

# *going country*

## *Lesson Plan 1*



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## ***Lesson Overview:***

This session provides an introduction to the three lessons and explores what county lines is and why young people may get involved. It introduces concepts related to adolescent brain development, how this can affect decision making when we are younger and what this might mean for gang involvement.

## ***Aims and Objectives:***

1. For young people to understand the complexities of involvement in county lines.
2. To begin to understand how we make decisions in adolescence.

## ***Lesson Type:***

Activity and discussion based.

## ***Materials Needed:***

Going Country Video, ABD Video.

## ***Learning Outcomes:***

- Young people are clear on what county lines is.
- Young people can describe why young people may get involved.
- Young people begin to understand and can describe adolescent brain development.



# ***Introduction***

This lesson plan is the first of three focused on knife crime and youth violence. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the '*Going Country*' video available on this link: <https://www.essexvvu.co.uk/essex-county-lines/>

Each of the sessions require the video for delivery. As the facilitator you will be asked to show the video, stop it at key points and then complete activities related to the content shown.



The purpose of all of the sessions is to challenge pre-existing knowledge, change attitudes and opinions and help young people make positive choices and decisions.

## ***This session***

This session acts as an introduction to the resources and covers key points related to:

- What county lines is and the current understanding of young people.
- Whether people know it's risky and the consequences of gangs and county lines before they get involved.
- Introduces key concepts related to adolescent brain development and how this relates to gang involvement.

# ***Step 1***

Firstly use the introductory statement below to introduce this session and the subsequent sessions to the group.

*“Today we are going to complete the first of three sessions focused on youth violence and county lines.*

*You may have already had some lessons on this and that’s fine, we really want to find out what you already know and your opinions of these issues.*

*Like many things in life the reasons why people do things that are dangerous and harmful are complicated.*

*To help make sense of this we are going to start by watching a video that was made in Essex about county lines.*

*These are the authentic voices of young people who live in Essex. These are their experiences and their realities.*

*I will stop the video at a certain point and we will then complete an activity related to what we have just watched.*

*Ok, let’s get started.”*

Now play the video. You should stop the video for the first time at:

**0:10**

# ***Pause 1***

Now we have stopped the video we're going to discuss some key messages from the segment of the video we have just watched.

We are going to work through them in order and the first one to discuss is below:

**0:05 - 0:10** – *'Basically everywhere in Essex there's like a drug or gang related issue that's going on. You see deals just going on when your walking home.'*

## ***Discussion***

Read the message from the video to the group and then facilitate a discussion using the key points below, you should work through these in order.

1. Is this your experience where you live in Essex?
2. If this is not your experience have you heard of these kind of things from other young people?

## ***Statement***

At the end of the discussion read the following statement to the group:

*"Ok, so we have discussed the point in the video. Some important things to note are that these issues can happen anywhere.*

*We hope you never come across it but it's important that we all understand the issues and are aware of how young people can get involved."*



# ***Pause 2 - 0:10 - 0:48***

**0:10 - 0:48** – This part of the video provides an overview of what county lines is in the words of young people rather than a specific statement.

## ***Discussion***

After watching the video clip use the following discussion points with the group.

1. Did you know what county lines was before watching the video?
2. Do you think most young people your age know what county lines is?
3. Do you think there are negative consequences if you get involved in county lines?

## ***Discussion / Statement***

At the end of the discussion read the following statement to the group and then discuss:

*“Ok, so we have discussed the description of County Lines in the video. Most of you already knew what county lines was (adapt if not the case, this is presumed to be unlikely) and you thought that most people your age also knew this as well.*

Now discuss the following question:

*If people know what County Lines is and know there are likely to be negative consequences. Why do they get involved?*

# ***Pause 3 - 0:48 - 1:36***

**0:48 - 1:36** – This part of the video explores some reasons that young people may be attracted to involvement in county lines. It covers the financial rewards which may be offered to young people.

## ***Discussion***

After watching the video clip use the following discussion points with the group.

1. Do you agree with the points made in the video about why young people may be attracted to county lines?
2. Do you think money is the main motivator?
3. What about a sense of belonging?
4. Do you think young people are more likely to look at the benefits, like the money they might receive, rather than the consequences of being in a gang?

## ***Discussion / Statement***

At the end of the discussion read the following statement to the group and then discuss:

*“Ok, so we have looked at some reasons why people may be influenced to join a gang. In the previous segment we talked about how people are likely to know the risks before they get involved. So why does it happen?”*

*There are some realities we need to think about when it comes to involvement in county lines. Specifically we need to think about the changes which are happening in our brains when we are young, and how these can sometimes affect how we think and the decisions we make.*

*To better understand this we are going to now think about something called Adolescent Brain Development.”*

# ***Adolescent Brain Development***

1. Start this activity using the following statement:

*“We are going to think about adolescent brain development.*

*Put simply this describes the changes that happen in the thinking parts of our brains as we get older. We are looking at this as it can be helpful when we are trying to understand why people get involved in risky things, especially when they already knew the risks.*

*We will start by watching a short video. The video is going to show you some of the science behind decision making. Don't worry if you don't know or understand every word or concept in the video, I will help explain it after we have watched it.”*

Now show the group the video below which has been adapted from a video produced for parents in Essex:

<https://youtu.be/9uIFxhyysWg>

2. After watching the video use the following statement before moving into a discussion with the group.

*“So the video raised a couple of really important points that I want to discuss with you all, the key things to think about are:*

- *Lots of changes happen in our brains when we are teenagers.*
- *Most importantly the part of our brain that helps us think about consequences, and many other things, develops last.*
- *Because of this we may rely more on emotions when we are younger, this can mean we may also be more influenced by other people including our peers.*

*Let's now discuss what this may mean in the context of county lines and getting involved with gangs.”*

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# ***Adolescent Brain Development***

3. We are now going to discuss adolescent brain development with the group.

Use the discussion points below:

- Earlier we talked about how people already know what county lines is before they get involved and often already know what some of the consequences are. Do you think our developing adolescent brains may be a factor in this?
- Do you think we might be more focused on the immediate benefits (e.g. money) than longer term consequences?
- What do you think? Do you sometimes act without thinking about the long term consequences of what you do?
- How could understanding some of these realities help young people who might be at risk?

## ***NOTES:***

- Reinforce that understanding how our brains develop can be an important part of making positive decisions and staying safe as it can mean we think deeper about the choices we make.

# ***Session Close***

We are now going to bring the session to a close. Use the following statement to summarise the learning from the session:

*"We are going to bring things to a close and introduce the next session.*

*Let's recap on what we have covered today.*

*We started thinking about county lines, whether all young people know what it is and whether people understand that there may be negative consequences to being involved.*

*We started to think about how our brains develop when we're adolescents and that this may mean we focus more on benefits than consequences. We also talked about how understanding this can be helpful and help explain why young people may get involved in things that they already knew were risky.*

*And we introduced how understanding some of the realities of adolescent brain development might be helpful to us.*

*In the next session we are going to look deeper into how others can affect our decision making and actions we can take to help keep ourselves safe."*

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