

The Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner's response to the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMICFRS) - Both sides of the coin: An inspection of how the police and National Crime Agency consider vulnerable people who are both victims and offenders in 'county lines' drug offending (January 2020).

[The report can be found here](#)

HMICFRS undertook fieldwork between March and June 2019. They conducted interviews, 'reality testing' in relevant departments and with partnership agencies, and reviewed documentation. Representatives from some non-police bodies were included as part of forum discussion groups in each force area as follows:

- Ten police forces.
- The national county lines co-ordination centre.
- Other parts of the National Crime Agency.
- Three regional organised crime units.
- The College of Policing – county lines lead.
- The Crown Prosecution Service – county lines lead.

On 10 January 2020 HMICFRS published its findings highlighting the following achievements:

- The establishment, in 2018, of the national county lines co-ordination centre (NCLCC);
- Effective use of modern slavery legislation by police forces;
- The good use of 'intensification weeks', where the NCLCC co-ordinates law enforcement activity during dedicated weeks of action against county lines networks; and
- Good practice in relation to police bail
- That Police forces and the National Crime Agency are generally effective at tackling cyber-dependent crime, identifying several areas of positive practice, including:
- Efficient working arrangements between law enforcement agencies:
- A well-established national strategy for dealing with the threat from cyber-dependent crime
- Early identification and response to emerging threats
- The implementation of minimum standards and recognised performance indicators; and

- The development of local cyber-dependent crime teams

I agree with HMICFRS, that where there is demand for illegal drugs, criminals will find ways to satisfy it. Rather than take risks themselves, they callously exploit children and vulnerable adults, getting them to travel across police force and regional borders to distribute drugs and collect the proceeds. Contact between dealer and user relies heavily on mobile phones. Dealers often use a dedicated phone number publicised to users. **This is 'county lines' offending.** It presents major problems for the police and criminals often use violence to enforce debts and protect territory.

Of most concern, it causes significant harm to our local communities, including knife crime. And there are clear links between county lines and other crimes; including modern slavery and human trafficking, which are all priorities in my Police and Crime Plan.

HMICFRS concludes that the lack of a fully integrated, national response means that investigations are often less effective than they should be. The report also notes concerns regarding organised crime mapping, competing priorities and the limited use of telecommunication restriction orders.

The Chief Constable has maintained a dedicated 'County Lines' Detective Inspector to ensure that best practice is adopted.

HMICFRS made 10 recommendations designed to facilitate the creation of a national, co-ordinated response to county lines offences. There were no specific recommendations for Chief Constables, but I support any improvements which can tackle this growing problem more effectively.

Yours sincerely



Paddy Tipping
Police and Crime Commissioner