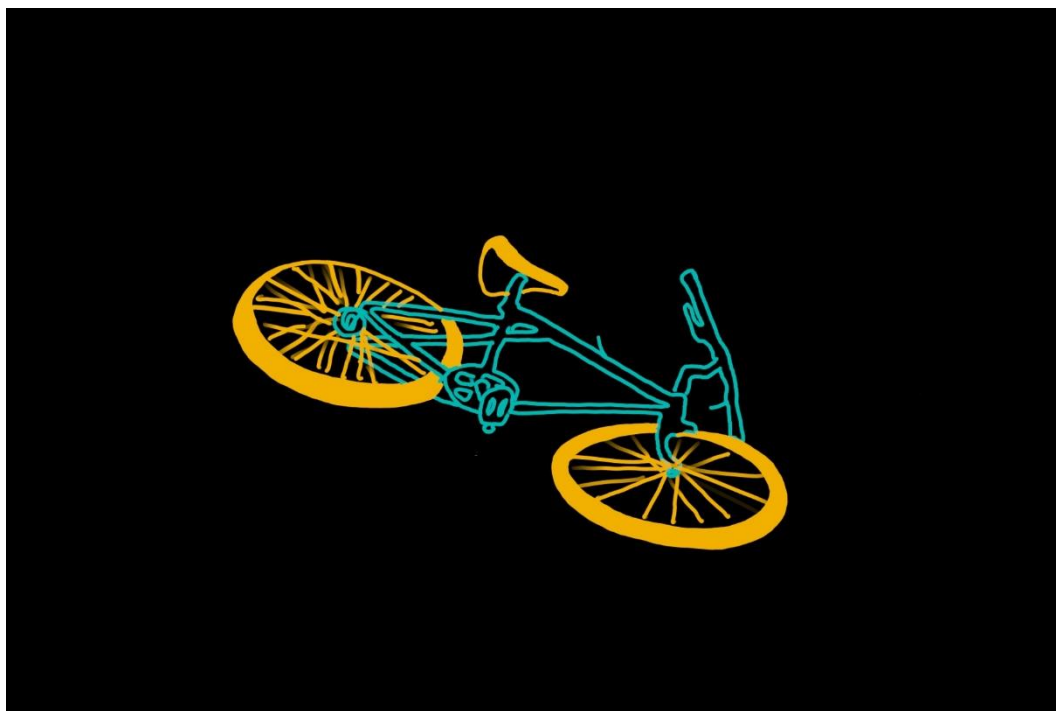


# **Cold Chips and Money**



**An evaluation of a *county lines* interactive digital story,  
developed by**

**Active Communities Network  
and  
University of Portsmouth**

**Written by  
Alexandra Russell and Dr Catherine McNamara  
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## Executive Summary

### Resource overview

Cold Chips and Money (CCM) was created in collaboration between the University of Portsmouth and Active Communities Network. The resource also had input from the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership, Portsmouth Youth Offending Team, the Missing, Exploited & Trafficked Operational Service (Portsmouth City Council), the Willow Team (Hampshire County Council), Edge of Care Team PCC and Portsmouth Police (Hampshire Constabulary).

CCM is an interactive digital story designed for Years 7 & 8. CCM was designed to raise awareness around the growing issue of county lines, within the context of Child Criminal Exploitation. It uses interactive storytelling as a tool to engage students to meaningfully explore the issues surrounding exploitation, and how children can be manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

### Delivery settings & dates

1. Isle of Wight, Youth Offending Team (IoW YOT): **22.04.21**
2. Trafalgar School, Hilsea: **21.05.21**
3. Mayfield School, North End: **25.05.21**
4. Springfield School, Drayton: **21.06.21**
5. Medina College, Newport, Isle of Wight: **21.06.21**
6. Park Community School, Leigh Park: **21.07.21**

### Student delivery numbers

1. Medina College: **825**
2. Park Community School: **180**
3. Springfield School: **220**
4. Trafalgar School: **167**
5. Mayfield School: **22**
6. Isle of Wight Youth Offending Team (IoW YOT): **1**

**Total: 1,415**

### Delivery & evaluation

- CCM concept, design, set up and delivery (including evaluation): *15 months*
- Evaluation methods: *pre and post delivery interviews and surveys*
- Resource and evaluation delivery time: *60 minutes*
- Student feedback: *500 surveys (less than the number of students due to some instances of whole class delivery)*
- Teacher feedback: *34 pre and post surveys and interviews*
- Curriculum: *majority of schools chose to deliver CCM within PHSE*
- Covid 19: *schools chose to find capacity to deliver the resource amid restrictions*

*“I think that children do feel like they are obligated to say yes to people, especially adults, because they are taught that they are always right and have power over them, this makes them feel like they can’t/don’t have a voice”*

**(student)**

*“It went really, really well. I think young people now have a better understanding of grooming and county lines, especially how easily you can be sucked in by ‘elders’ and then owe them and have to repay a debt. I think they now know the warning signs, and where to get help if they are in a situation that they’re worried about”*

**(teacher)**

## 1. Context

County lines (also referred to as Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)) is the term used to describe criminal gangs that exploit and use young and highly vulnerable children as couriers to move illegal drugs, cash and weapons between cities and smaller towns, to sell them via dedicated mobile phone lines. The NSPCC have produced an information video to explain the process of how children are enticed or threatened into illegal activities by criminal gangs. There are three stages of grooming: the NSPCC define these stages as the targeting stage, the test stage and the trapped stage ([Stages of Child Criminal Exploitation - YouTube](#)).

The Police have committed significant resources to combating the rise of children being manipulated into county lines activities. It is a nationwide issue that is attracting national news coverage. A BBC report from September 2020, followed a week-long Police operation involving all 43 regional forces in England and Wales. The raids resulted in 1,000 arrests and £1.2 million pounds being seized in one day. Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has stated that tackling county lines was a "priority" for the government, which has invested £25m to combat the exploitation of vulnerable children (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-54282448>).

## 2. Resource overview

The project team led by Dr Catherine McNamara (University of Portsmouth) created a digital interactive story. The story is a catalyst for discussion with young people and families. The project was to complement the borough's ongoing multi-agency work on CCE, County Lines, gangs and youth violence.

The story is called *Cold Chips and Money* (CCM). It is aimed at young people aged 11-13 (Years 7 & 8). It is possible to use the story with any age, if a professional felt it was suitable but it has been developed with Key Stage 3 in mind. The story has 3 parts and a young person is the protagonist (main character). The story builds from an ordinary morning, to first encounters with older people who are themselves involved in CCE through to scenes where the main character is feeling very pressured to carry out actions that would constitute criminal offences.

The story is for use as part of early intervention with groups of young people who generally do not yet have direct experiences of CCE. The project to create CCM and its accompanying resource pack is part of a collaboration between the University of Portsmouth and Active Communities Network.

The resource also had input from the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership, Portsmouth Youth Offending Team, the Missing, Exploited & Trafficked Operational Service (Portsmouth City Council), Edge of Care Team PCC, the Willow Team (Hampshire County Council) and Portsmouth Police (Hampshire Constabulary). CCM was funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (Hampshire & the Isle of Wight). There was structured stakeholder engagement that considered the target age group, character, gender, narrative and activities, and levels of criminality. These professionals were asked to trial the story and feedback, which provided useful suggestions for adapting elements of the resource. They also offered some general feedback that could prove useful when considering applying for further funding to support more schools to deliver CMM.

The original concept for CCM was conceived in February 2019. The initial plan was to use external facilitators to deliver CCM in schools during a facilitated workshop. These plans had to be postponed and later amended to respond to the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020. All

stakeholders worked in partnership to find a solution to delivering CCM during the unprecedented restrictions and measures brought in by the government. It was agreed that delivery could be achieved if schools/teachers were supported to deliver the resource to students as part of their PHSE curriculum.

This decision proved to be fortuitous and was genuinely collaborative. Schools were offered one to one support with set up and delivery logistics from the Project Coordinator and Evaluator (employed by the University of Portsmouth). This new model of delivery had many advantages, as it provided the opportunity for sustainable knowledge exchange that embedded practice and expertise within school settings, as opposed to relying on external facilitators. Schools were guided and supported from first contact, through to delivery and completion of evaluation tools. This guided support model also means that schools now have the delivery experience to continue to deliver the CCM resource with future students.

CCM is an interactive digital story designed for Years 7 & 8, with an estimated delivery time of 30 minutes to navigate through from start to finish (excluding discussion and evaluation). Covid 19 increased the predicted delivery time in some schools due to measures that required students to sanitise their desks at the start and end of every lesson. The story is accompanied by a resource pack, which includes a session plan to support teachers to facilitate a structured conversation alongside navigating the story.

CCM follows a young person through a variety of activities and scenarios to show him being subtly manipulated and then exploited by people who seem initially to be friendly. It highlights how small decisions can result in major consequences and how difficult it can be to see the manipulation. The story places students at the centre of the action, giving them autonomy over the main character. Students answer multiple choice questions to navigate through the story which has multiple outcomes depending on the answers they choose.

The CCM resource aims to raise awareness around the growing issue of county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation. The resource utilises storytelling as a tool to engage students to meaningfully explore the issues surrounding exploitation and how children can be manipulated and coerced into committing crime. The following link takes teachers/facilitators to the CCM interactive resource, as well as to related supporting information on county lines: <https://coldchipsandmoney.uk/>

Amongst the pressures and uncertainties created by Covid-19 restrictions, IoW YOT, and five schools, worked in partnership with the CCM Project Coordinator and Evaluator from February to July 2021 on the set up and successful delivery to 1,415 students (including fulfilling all CCM evaluation requirements). This report acknowledges the efforts and commitment of these schools, and thanks them for finding space within their curriculum to deliver CCM. CCM was initially offered to Isle of Wight Youth Offending Team (IoW YOT) and nine schools across the Portsmouth and Leigh Park area in February 2021. Two schools declined the offer of participating with the first roll out of the resource, stating that county lines is not an issue for their students. Another school had agreed to deliver the resource with their Year 8 students but receded on their agreement three months after first contact due to issues with capacity (again linked to the pressures of Covid-19).

### 3. Learning objectives

CCM is designed to help students understand, recognise and manage external influence and pressure, and how they can keep themselves safe, as well as supporting one another to resist unwanted attention that might lead to exploitation. It aims to challenge misconceptions students may have about how criminal gangs seek to exploit young people. It therefore enhances work on personal safety and risk management. Use of the resource can build on

lessons which have introduced topics related to forming and maintaining respectful relationships. It responds to PSHE Association Key Stage 3 Core Theme Relationships: Social Influence section R42-47.

#### 4. Learning Outcomes (*students*)

- I understand what child criminal exploitation is and who is at risk of it.
- I can explain and challenge the reasons why some young people might succumb to the unwanted social pressure and influences which lead to exploitation.
- I can talk about a range of options to manage unwanted social pressure and influence.

#### 5. Delivery models

CCM appears to be most effectively delivered within a single lesson, as stopping, and starting invariably results in losing your place in the story. The overwhelming preference of participating schools was to find capacity within their PHSE curriculum. The resource was facilitated by teachers with students in a whole class setting. The delivery framework consisted of a pre delivery class discussion, delivery of the resource, and a post-delivery class discussion. This allowed students the opportunity to analyse their decision-making processes in relation to the choices they made throughout the story.

Participating schools chose to deliver the resource using one of the following three delivery models:

1. Whole class participation, where teachers facilitated the story with input from all students on how to answer multiple choice questions. This approach resulted in one outcome that was reached by the whole class.
2. Cluster groups of students played the story within the whole class lesson. This approach required collective decision making between students that generated numerous outcomes within a whole class setting.
3. Individual students played the story, producing a variety of outcomes across the whole class.

#### 6. Delivery settings & dates

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#### 7. Student engagement

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**Total: 1,415**

## 8. Ethics & Safeguarding

- Informed consent was gained via verbal approval from teachers/YOT Officer for their participation in all aspects of the evaluation methods.
- Data collected from students and teachers/loW YOT Officer was anonymised, excluding information on delivery setting.
- Teachers were asked to review their school's safeguarding policy prior to delivery.
- Prior notice was given to inclusion leads prior to delivery.
- Ground rules were established prior to delivery that emphasised students should not disclose personal stories or make assumptions about others.
- A trauma informed approach ensured time for discussion pre and post delivery, allowing time to reflect on perceptions, feelings, and thoughts around county lines.
- Students were signposted to internal and external support sources.

## 9. Evaluation Methods

It was important to gather the views of both teachers and students in relation to their expectations of CCM, as well as how effective the resource was at raising awareness of county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation. The following methods were employed to obtain testimonies from teachers and students from all five schools and loW YOT:

### **Teachers**

- Pre delivery informal interview
- Pre delivery survey
- Post delivery informal interview
- Post delivery survey

### **Students**

- Pre delivery survey
- Post delivery survey

## 10. Key findings

### **Overview**

This chapter provide examples of the most common feedback gathered from participating schools. The examples include feedback from both teachers and students, pre- and post-delivery. Additional feedback from one young person in the care of loW YOT is also included within this chapter.

All schools (and the loW YOT) stated that they will be using the resource again next academic year. Teachers often commented that students appeared to initially display limited understanding of exploitation (in relation to county lines) before the pre delivery class discussion. Students thought that they would 'get in trouble' with the Police if they ever became involved in county lines and would therefore be unlikely to seek external sources of help. Pre delivery student surveys show an increase in basic or initial understanding after the pre delivery discussion facilitated by teachers. Student feedback post delivery appears to evidence an increase in and a more nuanced understanding of county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation.

Post delivery feedback from students shows that CCM is a vital tool in helping to inform students of their legal status in relation to county lines involvement, as well as helping them to understand how to safeguard themselves if they ever found themselves in the vulnerable position of being exploited. Post delivery student surveys overwhelmingly evidenced a significant increase in awareness of county lines, and the issues surrounding it, using the resource to explore scenarios that depict what young people can experience when moving through the three stages of coercion (*refer to Context, chapter 1*).

Teachers from all schools stated that the interactive storytelling format of CCM was incredibly effective at engaging students and holding their attention. They also found that student discussions pre and post delivery presented a range of perspectives (some unexpected), allowing teachers the opportunity to facilitate in depth dialogue around the cause and effect of the choices we make, and how easily young people can be manipulated into illegal activity through peer pressure and grooming.

Teachers highlighted that CCM can be effectively delivered using a range of approaches (see chapter 5). They all agreed that splitting the delivery of the resource into two sessions would reduce its impact due to the multiple choice question format of the resource (i.e. engagement would be reduced if students were unable to find their way back to the same place in the story).

All teachers said they would continue to use CCM as part of an on-going awareness raising campaign related to county lines. They overwhelmingly stated that the resource had helped to meet their statutory obligation to keep students safe and informed about county lines to prevent exploitation. Teachers stated that due to the effectiveness of CCM, they are planning to use the resource with future year 8 students, embedding the resource within the PHSE curriculum (potentially revisiting the issue of county lines with the same students during their first term of year 9).

## 11. Student feedback

Student feedback provided an important and valuable range of insights and perspectives. Student questions were designed to determine levels of understanding of county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation. 500 pre and post survey questions were submitted by students – this was less than the total number of students that engaged with the resource due to some instances of whole class delivery.

Student pre survey questions evidence a moderate to good understanding of county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation. As previously mentioned, examples of increased levels of awareness and understanding appear to correlate with a pre delivery class discussion that provided students with a general description of county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation. Common themes and patterns that arise from student feedback indicate that some students show higher levels of understanding than others, allowing CCM to bridge the gap in knowledge.

Post delivery survey questions provide more nuanced responses, with students using the narrative of the CCM story to help make sense of issues of manipulation and coercion. They were using the lens of the character to meaningfully explore how vulnerable children can suffer exploitation from older peers and adults.

*Note: the complete transcript of all student responses has been omitted from the appendix due to the vast quantity of data.*



The following extracts from pre and post delivery surveys from students have been chosen to reflect the most common responses across five schools and the IoW YOT:

## Student surveys

### Pre-delivery

1. *Child Criminal Exploitation is where a child is being told they would get a reward if they did what the criminal wants them to do. I kind of know what county lines is...I have a vague idea – children made to do things they don't want to?*
2. *Children would get in trouble if they carried out a criminal act, but they would have a smaller risk of trouble.*
3. *You would get in trouble, but it would depend upon your age.*
4. *Children wouldn't get in trouble because they are getting forced into it.*
5. *Children would get in trouble for doing a crime, but not as bad because they were exploited.*
6. *I think young people can sometimes get asked 'do something for me?' It could be anything.*
7. *I think I would get in a bit of trouble with the police if I ever got involved in county lines because I wouldn't ever snitch.*
8. *CCE is when children are taken advantage of - when a child is forced to do stuff for gangs.*
9. *Young people can get pressured by their friends. For example, if they are being forced into drinking or smoking because people are calling them names if they don't.*
10. *Yes, a child would definitely be in trouble [with the police] if they were seen with the wrong people and the police would probably think, "their one of them". So, I think they would treat them the same because the child probably won't be honest and make up lies because his mates have threatened him etc.*
11. *One of your friends might be a bad influence and make you feel guilty or anxious about losing that person as a friend if you don't do what's asked of them. They could influence smoking, drugs, alcohol, skipping school or just misbehaving.*
12. *I think children are pressured every day, which could cause physical/emotional harm because of the consequences.*
13. *I think if young people were involved, they would get into trouble. But they may not have a choice due to circumstances like poverty, so they may have to get involved.*
14. *County lines is all about abuse. It's when a child is being told they would get a reward if they did what the criminal wants them to do.*

15. *Children are taken advantage of when a child is forced to do stuff for gangs.*
16. *Children may not exactly understand what is going on – especially if the adult is far more superior to them.*
17. *Something happened to a friend of mine, and it was to do with drugs. The situation has been sorted.*
18. *There were some in our class that said yes kids would get in trouble – then others said they wouldn't get in trouble. 'Trouble' is a difficult word, as they knew they would get involved with the police but not necessarily in 'trouble' with them as some might have been coerced.*

### **Post-delivery**

1. *I think that children do feel like they are obligated to say yes to people, especially adults because they are taught that they are always right and have power over them, this makes them feel like they can't/don't have a voice.*
2. *Young people can tell a responsible adult about what someone is asking you to do.*
3. *Children would be treated as a victim if they became involved in county lines due to pressure.*
4. *I think smaller or younger people feel pressure, they don't want to say no because other kids are bigger, you could get hurt if you say no. I used to be like that. I now feel more confident to say no.*
5. *I think anyone could get tempted, and then if you do it once you're trapped and they got you. They befriend you/get you onside/get you to trust them, give you stuff so you owe them.*
6. *CCE or child criminal exploitation is a type of child abuse where children are manipulated into committing crimes. They are likely to exploit children to move and store and transport drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence, and weapons to make them oblige. They may also pretend to be your friend to use them also.*
7. *I think young people are more at risk if they're going through a tough time, being picked on or bullied, it can work both ways if you are sad, you can make money to cheer yourself up by buying stuff you want, or you could tell them to go away and not do it.*
8. *I think the character found it hard to avoid peer pressure because they wanted to be his fiend and no one else wanted to.*
9. *I think that it is easy for children to feel peer pressure, this is because they may not want to get left out or made fun of.*
10. *I think saying no to a person as a child is hard because you are easily impressionable. The person asking them might be telling them that it's good and it gets to your head.*
11. *Children can turn to their parents or friends or even ChildLine or help.org.*

12. *I think that children find it hard to say no to people even if they know it's wrong because they don't want to get made fun of or want to fit in with the others.*
13. *I think that children could turn to parents, teachers, or someone that they trust if they are being pressured into doing something.*
14. *I think the character found it hard to avoid pressure from others because his new 'friends' would tease him if he didn't do anything they offered him or asked him to do, like smoking or underage drinking.*
15. *I don't think kids would get in trouble with the police because they are being forced and pressured into committing those crimes.*
16. *I feel safe everywhere because I know there are some people out there that would come and help me if I was in trouble. But if there isn't, I always have my keys, so if someone comes onto me, I can go for the jugular or any body part, then call the police/ambulance so that he or she can be helped.*
17. *I think there could be many reasons they feel they HAVE to do what they've been asked. Whether they are being threatened, feel protected by the bad people or maybe the friend who's manipulating them is popular and they want to keep that social status of being their friend.*

## 12. Teacher feedback

As a result of the evaluation process, 34 teachers that delivered CCM provided pre and post delivery surveys, plus 11 pre and post interviews with key teachers. These offer a robust and overwhelming positive evidence base in relation to the CCM resource, specifically regarding its design and impact. All informants willingly participated in the evaluation process, with the majority completing all aspects of the evaluation process. The timeframe from first contact with schools to the completion of evaluation tools took five months. The five month timeframe usually included several contacts (e.g. phone calls and/ or video calls) carried out at times to suit the teaching staff. The school Easter holiday period fell in the middle of this time.

Delivery settings in 2021 commented that it was challenging to include the use of the CCM resource within their pre planned PHSE curriculum. However, teachers recognised the value of the resource as well as the significance of the pilot and managed to find capacity for delivery within their PHSE curriculum. The evaluation was an essential part of the pilot roll out of CCM, but under the unprecedented circumstances of covid 19, the effort and time teachers and the IoW YOT Officer committed to the process was impressive. The majority of teachers stated that as restrictions are eased it will be possible to reduce the set up time for delivery/evaluation with future Year 8 students (when children no longer need to clean their work stations at the start of each lesson for example).

Teachers were asked questions about their first impressions of the resource, how they expected students to engage with it, and whether they believed it would be a useful tool for helping to raise awareness of county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation. Post evaluation was designed to determine the resource's effectiveness. The following examples present the most common responses (pre and post delivery) from teachers across five schools and IoW YOT (*full interview/survey questions and transcripts can be found in the appendix*).

## Teacher surveys

### Pre delivery

1. *I hope that students will increase their awareness of how to keep themselves safe, as well as developing more critical thinking about county lines scenarios.*
2. *I think it will provide recognisable scenarios that students can consider and allow them to realise the impact of smaller choices, and how these can lead to more serious outcomes.*
3. *I think there is a lot of reading involved, which might not be as engaging for some students. Perhaps a mix of reading and animated aspects could be good.*
4. *I think there should be less reading for students – perhaps a more mixed media approach with videos etc. built in.*
5. *I think it is really important to raise awareness of county lines with young people. I think that sometimes their everyday life and peer relationships can appear ordinary, but sometimes they are exploitative relationships. I think it will be so important for them to see the warning signs and how easy it can be to get drawn into something that looks glamorous but isn't.*
6. *I think this resource supports our PHSE curriculum.*
7. *This resource will help students safeguard themselves against exploitation. It will help them understand how they could be taken advantage of.*
8. *I think students will enjoy the interactive nature of the game. Students might struggle to digest the information - considering the consequences will require more discussion. I think the length of the story might be an issue.*
9. *A minority of students might struggle with confidence in front of others.*

### Post-delivery

1. *Thank you for letting us use this resource, it was a really good way to talk to young people about CCE and useful for triggering important dialogue.*
2. *The resource was good, age appropriate for the years 7 and 8. My young person engaged well with it, and it triggered good conversation about his personal experiences.*
3. *The story itself was engaging. My young person did not like that there were not enough choices or that the thing he would have done in the situation wasn't there as an option.*
4. *IoW YOT are going to embed CCM as part of the YOT's interdisciplinary approach (i.e. drug workers and YOT officers delivering it together).*
5. *We were in a computer room, so there wasn't a great amount of space for roleplay.*

6. *I thought it was interesting that no students said they would seek help from teachers, school, or parents.*
7. *I completed the intervention with the young person and his drug worker. He felt it gave a good example of how young people can become involved in county lines. It triggered conversation around his own peer associates and their drug use.*
8. *Young people really enjoyed the interactive part, they will be pleased that they have a good knowledge on this topic now.*
9. *I think young people now have a better understanding of grooming, especially how easily you can be sucked in by 'elders' and then owe them and have to repay a debt.*

## Teacher pre-delivery interviews

### Pre-delivery

1. *Our case load is getting younger, so this resource is going to be really helpful for the younger ones who are even more vulnerable. I think it is important that it is facilitated with the young person – he wouldn't do it on his own. The young person is a year 8 student, currently out of school, he is involved with a group of peers who are much older. He uses cannabis and is involved with our drug and alcohol service. His drugs worker will be joining me during delivery this afternoon. This resource literally could not have come at a better time. I think it will spark quite a bit of conversation around the issues that we are worried about anyway. I think it is a good format, there definitely are benefits to it being an interactive story telling resource because you are not having to chat at them, you are doing something with them, its interactive so they can take control.*
2. *I liked that young people could make their own decisions independently using different scenarios, rather than a teacher over influencing what they should decide to do and make their own decisions and have their own consequences to those decisions. This will be the first time this year 8 will have approached the subject of CCE but we have spoken with previous year 8 students about the issues surrounding CCE.*
3. *I understand that the resource is about county lines and issues surrounding child criminal exploitation. It is going to be really useful for us, as we have some young people already involved in county lines issues. The more knowledgeable and the less ignorant they are to the subject the better.*

*The resource looks really interactive and fun. I think the students always like interactive and fun resources, but this is not always possible, so it will probably be quite a novelty for the students. I think the students will quite enjoy the experience of taking parts in this resource.*

4. *We are hoping that the resource will make the students less naive to possible situations and come away with pre rehearsed scenarios and actions on how they*

would deal with county lines issues. We also want to raise awareness that the students will not necessarily get in trouble with the police if they end up involved in county lines activity. I predict that we will get some responses about the fact that the story just focuses on a boy and not a girl.

5. *I think it will raise their awareness of how little decisions can have big consequences and create a spiral effect - how one small decision can have a big impact is quite powerful, then when they get to the end they can discuss the different story choices and the different outcomes of their decisions. I think that it will help them understand the importance of speaking out and thinking a bit more carefully. To know that they can seek help if it is needed.*
6. *I don't think the students will initially be able to tell us what exploitation looks like bar some extreme examples. I think they will struggle with some of the nuanced aspects of relationships that are exploitative. But I do think talking with them about relationships/friendships outside of school is going to bring up some interesting discussions.*

### **Post-delivery**

1. *The young person said he thought it was a really good resource – very age appropriate – very realistic – it was the right length to keep him engaged. The resource allowed us to ask the questions we wanted to ask, without them just coming out of the blue. Mum had already flagged up that an older boy had been glamourizing drug taking to her son. She didn't want us to just ask about that example directly, in case that meant she lost his trust, so the resource enabled us to approach that scenario one step removed and allay any suspicion that mum had already disclosed this information.*
2. *We've used other resources before, things like a video where you choose your own adventure, I was a bit concerned that just having the text come up wasn't going to engage them as much. That was my initial thought, it looked a bit bland on the screen. As it turned out, they did get quite into it, but I have seen, particularly one of my groups get more engaged with a video style. Getting them to do it individually took about 35 minutes but as a whole class it took closer to 45 – 50 minutes. Although our classes are an hour long, the students have to spend five minutes at the start and end of the lesson sanitizing the work stations because of Covid, which impacts the time we have to deliver content with them.*
3. *I think the resource helped them to learn that making different decisions can make a difference. I think some of them really enjoyed being able to go back and see how they could change the story. I think choosing your own adventure style really appeals to the students because it is something different. It is not something we do in most lessons. Most lessons are about students being given the facts and asked to make a note of them, but this was more free flowing and allowed for discussion.*
4. *You get a lot of honest feedback when they're 12 or 13 years old! I think it was pitched at the right year groups because we have some very vulnerable young people. County lines is something that kids are getting involved in from a much younger age now. I would definitely use this resource again – we use anything that we can get our hands on! I think we were given plenty of time to look through it ourselves before delivery – you don't want to try and deliver something to the students when you haven't had time to look at it yourself.*

5. *"I thought it was very accessible. My groups sat in pairs of three to play the game and they didn't need much help. It was a light touch from me in terms of having to guide them through it. But I was hovering around all the conversations and hearing what they were saying. They all had a mini debate between themselves, but some didn't want to speak and just got on with it. Some had a laborious argument within their groups about how to answer the questions. It was all good learning.*
6. *I like to encourage mini debates, but students are sitting in rows now all looking forward due to covid restrictions, this makes discussion very challenging. Hopefully from September we'll be able to have them sat in small groups facing each other again.*
7. *I would use this resource again. It works well with year 8 – I wouldn't do it with any of our older students but maybe year 7. It is helping them to learn consequences of their decision making. I'm planning to use it again later in our next academic year.*
8. *They didn't mention having any issue with it being a male character or that it used football as a focus of the story. But I do think it would be right to allow them to choose a character and sport that better helps them identify with the story – perhaps a transgender character? This would help them better understand and accept that everyone has their own preferences and identities that are sometimes different from their own. When students have extreme views, they are generally coming from their parents. We challenge these views during their time at school, but it is very time consuming – especially year 9 who have issues around gender and race.*
9. *It went really well. We had a discussion at the beginning to work out what the word exploitation means – what child criminal exploitation means. They did their surveys before we started and then took part in the story element. They engaged really well with it and the students were really focused throughout. I don't think they realised how different their outcomes would be based on the choices they made as the character in the story. That worked really nicely because they were shocked to hear that some students had different experiences than they had had in the story.*
10. *I think that was quite impactful because I think it helped them to relate that to situations in real life, and how one thing can lead to another. I think the students now have a better understanding of CCE/county lines, and we will be building on this in other PHSE lessons to help solidify it for them. I think they now know where to get help if they are in a situation that they're worried about, as well as how to help a friend in trouble.*
11. *It was very accessible and worked very well and I would recommend it to other schools. It is a really good resource to help understand the issues, as long as they have access to the technology to engage with it. I would have loved to do this with more students this academic year, but the impact of lockdown meant that we were a little bit tighter for time. I would like to build it into our scheme of work moving forward to allow all students to play it.*
12. *The year group that we delivered to are a challenging group but they found it really engaging which was brilliant. Feedback from the teachers was very positive. We delivered the session in 55 minutes – including doing the evaluation and discussion time. I don't think that all students finished the session with greater awareness of county lines, but that could be due to the teacher that was facilitating the lesson or the particular kids in that group. There were definitely other students that ended up with a clearer understanding of the issue though. I think students did*

*struggle with the concept of being exploited, I think some students just find that quite hard.*

- 13. I think the resource looks good, I enjoyed playing it. All the teachers are excited to deliver it with their students. I like the fact that the students will be participating in it, so it will be their story. I can see why it works better in small groups, because then you're going to have different paths that students are going to take.*
- 14. I think they're going to find it hard to accept that it isn't normal to be hanging around in gangs and doing things. I don't think they realise that they can be exploited, coerced, and manipulated when in gangs. My most challenging job is to convince students that it isn't cool to be part of gangs. It isn't a very brave thing to do because you are just going along with what other people expect of you and not being resilient. I'm a bit concerned that some of the delivery teachers (not PHSE) won't know how to answer some of the student's questions as they are unfamiliar with the subject.*
- 15. The students absolutely loved it – they loved the fact it was interactive. Some of them were a bit cheeky, they always opted for the worst scenarios and tried to anticipate what was going to happen. Students commented that they found the initial stage of the story too long (setting the scene), and the story could have progressed faster.*
- 16. I think it is best suited to year 8 students because they are more vulnerable - years 9 and 10 appeared to already know a lot about county lines. But it is the type of resource that raises awareness whatever the year group.*
- 17. We would have preferred to deliver the resource in smaller groups, opposed to whole classes, but we just don't have the technology to facilitate that. I thought it was a really, really good resource and I really enjoyed doing it.*



## 13. Recommendations

### **Time frame for set up & delivery**

- The pilot delivery of CCM (2021) consisted of a five month lead in time from initial contact with schools/loW YOT, to the successful delivery and evaluation of the resource. This was significantly impacted by the demands on staff related to the restrictions and complexities that schools were having to navigate due to Covid-19
- The easing of Covid 19 restrictions should mean that schools have greater time and flexibility to deliver CCM within a shorter timeframe.
- Future delivery should consider making first contact with schools at the beginning of the academic year. This would allow schools additional time to plan the use of the resource into the curriculum and arrange the necessary logistics for delivery/evaluation.
- Teachers suggested that CCM should be delivered in the final academic term for year 8 students, with additional sessions on county lines occurring within the first term of year 9. This is no doubt, a school-specific decision though.
- Facilitation skills of delivery teachers is key to the effectiveness of CCM. The resource was most successfully delivered by experienced PHSE leads, with a good general knowledge of county lines.

### **Partnerships & collaboration**

- The University of Portsmouth and Active Communities Network worked in partnership with local stakeholder partners such as the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership, Portsmouth Youth Offending Team, and Portsmouth Police. This collaboration resulted in a successful resource which was well received by professionals.
- Continued partnership with schools would present opportunities for sharing key findings (using evaluation gathered pre and post delivery), and promote ongoing knowledge exchange on county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation.

### **Sustainable delivery models**

- CCM should be delivered within one 40-60 minute lesson to ensure continuity and include group discussion pre and post delivery.
- CCM appears to work most effectively delivered in small cluster group of students within a whole class setting.
- The Project Coordinator and Evaluator is an effective role to manage and guide schools through set up to delivery when using this resource for the first time. When teachers have been well-supported to plan and deliver the resource, they are enabled to continue to deliver the resource without the need of external facilitators (which would incur ongoing costs).

### **Evaluation**

- Schools stated that the evaluation framework tools (i.e. pre and post survey questions and interviews) were useful in gathering robust feedback from teachers and students.
- Google forms should be created and made available for student/teacher pre and post delivery surveys.

### **Additional content/ workshop activity**

- Although schools were not expected or directed to lead any role play activities within delivery of CCM, one school stated that their students were happy to engage in role play. They went on to say that their students 'often won't do it if they don't feel happy with the content'.

### **Curriculum**

- CCM was designed for Year 8 students, and the feedback from teachers overwhelmingly states that this is the appropriate age group for the resource.
- CCM appears to be best suited to being embedded within the PHSE curriculum.
- CCM should form part of a school's broader approach to raising awareness of county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation.

### **Inclusivity & accessibility**

- Some feedback suggested consideration of including audio narration and video clips to support students with additional learning needs.
- The positive feedback from IoW YOT indicates that alternative settings could also benefit from support to deliver CCM to high risk/vulnerable young people.

### **Future funding**

- Continued funding for set up, delivery and evaluation of CCM would enable more schools to engage with the resource in supported ways in 2022 and beyond.
- The original cost for the Project Coordinator and Evaluator was £6,000. This included a proportion of the fee to develop the evaluation model and materials as well as payment for time supporting five schools and the YOT leading to 1,415 children experiencing the resource. This equates to approximately £3 per child which we would suggest is value for money.

### **Development of the CCM design**

- Some schools initially shared concerns about whether students would like the illustrations, as well as suggesting that they might take issue with the character being a boy, and the activity in the story being football. However, these concerns never came to fruition in the student post survey questions. Students appeared to have fully engaged with the resource with no mention of the gender of the character or the activity being football.
- It would be possible to develop a more technologically sophisticated resource more akin to a computer game, though these kinds of products have significantly higher costs.

## **14. Conclusion**

The delivery of the pilot CCM project produced a wealth of evidence to assert its effectiveness when delivered by PHSE teachers to Year 8 students within one 50-60 minute lesson. The number of students that engaged in the pilot delivery of CCM (1,415) exceeded expectations. In the original funding bid we committed to reaching 1,000 young people. As a result of the negative and complex impact of Covid-10, we revised this down to 750 – 800 anticipating restrictions on school's capacity to deliver additional content.

Student feedback was resoundingly positive, gathered from student surveys across five schools and IoW YOT. Students stated that they had gained greater awareness and understanding of exploitation in relation to county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation after engaging in the CCM resource. Teacher feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with schools stating that they planned to use CCM with future students. They stated that the interactive format was highly effective at maintaining sustained engagement from students throughout delivery.

The interactive storytelling format with multi choice questions allowed students autonomy over the characters journey. This approach helped students to meaningfully engage with the subject matter, using critical thinking to examine the incremental steps that can ultimately result in complex and harmful consequences. CCM is an effective tool to raise awareness and safeguard students from potential manipulation and coercion. The accessible format of resource means it has the potential to be rolled out to more schools in 2022 with the support of the Project Coordinator and Evaluator.

The Project Coordinator and Evaluator supported schools with set up and delivery of the resource. This external source of support helped to introduce and then embed expertise around learning and teaching the subject of county lines/Child Criminal Exploitation. This sustainable model of delivery empowers schools to deliver CCM without the need of external facilitators. The Project Coordinator and Evaluator also plays a vital role in obtaining valuable feedback from teachers and students, using one evaluation framework for all schools to centrally collate data to measure the effectiveness of CCM when it is first introduced and implemented.

The project team are grateful to have had the opportunity to support professionals in their work to safeguard children across Hampshire and IoW from the destructive consequences of county lines and Child Criminal Exploitation.

## 15. The Project Team

Project Manager:	Dr Catherine McNamara (University of Portsmouth)
Project Partner:	Julian Wadsworth (Active Communities Network)
Lead Practitioner:	Ian Nicholson
Game Developer & Illustrator:	Amy Godliman
Evaluator-Facilitator:	Alexandra Russell