decreasing

Lack of job opportunities may have led to increased mental health issues and anxiety.

#### Undiagnosed MH

Services across the board were disrupted, which in turn may have had an impact on the earlier intervention of mental health diagnosis.



## CROSS CUTTING THEME THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### HOW DID THIS IMPACT THE RISKS POSED TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

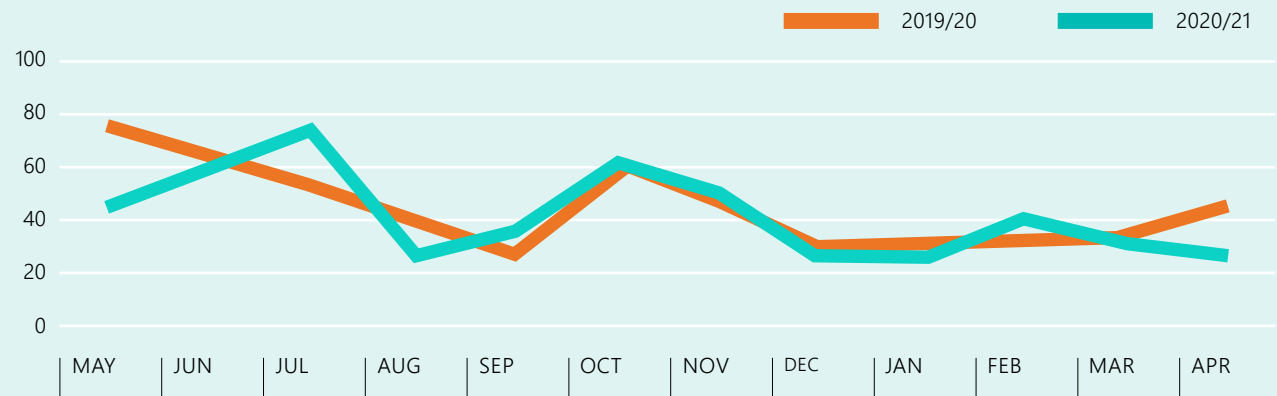
*Insight from Service Manager, Safer London:*

"Our R&R practitioners worked tirelessly throughout a difficult year that saw an increase in COVID-19 cases, a national lockdown and public uncertainty to deliver intervention support to children and young Londoners being exploited by criminal gangs to do County Lines. From the view of a young Londoner that was referred in 2019 and the case was not closed throughout the COVID 19 Pandemic due to the support needs and risk factors that made them susceptible to County Lines gangs. The young person's journey went from going 'country' every day to no involvement in County Lines. However, working with Mental Health and Wellbeing specialists the young person became increasingly anxious and agitated following the announcement of the second lockdown, the lack of predictability around COVID-19 and the level of changes to government guidelines. The young person had a good working relationship with the lead practitioner and contacted her multiple times outside of sessions to share positive news (hearing about new and exciting job opportunities) and also when they were struggling (especially around the COVID-19 pandemic),

finding navigating the uncertainty overwhelming and facing concerns around the long-term, global consequences of the virus. The young person was proud of the journey they had been on with our provider and spoke at length about their goals and aspirations in life. The young person vented frustrations around COVID-19, scepticism around the government's response and specifically fears around the vaccine, in that they would develop further difficulties."

### REFERRALS OVER THE COVID-19 PERIOD

The referrals comparison from years 2 and 3 are very similar, particularly from September through to March, where the referral pattern is almost identical year on year. This demonstrates that we saw no real change in referral rates pre-Covid-19 compared to when we were at the height of the pandemic.



# CASE STUDY

## SAFER LONDON

**saferlondon**

### OVERVIEW

A young person aged 17 was referred following a hospital attendance for a severe injury to their hand where it was found that the young person had been exploited to engage in County Lines and the injury was directly linked. The young person was at risk from criminal gangs, although had not disclosed who the perpetrators were. The young person had no access to income which may have been a driver for County Lines. This was also a barrier to accessing education and training.

*“The young person has noted improvements since first being referred. The main improvements being more open, improvements in mental health and comfortability travelling, feeling more motivated with education and seeking work.”*

### RESPONSE

The person's safety was a major concern during the initial stages and continued to be the focus throughout his intervention support. The young person was provided interim housing outside of the 'area'. Eventually the young person returned to his local borough and the Safer London support worker shared this information to wider professionals, who were able to work collaboratively to implement an effective safety plan.

The young person was initially NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) at referral stage but had aspirations to work in the construction industry. The lead worker and young person explored this in one to one sessions and developed an action plan to support the young person to achieve his goals.

During initial stages, the young person was exhibiting clear signs of PTSD and smoked cannabis frequently to cope with the situation he found himself in. This was regularly reviewed during intervention. The young person struggled to cope during lockdown and needed constant reassurance from his professional network. During intervention, positive coping strategies and resilience building was explored. The young person reflected on previous positive coping strategies he used, such as riding his bike.

The young person now states that he now knows the difference between positive and negative influences and could identify a healthy/unhealthy relationship. The young person was often praised during professional meetings for his engagement and politeness.

### OUTCOME

The young person has had no further involvement with the YOS and maintains that he is no longer offending. The young person has not come to the attention of the police since his exploitation and subsequent engagement with Safer London. Access to ETE (Education, Training and Employment) was improved by providing continuous advocacy for this young person. The young person accessed the Safer London 'Hardship Fund' to get a laptop and now has a clear direction of what he would like to achieve in life and has a better understanding of the steps needed to achieve these goals. The young person is currently engaging with Skills Training and has attended job fairs and interviews.

The young person's physical and mental health have improved, and there has been a noticeable difference from when first referred. There have been no concerns around offending since his referral to R&R.

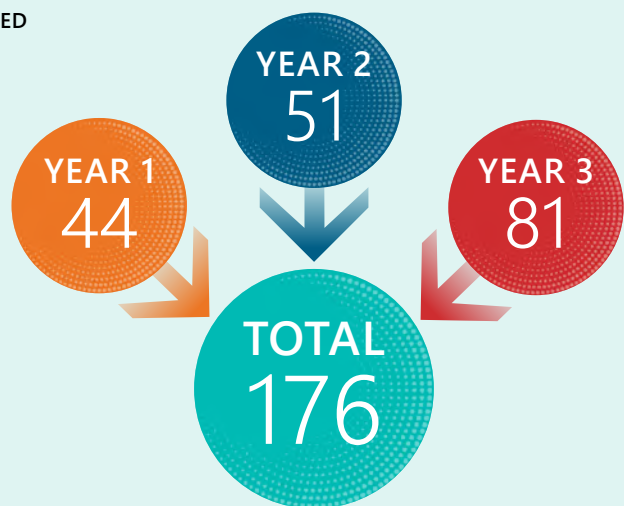


# CROSS-CUTTING THEME NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM (NRM)

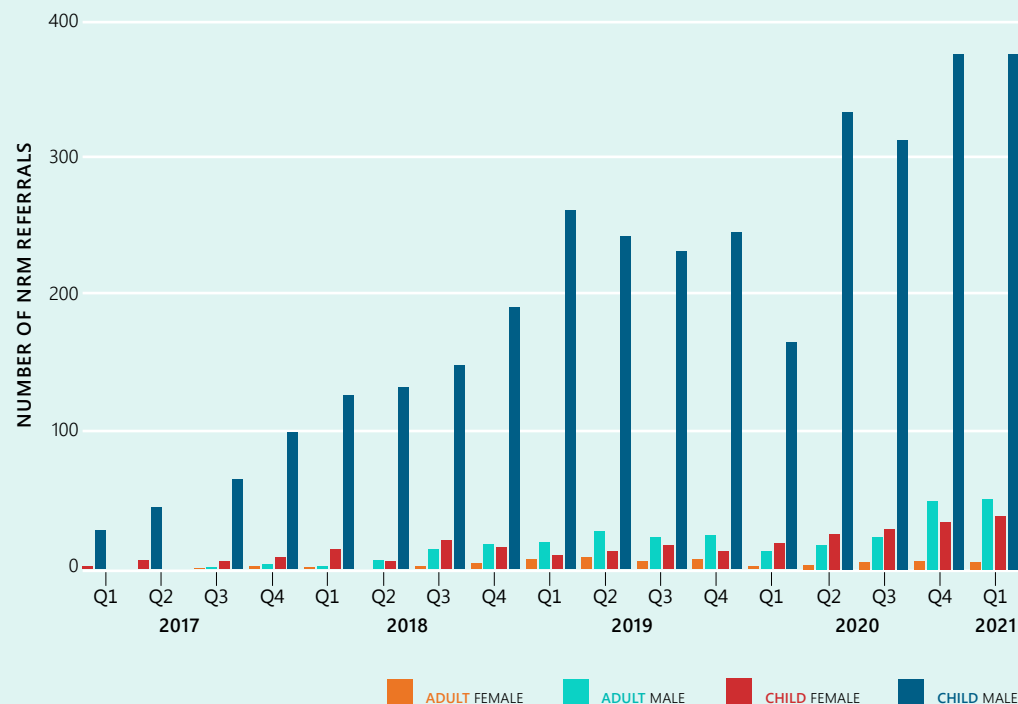
The project has seen a year on year increase in NRMs supported by R&R service providers. This includes providing evidence to support the Conclusive Grounds decision making process and providing advocacy on behalf of the young person for their NRM to be factored into Criminal Justice proceedings. We also have R&R staff members participating in the local NRM decision making pilots in North and West London.

NRMs in general have drastically increased over the past 4 years, predominantly due to the large numbers of male children being referred (See Home Office graph). Since January 2020, a flag within the NRM digital casework system identifies County Lines referrals. For those exploited as children, an increase in the identification of County Lines cases has partially driven the rise in the number of cases categorised within the 'criminal exploitation' category, with 40% of all child referrals for criminal exploitation being flagged as County Lines.

### NRMS SUPPORTED BY R&R



TOTAL NUMBER OF NRM REFERRALS FROM 2017 TO JUNE 2021 (HOME OFFICE, 2021)



# NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM (NRM)

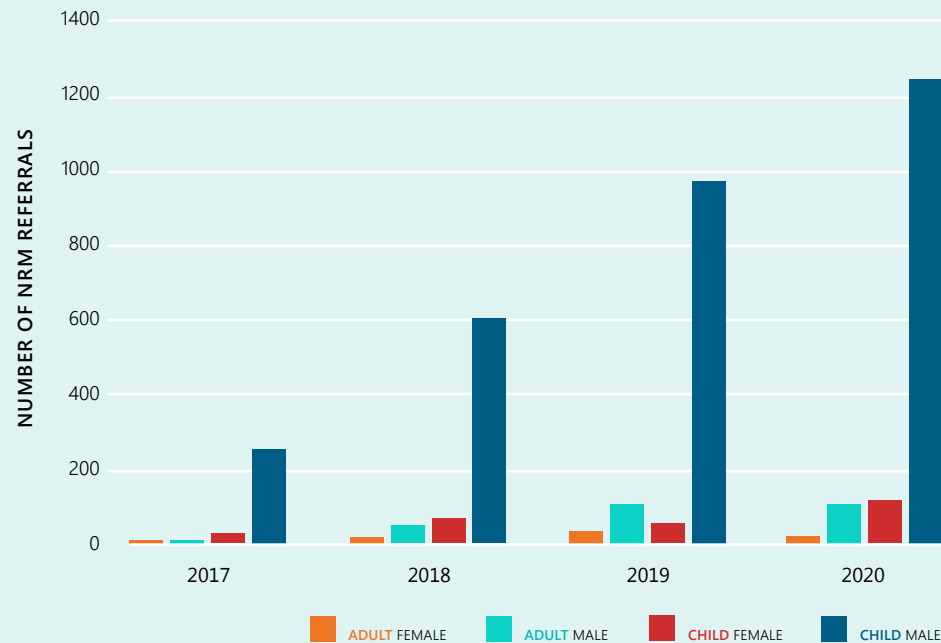
## OVERALL NRM CONCLUSIVE GROUNDS DECISIONS

In 2020, the Single Competent Authority made 3,454 conclusive grounds decisions, a slight decrease from 3,616 made in 2019. Of the conclusive grounds decisions made in 2020, 89% (3,084) were positive and 11% (370) were negative. The proportion of positive conclusive grounds decisions was higher for child potential victims (95%; 1,556) than adults (84%; 1,453). The average (median) time taken from referral to a conclusive grounds decision made in 2020 was 339 days.

## COUNTY LINES FLAGGED NRMS

In 2020, 1,544 referrals were flagged as County Lines referrals, accounting for 15% of referrals received and an increase of 31% from 2019. The majority (81%; 1,247) of these referrals were for male children.

NUMBER OF NRM REFERRALS FLAGGED AS COUNTY LINES, BY AGE GROUP AT EXPLOITATION AND GENDER (HOME OFFICE, 2020)



## NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM (NRM)

### THE R V BRECANI RULING AND THE FUTURE OF NRMS IN THE YOUTH JUSTICE

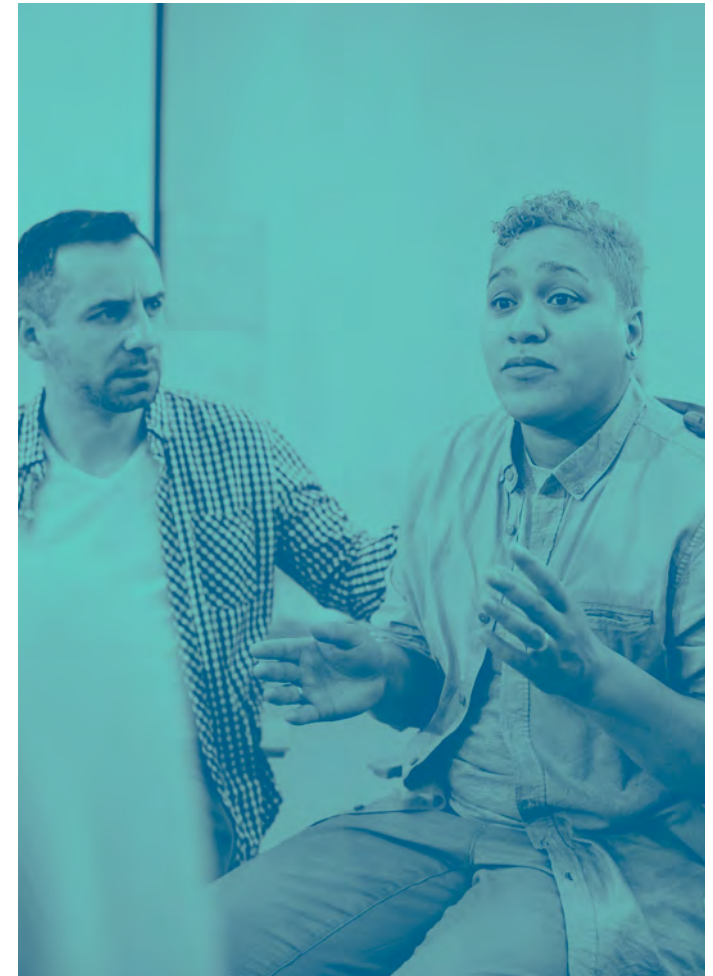
R v Brecani is a judgment that was handed down on the 19th May 2021 by the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales. The judgment has sent shockwaves through both the legal profession and those who work with vulnerable victims of modern day slavery.

In summary the Court of Appeal has held the following:

- The Single Competent Authority case worker's findings of Conclusive Grounds, is not admissible in evidence in a criminal trial and;
- A Single Competent Authority case worker cannot give expert evidence of their findings (of Conclusive Grounds) as they are not experts.

### WHAT'S NEXT FOR NRMS?

- This ruling is likely to be a major setback for those concentrating their efforts on highlighting criminal exploitation during both police investigations into County Lines and the subsequent criminal justice process. There will now be much more reliance on the police to proactively seek out and provide evidence of modern day slavery.
- Despite the challenge of NRM admissibility, as a project we will continue to support the NRM process. One of the major benefits of a County Lines related NRM referral is that a crime report will automatically be created for the instance of criminal exploitation to be investigated by police. Therefore, giving rise to the opportunity for exploiters to be identified and victims to use the Section 45 defence under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.



# CASE STUDY

## ST GILES TRUST

### St Giles

Turning a past into a future

#### OVERVIEW

A young person was referred to R&R following an arrest related to County Lines in Essex. This was the second time that the young person had been arrested, but the first time relating to County Lines as well the first time for the family reporting the young person going missing. Essex police made the referral to R&R and at the time the young person was not working with a Social Worker or any other professional support services. The young person communicated his needs to obtain confidential legal advice regarding the arrest and pending charges for a drugs supply offence. Fears were that this would irreversibly and detrimentally affect the young person's future prospects and as he was 18 years old, he would likely receive a custodial sentence.

#### RESPONSE

Legal advice was sought via other resources, such as the R&R coordinator, Just for Kids Law, Human Trafficking Foundation and Philippa Southwell (Consultant Solicitor, expert in Exploitation/CCE). The relevant information relating to the young person's concerns was provided and at the same time maintaining the young person's anonymity as requested.

The legal information acquired enabled the young person to make a decision about whether or not he would consent to an NRM referral, for which he did later consent.

This also helped alleviate stress about his pending charges.

Support plans were also introduced, which enabled the young person to work towards some positive goals. The young person's over-arching goal was to own his own business one day and he wanted to study business at university. Short term goals consisted of completing the Police bail requirements and seeking legal advice. These were both achieved, which further built on the trust in the working relationship as well as helping the young person to move out of a very stressful mind space.

*"The young person's relationships with his family have significantly improved and he is able to go out freely whilst in open communication with parents. I have also heard from the young person's father who has spoken of how different the young person has been since his engagement with R&R. He said that he was extremely proud of his son and has thanked us profusely. I shared that the young person's achievements were due to his own commitment and determination."*

#### OUTCOME

The young person completed his police bail successfully and has not gone missing for the duration of working with St Giles Trust. The young person has not been involved in any criminal activity or come to police attention. The young person has done extremely well academically and received offers from multiple universities, eventually settling on his preferred option. At the time of publishing, the young person still awaits a conclusive grounds decision regarding his NRM referral.

# RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACT

## PROJECT OUTCOMES FOR INITIAL 3-YEAR PROJECT

1. Minimum of 600 YP case worked
2. Reduction in recorded criminal behaviour
3. Increase in number of YP identified as being exploited
4. Increase in engagement with services
5. Better understanding of the problem and networks
6. Increase in number of YP identified as being at risk
7. Increased knowledge of the risk for young women associated with County Lines/criminal networks
8. Increased feelings of safety and reduced feelings of vulnerability
9. 400 front line workers trained
10. Increase in referrals to NRM
11. Increase in referrals to family support services
12. Increase in number of CSE cases referred to safeguarding and increased links between London and regional services
13. Decrease missing episodes for engaging cohort

In this section we will look back at the initial project outcomes agreed with MOPAC during the design and rollout of the Rescue and Response initiative.

This is the first time that we are reporting back on the overall project outcomes over the full duration of the project to date, so we are hoping to demonstrate the effectiveness and success of the intervention so far. The ability to track outcomes over a 3 year period has allowed us to develop a more comprehensive insight into the longer-term impact driven by the project, tracking some indicators both before and after allocation, which enables us to monitor the behavioural changes achieved.

### 1. MINIMUM OF 600 YP CASE WORKED

Of the 707 referrals accepted onto the project over a 3 year period, 454 were case worked, falling short of the initial target of 600. As a newly introduced initiative it can be difficult to estimate realistically achievable targets. The project has operated with a waiting list continuously since the early days, meaning that R&R Partnership Coordinators would often seek local provision or alternative interventions for referrals received to avoid young people having to wait too long to be allocated to an R&R provider. In order for us to increase our numbers of young people

case worked, we would either need an uplift in staffing capacity or we would need to introduce time limits for intervention periods, which to date have been very flexible and seen young people case worked for longer periods, sometimes exceeding 1 year.





## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### 2. REDUCTION IN RECORDED CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

To get an initial indication of the impact of the R&R intervention on recorded criminal behaviour, we examined a dip sample of 50 young people who had engaged with R&R and completed the intervention. We looked at the number of convictions recorded on PNC (Police National Computer) for 1 year prior to allocation and 1 year after allocation. The results of our representative sample do correlate with the feedback from service providers regarding the impact of R&R on criminal offending.

Overall, the majority of young people who engaged with R&R experienced a reduction in arrests and offending. 34 of the 50 dip sampled had no previous convictions, which supports the frequently cited view that 'clean skins' are recruited specifically by exploiters. Of those that did have previous convictions at the point of referral, 75% (n=12) experienced a reduction in recorded offending after R&R engagement. 92% (n=11) of the 'reduced offending' group reduced their offending down to zero convictions in the year following R&R engagement. For the group who had previously been arrested prior to referral, 65% (n=20) experienced a reduction in arrests in the year following engagement.

75%

REDUCED  
OFFENDING  
– FOR  
INDIVIDUALS  
WITH PRIOR  
CONVICTIONS  
AT POINT OF  
REFERRAL\*

92%

OF THIS GROUP  
REDUCED  
OFFENDING  
DOWN TO  
ZERO IN YEAR  
AFTER R&R  
ENGAGEMENT\*

65%

REDUCTION IN  
ARRESTS – FOR  
INDIVIDUALS  
WITH PRIOR  
ARRESTS AT  
POINT OF  
REFERRAL\*

\*Based on dip sample of 50 young people who engaged with R&R.



## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### 3. INCREASE IN NUMBER OF YP IDENTIFIED AS BEING EXPLOITED

Prior to the launch of Rescue and Response in 2018, there was no pan-London approach to monitoring the numbers of young people exploited through County Lines, so it is difficult to measure an increase in the numbers identified.

However, each year of the project to date has seen relatively high and consistent numbers of young people referred as victims of County Lines exploitation, resulting in us having a much more accurate overview of the quantity of young people involved.

#### RESCUE AND RESPONSE REFERRALS



### 4. INCREASE IN ENGAGEMENT WITH SERVICES

The calculation for engagement is made by taking the number of referrals accepted onto the project against the number engaged by service providers.

Engagement rates saw a large increase going from year 1 into year 2 as the project became more established and remedied any initial teething troubles.

As the Covid-19 pandemic struck, we were unable to maintain this higher level of engagement and saw a slight dip in year 3 by 5%, although still a substantial increase on year 1. This reduction is believed to be associated with the challenges of engaging young people remotely online, but we are grateful that engagement rates were not more significantly affected by this challenge.

The table across shows the referral engagement with external services during the past year 20/21, demonstrating the breadth of partners working with R&R.



#### ONWARD REFERRALS ENGAGEMENT 20/21

SERVICE	NO.
CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE	152
YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE	125
EDUCATION	100
HOUSING	65
FAMILY SUPPORT	61
EMPLOYMENT	54
EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH	53
HEALTH	42
CRIME & OFFENDING	38
CRC	33
FINANCE & BENEFITS	31
DRUGS & ALCOHOL	27
ADULT SOCIAL CARE	25
RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT	10
VAWG	2
OTHER	1

## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### 5. BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM AND NETWORKS

Yearly Strategic Analysis for 3 years has allowed us to better understand the volume of young people affected by CL exploitation, confirm the characteristics most frequently attributed to victims of exploitation and their geographic locations across London. Cross referencing this with data from NCLCC also indicates which boroughs may have an exploitation problem that is potentially

not being addressed or utilising the R&R service. Information received from county police force's has also helped us to see consistent patterns in where young people are most commonly being trafficked outside of London. As a result, we now have a far more enhanced understanding of what the County Lines exploitation picture looks like across London.

### 6. INCREASE IN NUMBER OF YP IDENTIFIED AS BEING AT RISK

Due to the large volume of young people referred into the project, to date we have predominantly worked with those who are already subject to exploitation through County Lines, rather than those at-risk of County Lines exploitation. Working with this cohort has kept us at full capacity with a near-constant waiting list since inception. Most of those identified as at-risk of County Lines exploitation are

signposted to local provision within their borough or alternative support services.

In year 4 of the project we will be working closely with the Home Office funded County Lines Victim Support Service (CLVSS) operated by St Giles Trust to signpost any R&R referrals who present as at-risk of more localised exploitation.

### 7. INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OF THE RISK FOR YOUNG WOMEN ASSOCIATED WITH COUNTY LINES/CRIMINAL NETWORKS

*Please see Cross-Cutting Theme section on Young Women and Girls pages 26 to 31.*

### 8. INCREASED FEELINGS OF SAFETY AND REDUCED FEELINGS OF VULNERABILITY

Over a 3-year period, 83% of young people engaged on the project have received a positive outcome\*. One of the key indicators for measuring a positive outcome within R&R is "Increased feelings of safety and reduced feelings of vulnerability (service user led)". We have not measured this outcome independently, so cannot provide a percentage that relates solely to this outcome. However, based on our overall monitoring of positive outcomes, we are confident that the majority of young people engaging with the project are feeling safer and less vulnerable than they were beforehand.

As part of the University of Bedfordshire's R&R Evaluation 'Young People's Voice Survey', a cohort of young people receiving support from R&R at the time were asked if they felt safer overall. Of the 17 who answered this question, 11 young people recorded that they felt safer, while 2 stated that they did not and 4 responded that they didn't know.

*\*See page 12 for full definition of R&R 'Positive Outcome'.*

## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### 9. 400 FRONT LINE WORKERS TRAINED

During the earlier stages of the project, 'Breaking The Cycle' training sessions were delivered to frontline professionals across the four London quadrants, with two sessions per quadrant. This amounted to approximately 600 front line workers trained initially.

Through the Abianda Gender Consultant, we delivered 23 sessions to 1027 front line professionals. The training 'Young Womxn, Girls, Gangs & County Lines' helps support

frontline workers to address the specific needs of young women and girls at risk of County Lines exploitation.

On top of this, the R&R team regularly deliver bespoke training sessions or presentations for county police forces, educational establishments, local government, community sector organisations and at national child exploitation conferences. This takes our total for front line workers trained in excess of 2000 in the 3 years to date, far surpassing the initial target of 400.

### 10. INCREASE IN REFERRALS TO NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM

*(Please see Cross-Cutting Theme section on NRM pages 35 to 37)*

### 11. INCREASE IN REFERRALS TO FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

#### ONWARD REFERRALS FROM R&R TO EXTERNAL FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES



#### INWARD R&R ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIES OF YP ACCEPTED FOR INTERVENTION



## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACT

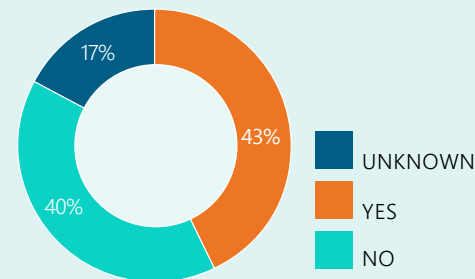
### 12. INCREASE IN NUMBER OF CSE CASES REFERRED TO SAFEGUARDING AND INCREASED LINKS BETWEEN LONDON AND REGIONAL SERVICES

We recognise that CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) affects both males and females, but we have found that CSE is very prevalent amongst the young women that we work with. On average, approximately two thirds of all young women referred have experienced a level of CSE, whether that be current or historical, familial, relational or external. Although many of the young women referred through R&R are over 18, the exploitation has most often taken place or at least begun long before this age.

Through Abianda's structured programme, CSE is addressed in the following ways:

- Explore issues such as consent, relationships, values
- Support young women to develop critical thinking and feel safe to share knowledge of further victims
- Make referrals to and liaise with DV services, Police, Social services, Specialist sexual abuse services, Counselling/Therapy, Sexual health services and Mental health services
- Challenge what we all too often experience as inappropriate language from professionals, this is often blaming and discriminatory
- Through our training as well as in general conversation we raise professionals awareness regarding the barriers to young women accessing support, indicators of exploitation and how to best support young women
- We work closely with placements and partners to share information and have risk response meetings where cases are identified
- Where no referral is made or a referral is on hold, we provide Case Consultations to support professionals to manage risk and increase partnership working, tightening networks around young women
- Abianda training has reach across the UK, helping raise professional awareness of the risk to Young Women and Girls beyond London

### 13. DECREASE MISSING EPISODES FOR ENGAGING COHORT



43% of young people had at least one reported missing episode believed linked to County Lines prior to referral. This is a reduction compared to 50% of year 2 referrals, indicating that R&R may now be receiving referrals at an earlier stage.

Of this 43%, the number of days missing was recorded for 78% of these young people; the most common being 1 day (16 young people), followed by 3 days (14). Overall, 1 to 7 days continues to be the most common period of time spent missing, but ranged up to 3 months.

To get an initial indication of the impact of the R&R intervention on missing episodes, we examined a dip sample of 50 young people who had engaged with R&R and completed the intervention. We looked at the number of missing episodes recorded on the Met Police system 'Merlin' for 1 year prior to allocation and 1 year after allocation. Of the 50, there were 16 (32%) who had no missing episodes prior to and after engagement.

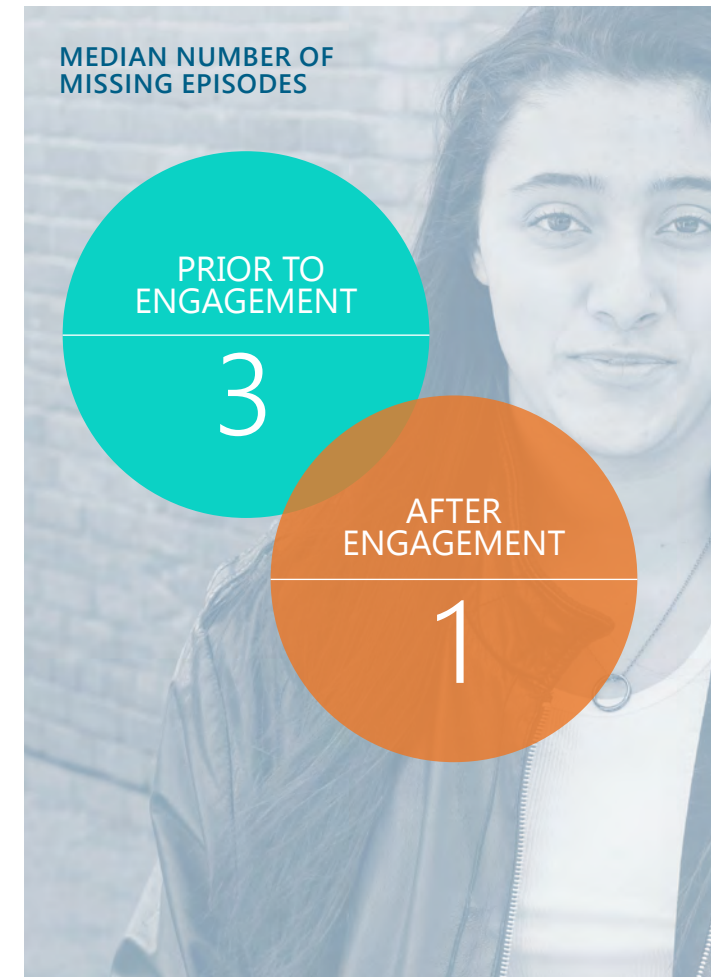
74% of the sample showed a decrease in missing episodes after engagement with R&R. The largest decrease we had in a young person's missing episodes was from 63 prior to engagement to only 7 after engagement. The median number of missing episodes prior to engagement was 3 and the median after engagement was 1, demonstrating an average 67% reduction in the number of individual missing episodes.

Of those who were reported missing at least once before engagement, 48% of the sample had zero recorded missing episodes after engagement.



## RESCUE AND RESPONSE PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### RESULTS FROM DIP SAMPLE OF 50 YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAD SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGED WITH R&R AND COMPLETED THE INTERVENTION



# UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

## YEAR 3 EVALUATION

### SNAPSHOT



In this section we have summarised the findings from the third year of the University of Bedfordshire evaluation of Rescue and Response.

The third year of the evaluation remained focused on four key questions (see Summary), and the findings are reported in relation to each of the questions that have remained consistent over the three years conducting the research. These were agreed at the start of the evaluation in consultation with the R&R Operational and Strategic board. The questions reflect the programme objectives and the Contextual Safeguarding framework via which the programme was evaluated (see appendix 4).

#### YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE SURVEY

As part of the evaluation, a short digital/online survey was created in order for young people currently engaged in Rescue and Response to share some of their views about the service anonymously. We recognise the limitations of a survey method, as well as the small number of respondents and acknowledge that the evaluation was not designed with a focus on the views of young people. However, University of Bedfordshire would recommend further research into the experiences of young people affected by County Lines and how services support them as a next step in the development of Rescue and Response.

#### GENERAL DATA

There were 23 respondents to the survey, but only 18 were fully completed. The young people did not have to answer every question and they could choose to stop and end completion at any point.

Of the 18 surveys completed, 17 of the respondents were male and one was female, representing all three of the VCS providers, although the spread of responses varied. All the young people were aged between 15 and 22. The respondents represent a broad selection of London boroughs, with one young person coming from a bordering county.

The majority of respondents identified as Black or Mixed Heritage, with only two identifying as White. While this is a very small sample, it aligns with data that indicates the disproportionate representation of Black (in particular) and minoritised males in CCE cohorts (Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (CSPRP), 2020).

#### UNDERSTANDING R&R

The majority of the young people confirmed that they knew what Rescue and Response was about and when asked to explain what they understood about R&R, six of the young people made the link to County Lines or 'OT' whereas many viewed the service as something that offered them help and support through a mentor/youth work and would 'keep me on the right path'.

When asked to what extent they agree with the statement: Rescue and Response knows what it means to 'go country', the majority of the young people strongly agreed; none disagreed although some stated that they neither agreed or disagreed.

#### BEST THING ABOUT R&R

Reflecting on what the best thing was about the support they are receiving from R&R, the young people were overwhelmingly positive. Some of the feedback included:

- Workers are really supportive and trustworthy
- They understand what I am saying
- I can see they know their stuff
- The flexibility of the workers
- Weekly check-ups and great support

## UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE SURVEY CONTINUED



When asked if anything would be changed about the service, most young people replied with 'no', but some respondents added they needed more support with work – indicating bigger systemic challenges/barriers that may impact young people's involvement in County Lines.

Further to this, some respondents chose to add additional comments at the end of the survey to share their positive experiences (see below).

### SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO STAY SAFE

Young people were asked what they thought the most important thing that professionals could do to keep young people safe from County Lines and some of the young people's responses aligned with what they felt was best about the support they had received from R&R. These responses illustrate the need for a relationship-based approach from work and services, as well as the need for resources.

- Stay in contact and give advice.
- I don't know really that's a hard question but maybe just be there and try not to judge as you don't always know why people are going OT.
- Encouraging young people do things and put things in place for them to succeed.

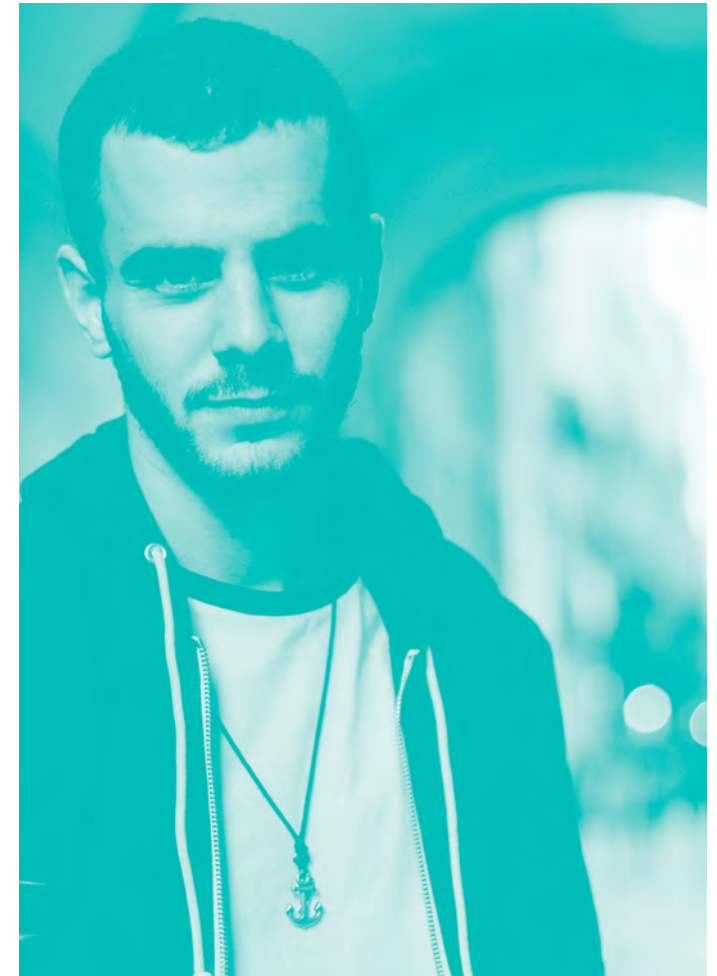
- Communication and being there for them.
- Be given support and options that will lead them down the right path
- Have contact
- There need to be more opportunities for young people to make money.
- Move them from their environment
- Move them from the area they was in, change their routine
- I think professionals can look to support young people to find work experience/ apprenticeships and jobs would help deter YP from going country. I also think more activities should be made for young people to do something constructive.

### ALTERNATIVE VIEWS

- Nothing, if they make that life choice that's their business
- I don't know nothing really if they want to go then there going probably for a reason or being forced. So I don't know.

### THE RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED IF THEY FELT SAFER OVERALL

- Of the 17 who answered this question, 11 young people recorded that they felt safer, while 2 stated that they did not and 4 responded that they didn't know.



## UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE CASE REVIEW INTERVIEWS



In order to further inform the ways in which the R&R model can facilitate increased safety and feelings of safety, amongst young people and their families, the evaluation team conducted six semi structured case review interviews with R&R Caseworkers; three interviews were with VCS providers and three with LA borough caseworkers.

The interviews focused on one case per worker and explored in depth how the R&R project had worked to support the particular young person. Although small in number, all these cases illustrated the extreme levels of vulnerability and high risk the young people had previously experienced before referral to R&R, and all evidenced the necessity of developing a strong trusted relationship with the young person in order to support them effectively. All of the young people had long and complex historical involvements with other statutory services (e.g. CSC, YOS) prior to referral. In this respect, a number of the young people also had clear indicators of potential exploitation ignored in the earlier LA response to the young person.

### **A NUMBER OF COMMON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES EMERGED AROUND R&R SAFEGUARDING WITHIN THE CASE REVIEWS, INCLUDING:**

- the challenge of safeguarding a young person over the age of 18, even when work had commenced with them under that age;
- key problems regarding the suitability and stability of supported accommodation for a number of the young people;
- not fully considering the impact of relocation of a young person and the support needs accompanying that process;
- the lack of wider appropriate support services for the 18-25 group (e.g. mental health and therapeutic interventions);
- the impact of drug debts on the ability of support workers to safeguard the young person;
- the impact of criminalisation on the ability of support workers to safeguard the young person;
- examples of increased risk being caused to young people due to neglect by other professionals or actions against peers (e.g. police enforcement);
- the impact of PTSD responses, due to previous exploitation experiences, on the ability of support workers to safeguard the young person;
- R&R workers not being local to locations to see the young person quickly enough;

- inconsistent direct working with a young person from a range of professionals meaning they received mixed messages about their safeguarding support;
- delayed response to R&R workers' attempts to advocate for young person from statutory services, especially from LA, CSC and police.

### **THE CASE REVIEW INTERVIEWS ALSO IDENTIFIED COMMON KEY STRENGTHS OF THE R&R CASEWORKER MODEL;**

- the sharing of expertise and training within the VCS sector, in order to help caseworkers develop a strong trusted relationship with a young person;
- close working and communication between caseworkers and coordinators within the R&R model to continue to advocate and identify risks for young person to the wider project network;
- sometimes the R&R worker remained the only professional still delivering safeguarding with a young person, especially when over 18.

## UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE SUMMARY



The analysis of the year three data has confirmed some of the evidence trends that were emerging in year two of the R&R project in line with the four evaluation questions being interrogated.

### Q1 What are the mechanisms of a 'team around the network' approach, in what ways and how does it work to increase practitioner awareness of County Lines and to facilitate a safeguarding response for young people?

The current findings with regard to the R&R bespoke offer are that:

- The 'team around the network' is now much clearer to all project partners and reaching the frontline practitioners in a more impactful, useful way.
- The role of the data analysts has been refined, clarified and re-directed towards greater relevance for safeguarding practice.
- Communication between all partners is now enhanced and the key importance of the role of Coordinators in this respect has been stressed.
- R&R project identity has improved and VCS partners in particular recognised the 'value' it added for them, especially in their negotiations with other statutory agencies.

- Existing service issues continue to influence the effectiveness of the team approach e.g. access to appropriate housing services; mental health and trauma support; legal support for court appearances; service availability for those aged 18+. These are large scale issues which require strategic thinking to improve accessibility and availability of service support.

### Q2 In what ways and how do the 'breaking the cycle' activities function to increase practitioner awareness of County Lines and facilitate a safeguarding response for young people?

The current findings indicate that the previous delivery of the 'Breaking the Cycle' training had contributed to a better understanding of the 'team around the network' model.

### Q3 Where and how does the R&R model leverage improved service, particularly safeguarding responses, to young people and vulnerable adults (under-25), what are the barriers and enablers to implementing a safeguarding response?

The current evaluation findings have identified some key levers and barriers to service response/safeguarding within the R&R model:

- In year three the project has moved towards much greater clarity of consent issues regarding information sharing

between providers and wider project partners.

- Trusted relationships between caseworkers and young people, as part of the R&R delivery, has proven to be key in developing effective safeguarding support.
- VCS and LA providers have identified when to bring new relevant partners into the safeguarding frame in order to best support young people (e.g. bespoke legal or trauma related services).
- The partnership element (including information sharing) of the project has slowly begun to increase, rather than decrease, trust. For example, communicating and demonstrating that by being part of the wider project providers are better networked to advocate on behalf of the young people and can flag emerging contextual threats to young people that can be disrupted and where safety can be created. Therefore, as safety in such instances has increased through partnership responses, so has trust.



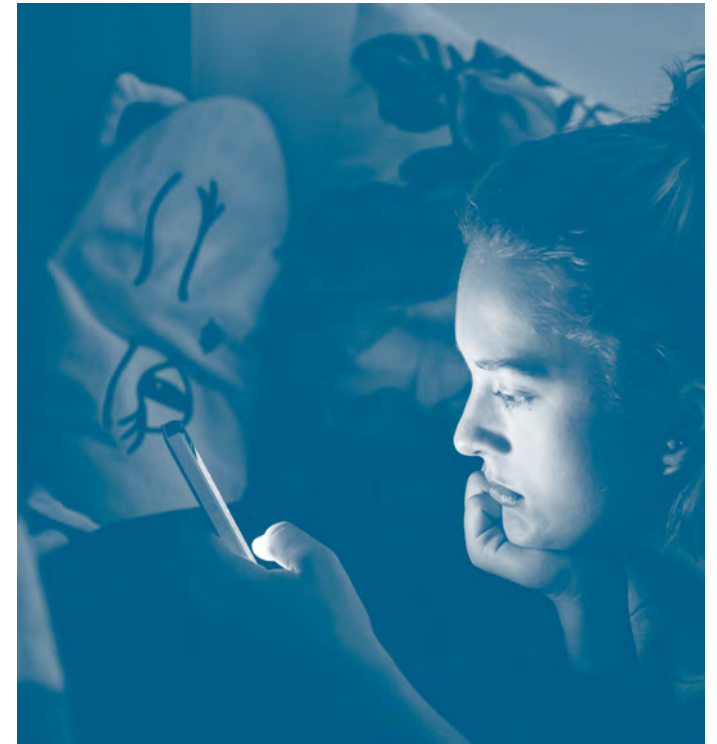
## UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE SUMMARY

### Q4 In what ways does the R&R model facilitate increased safety, and feelings of safety, amongst young people and their families?

The current evaluation findings suggest that there is some evidence of increased safety and feelings of safety by young people and their families:

- The Coordinator role within R&R is identified as a prominent and effective aspect of the bespoke offer, although some of the barriers to adolescent safeguarding still remain.
- The Youth Voice Survey and data from the individual case review interviews identify some examples of increased safety and feelings of safety.
- The sharing of expertise and training within the VCS sector, in order to help caseworkers develop a strong trusted relationship with a young person.

- Close working and communication between caseworkers and coordinators within the R&R model continue to facilitate advocate and identify risks for young person to the wider project network;
- In some cases, the R&R worker remained the only professional still doing safeguarding with a young person, especially when over 18.
- There is currently limited evidence that the R&R model is consistently able to promote a contextual safeguarding approach.



# OPERATIONAL UPDATES PRIORITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

The priorities that were set for year 3 have been developed and continue to remain ongoing for the project. In addition, year 4 will see particular focus on a number of key areas.

## YEAR 3 20/21 PRIORITIES

Development of referrals for the 18-25 cohort, and for young women through the Gender Consultancy role

Liaison with the top counties identified to increase awareness and engagement with the project

Continuing focus on developing association charts and network analysis

The collation and sharing of soft intelligence with police and LAs - building on the success of R&R's regular collation and sharing of COVID-19 trends during lockdown

Supporting the contextual safeguarding model through the project's liaison with boroughs and wider agencies

## YEAR 3 20/21 DEVELOPMENT

The Gender Consultancy role through Abianda saw over 1000 frontline professionals provided with specialist training in responding to the needs of young women and girls, including the provision of individual case consultancy

Analytical work comparing R&R referral data against NCLCC general CL data allowed us to identify county areas where engagement could be improved and booster sessions have been delivered to help maintain awareness of the service available

In response to year 2 UoB evaluation recommendations, we have tightened the gap between R&R Analysts and Service Providers, with each now having a dedicated go-to Analyst

The documentation of emerging CL trends is now happening via a monthly virtual call with an open invite to all caseworkers on the project, so new patterns of behaviour can easily be shared

Rescue recording has transitioned onto a live online document that can be accessed by both St Giles Trust and the R&R team, which also records alternative support outcomes and tracks onward referrals into the project

## YEAR 4 21/22 FOCUS

Highlight the impact of Covid-19 on young people's mental health and seek out options to bolster our wellbeing support offer

Continue to build relationships in county force areas, using metrics to prioritise areas in need and promoting Rescue service

Work closely with Met Exploitation leads to share learning and best practice concerning the crossover of CCE and CSE

Include young people in future design and development of our strategy to tackle County Lines exploitation

Work with Home Office funded CLVSS operated by St Giles Trust to signpost cases of localised exploitation

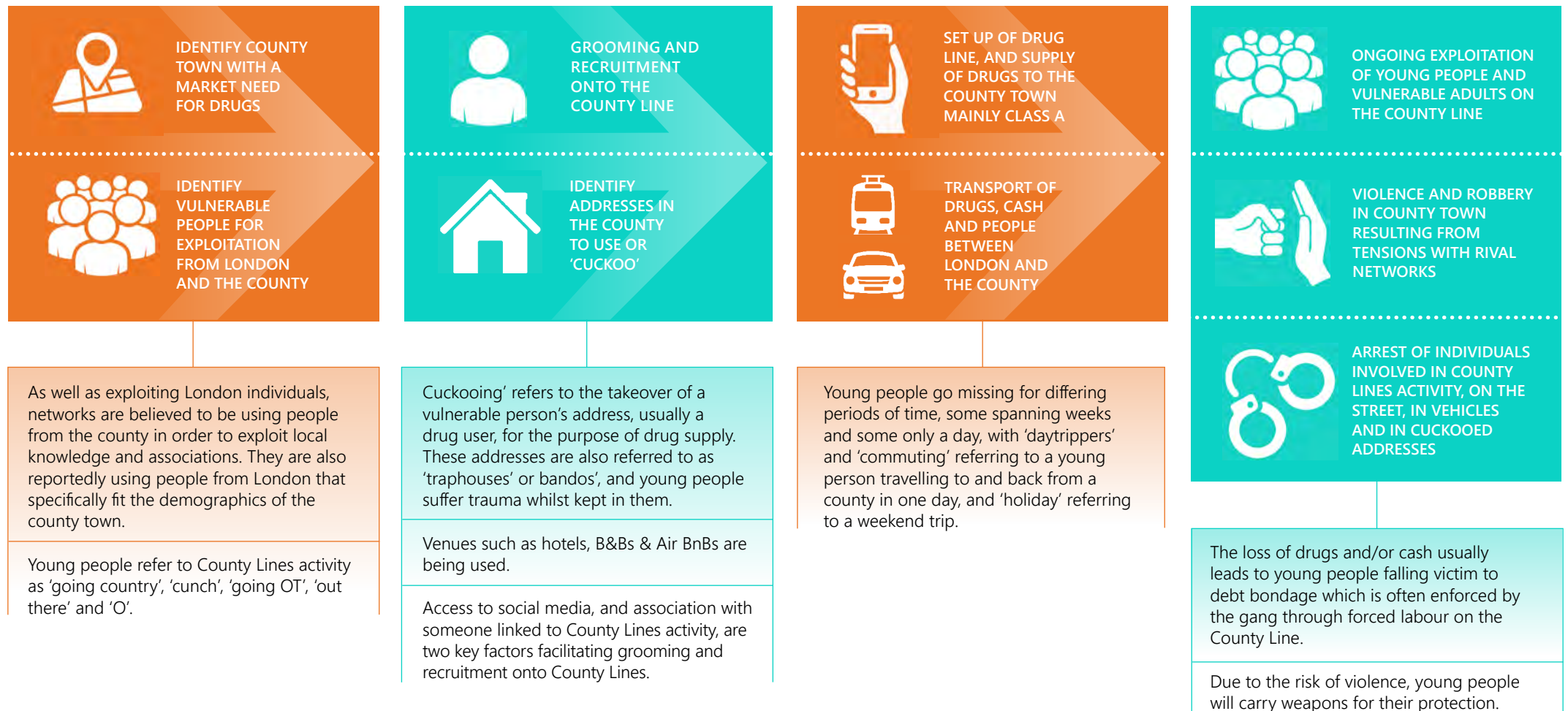
Develop ideas around how a County Lines response may fit into the wider approach to reduce criminal exploitation

# APPENDIX 1

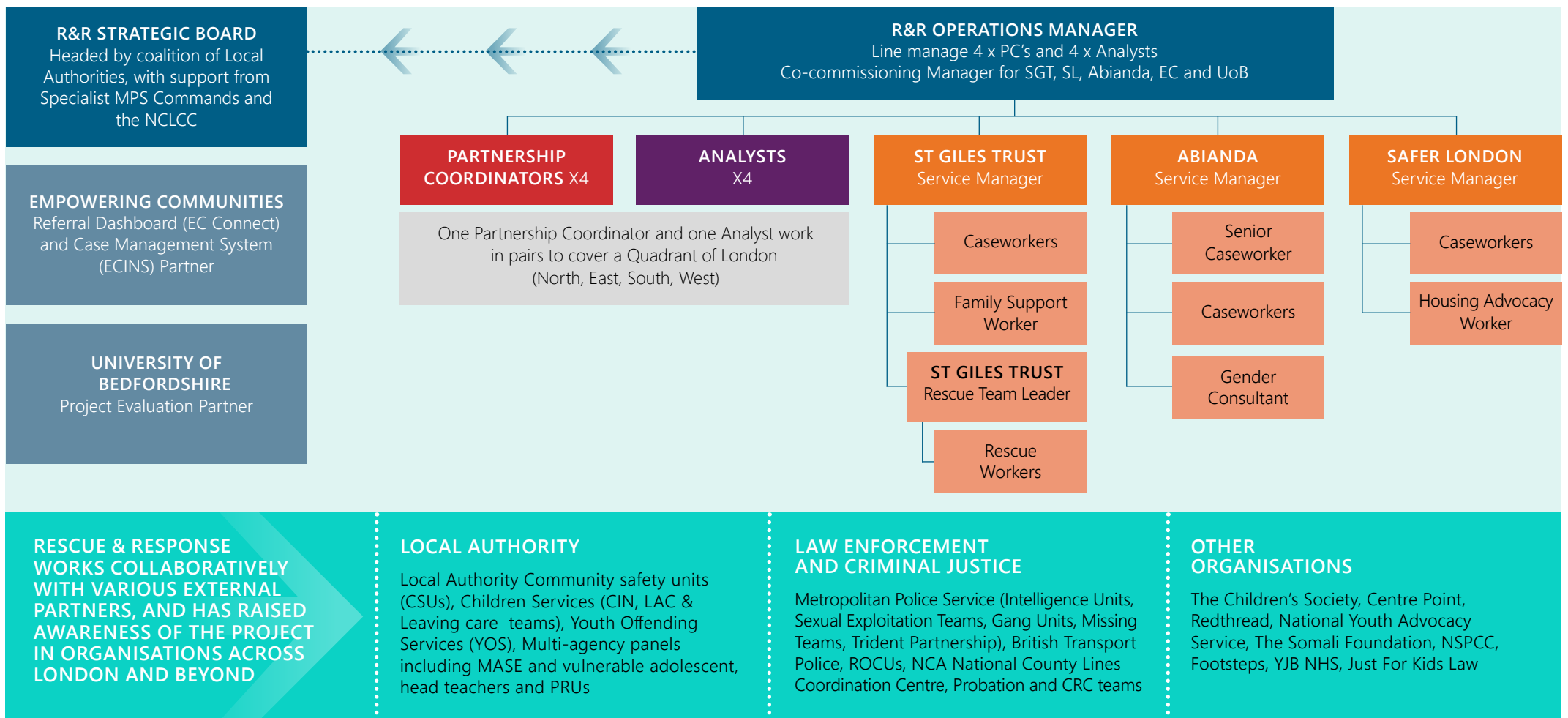
## WHAT IS A COUNTY LINE?

*“County Lines 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.*

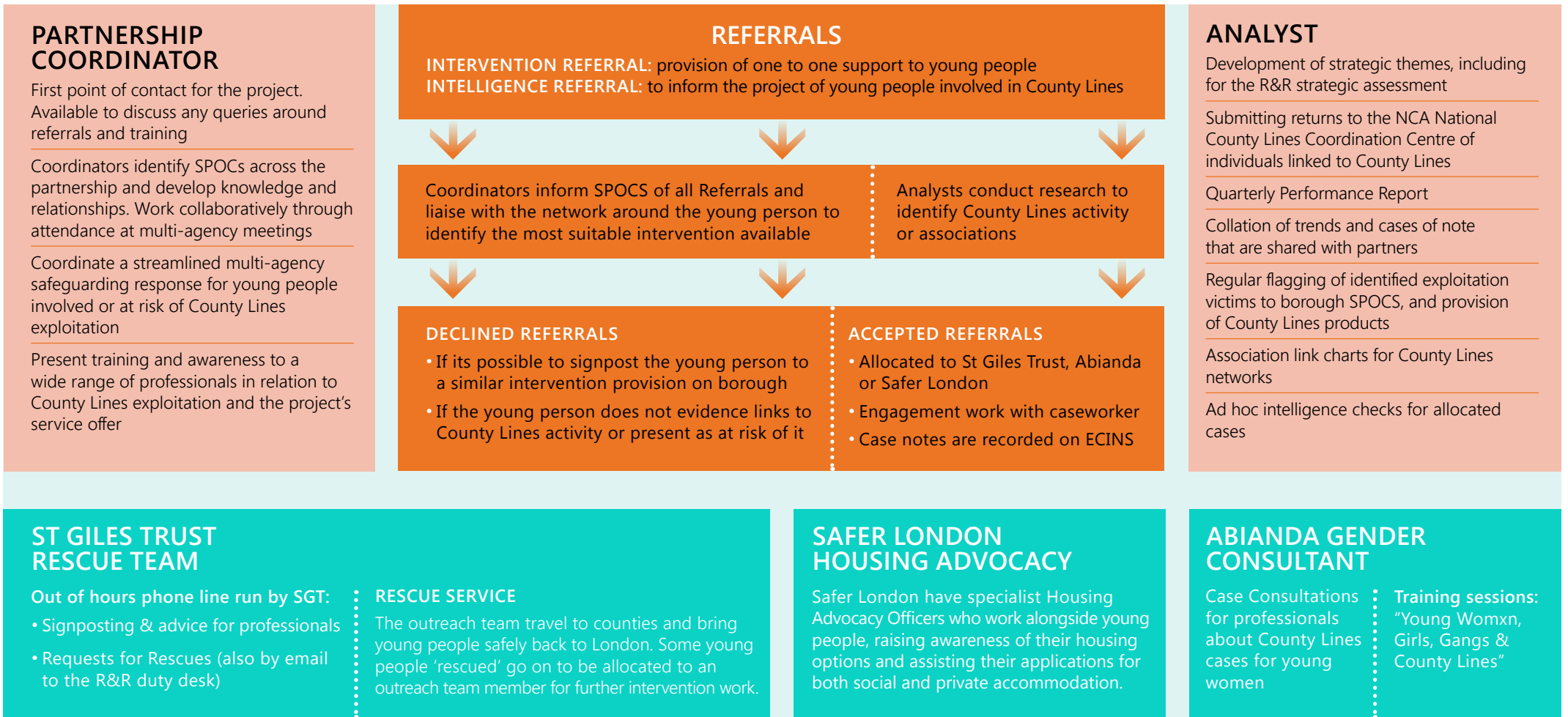
**NPCC definition (2018 Home Office Serious Crime Strategy)**



# APPENDIX 2 RESCUE AND RESPONSE ORGANISATIONAL CHART



# APPENDIX 3 RESCUE AND RESPONSE REFERRAL PROCESS





# APPENDIX 4

## THE CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK



Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to safeguarding adolescents from harm outside of the family home and that targets the social conditions of abuse; that is the spaces where young people come to harm and the social rules at play in these spaces (Firmin, 2017). While Police and Community Safety Partnerships are mandated to protect young people in public places, these agencies are principally tasked with crime prevention and reduction – as opposed to safeguarding and abuse prevention.

Whilst amendments to Working Together 2018 (HM Government, 2018) acknowledge extra-familial forms of harm, current policy and practice responses are struggling to articulate and operationalise a safeguarding response to extra-familial forms of harm, including those young people affected by 'County Lines' (ALDCS, 2018). Contextual safeguarding proposes a child welfare response to young people who are subject to harm outside of the home.

Specifically, a Contextual Safeguarding approach is scaffolded by four domains: it targets the social conditions of abuse, includes extra familial contexts in child protection legislative frameworks, utilises partnerships with individuals and organisations responsible for the spaces where young people spend their time and measures contextual outcomes (Firmin, 2017) as shown in figure 1.

### 1. TARGET

Seeks to prevent, identify, assess and intervene with the social conditions of abuse (rather than being solely focused on individual behaviours abstracted from context):

There is an emerging consensus that in order to safeguard adolescents from extra-familial abuse, safeguarding interventions must be targeted at, and distributed across, the social fields in which young people operate (as reflected in the inclusion of the 'contextual safeguarding' in Working Together 2018). The involvement of young people in 'County Lines' activity takes place in a complex social environment,

outside of the family home (the traditional site of safeguarding interventions), where young people are exposed to risk in the form of exploitative adults, peers, unsafe spaces and the socio-economic relationships (that are gendered and racialised) that structure the contexts within which young people operate. As such, interventions that seek to safeguard young people from this form of abuse must have an awareness of, and engage with and intervene in, all of the dynamics that intersect to create harm in the young person's environment. The evaluation team sought to understand how R&R partnership works across the various contexts and social relationships that structure young people's experience of abuse.

A Contextual Safeguarding framework has been applied to the organising and analysis of the evaluation data.

**FIGURE 1: CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK (FIRMIN AND LLOYD, 2020)**



#### DOMAIN 1. TARGET

Seeks to prevent, identify, assess and intervene with the social conditions of abuse



#### DOMAIN 2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Incorporate extra-familial contexts into child protection frameworks



#### DOMAIN 3. PARTNERSHIPS

Develop partnerships with sectors/individuals who are responsible for the nature of extra-familial contexts



#### DOMAIN 4. OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT

Monitor outcomes of success in relation to contextual, as well as individual, change

## APPENDIX 4 THE CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK



### 2. LEGISLATIVE, POLICY AND PRACTICE FRAMEWORKS

Incorporates extra-familial contexts into traditional child protection and safeguarding frameworks (as contextual work has historically been located within community safety and crime prevention):

Extra-familial contexts are assessed and intervened in in line with child welfare legislation and practice frameworks. This legislation promotes the best interests of children and dictates that the welfare of children and young people should remain paramount (Legislation.gov.uk, 1989; HM Government, 2018) over other commercial, enforcement or political objectives. Assessment and intervention in these spaces must, therefore, promote the centrality of young people's voices, and their participation in decision making, and must promote children and young people's right to live lives free from violence, abuse and neglect (article 16, CRC) whilst maintaining their right to privacy (article 19, CRC4). These articles alongside Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights and GDPR requirements are crucial considerations in any local strategy to safeguard young people. Given the extended reach of child protection systems under a public health or Contextual Safeguarding approach, serious consideration must be given to protection of privacy and civil liberties (Parton, 2019) to ensure that broad populations of young people are not profiled and targeted without consideration for thresholds of harm, consent, GDPR and confidentiality.

### 3. PARTNERSHIPS

Develops partnerships with sectors, services and individuals who are responsible for the nature of extra-familial contexts (rather than only working with services intended to support individuals and families):

A key objective of the R&R project is to coordinate a system for identifying, and implementing a safeguarding response to young people who are exploited via 'County Lines'. The R&R partnership has included analysts, project co-ordinators, three VCS partners and all 32 London boroughs. The UoB evaluation team explored the extent to which this partnership approach can leverage a safeguarding response to young people and the mechanism that facilitate this approach whilst identifying remaining barriers to working across partnerships. Iterative learning was fed into the R&R project via contextual reviews, briefings and the strategic and operational board meetings to inform and enhance the partnership work.

### 4. OUTCOME MEASURES

Uses contextual, as well as individual, outcome measures to monitor impact:

Finally, the evaluation explored the extent to which the R&R model achieved 'contextual' outcomes that supported the overall objectives of the project. The Contextual Safeguarding framework was used to evaluate the efficacy of the 'team around the network' approach, and the leverage this approach has to implement safeguarding strategies in unsafe contexts/peer groups. The evaluation explored the increased understanding of the contexts and social relations that increase young people and families' experience of safety, and the increased capacity of R&R and partners to promote interventions that facilitate safer contexts and relationships.

## APPENDIX 5

# UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE: ETHICS AND METHODS

### ETHICS

Ethical approval for the evaluation was granted by the Research Institute Ethics Panel at the Institute of Applied Social Research at the University of Bedfordshire. Additional research ethics and data protection processes were also followed at the three local authority/areas case study sites. In year 1 data were largely collected in person by the evaluator. However, research activities were moved online with the advent of Covid-19.

All participants read and signed an evaluation 'Information and Consent' form outlining the purpose of the evaluation, consent, confidentiality and anonymity and the right to withdraw specific comments and statements.

### METHODS

This was a formative and summative evaluation which traced the progress and development of the Rescue and Response project over a three-year period. It used qualitative, embedded methods of data collection. Quantitative data from the R&R annual Strategic Assessments were drawn on to corroborate emerging findings from the qualitative data collection and analysis. Data was collected from across the R&R project team (the analysts and coordinators); the three VCS partners: Abianda, St Giles Trust, Safer London; and three London Borough case study sites. The three London Boroughs were included in the evaluation to understand the extent to which R&R supported and informed Borough safeguarding practice. The three London Boroughs were selected by the evaluation team in partnership with the R&R Operational and Strategic board and were chosen to ensure that a range of geographical areas and challenges were included.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## PROJECT FUNDER

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

## PROJECT SERVICE PROVIDERS



**St Giles**

Turning a past into a future

## DATA SYSTEM PROVIDER



## EVALUATION PARTNER



A B I A N D A

**saferlondon**



# FURTHER READING

## REFERENCES

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University of Bedfordshire: Luton

**Imkaan and University of Warwick (2015)** *Between the Lines: Service Responses to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Women and Girls Experiencing Sexual Violence.*

**Available from:** [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B\\_MKSoEcCvOwM2tBZDJxV1R4LUk/view?resourcekey=0-bRa3tiZDlil3ivjoVwOSAg](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_MKSoEcCvOwM2tBZDJxV1R4LUk/view?resourcekey=0-bRa3tiZDlil3ivjoVwOSAg) [Accessed 17 September 2021]

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## AGENCY/REPORT

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

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

[Rescue and Response  
Referral Form](#)

[St Giles Trust](#)

[Abianda](#)

[Safer London](#)

[National Youth Agency  
Between the Lines Report 2021](#)

[University of Nottingham Rights Lab  
Covid-19, Vulnerability and the Safeguarding of Criminally  
Exploited Children 2021](#)

[HM Inspectorate of Probation  
County Lines, Academic Insight 2021](#)

[Public Health England  
County Lines Exploitation Guide 2021](#)

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

[Contextual Safeguarding Research Programme](#)





