

Local police officers working with schools across the city to protect children

Edinburgh Division's School Link Officers have been working closely with schools across the city to help keep children safe and protect them from harm.

Schools in the capital have been promoting the Crimestoppers #CountyLinesScotland campaign which aims to protect children from exploitation by 'County Lines' drugs gangs.



Police Scotland

County Lines is the police term used for the criminal exploitation of children and young people. It is where urban gangs use children and young people to move drugs and money across the country using dedicated mobile phone 'deal lines'. It comes with the associated harms to the young person such as sexual exploitation, violence and human trafficking.

Gangs establish a base in a particular location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'. They then target young people to become involved in selling drugs through a process of grooming. Once the young person is involved it is difficult to escape.

To counter this problem early intervention is essential and police are investing in raising public awareness of this crime in the local community, encouraging people to step forward and report it.

School Link Officers will also be delivering inputs to pupils so that they can spot dangerous situations.

Pupils are also made aware of the risks and harm caused by 'County Lines' and serious and organised crime, and can make better and more positive life choices.