



Meet Dex. He's a nice guy. He'll offer you money. He'll offer you drugs. He'll be generous. He'll make you feel important. He'll make you feel part of something. He'll make your life exciting. He'll do whatever it takes to get you working for him and his mates... and when you do...

Meet Dex. He's a scary guy. He'll say you owe him money. He'll make you deal drugs and move packages. He'll blackmail you. He'll be violent. He'll make you feel terrified. He'll turn your life upside down. He'll do whatever it takes to keep you working for him and his mates.

County Lines

COUNTY LINES – WHAT IS IT?

County Lines is the name given to a type of drug dealing led by gangs or organised crime groups. It involves the distribution and dealing of illegal drugs from one city or town to another using dedicated mobile phone lines.

The gangs recruit 'runners' to move the drugs and money between locations. These 'runners' are often young people who are being exploited and have been tricked or pressured into getting involved in criminal activity.

People like Dex target young people to control them and make them do what they want them to do. They will befriend you and offer things like money, gifts or protection in return for your involvement.

People like Dex can be any age or gender. You may already know them or they may be a stranger that approaches you on the street or via social media. They are very manipulative and often you won't even recognise what is happening. You might think you're freely choosing to get involved when actually you're being tricked and exploited.

This often leads to threats and violence, leaving people feeling trapped and unable to get out of the situation. People like Dex don't care about you.

COUNTYLINES...

There are a number of different tactics people like Dex use to exploit young people:

- Befriending or forming trusting relationships – both online and in the real world
- Giving gifts – food, money, alcohol, phones, clothes etc.
- The promise of high earnings
- The promise of protection/status/power
- Threats - against them, their friends, family and anyone they care about
- Violence – physical or sexual
- Debt bondage - tricking someone into thinking they owe a lot of money and have to do anything to pay it off

It's not OK for anyone to be treated like this and there are lots of people who can help.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP OR ADVICE

If you are worried about something happening to you, or anyone else, talk to an adult. This can be a friend, a relative, a teacher or anyone you trust.

Or, if you don't feel like you can talk to anyone you know, there are lots of organisations you can contact for advice or to pass on information:

- **Childline** – you can talk to Childline about anything by calling their freephone helpline on **0800 1111** or by chatting to them online - www.childline.org.uk. It's confidential and you don't even have to give your name if you don't want to
- **Fearless** – this is a site where you can access lots of information about crime. You can also pass on information 100% anonymously without having to give any of your personal details - <https://www.fearless.org>
- **Thames Valley Police** – the police are always there to help. You can visit your local police station or call them on **101** or **999** in an emergency. Always call 999 if you think you or someone you know is in immediate danger.