

**Avon and Somerset Police**  
**SERVE. PROTECT. RESPECT.**

Good afternoon,

I hope you are all enjoying the lovely Bank Holiday, as I am working and the BH provides me with a lull in meetings and emails I thought it good timing to drop you all a quick update on what your local teams have been doing to tackle County Lines. Whilst the activity I have highlighted is over the last fortnight, it is typical of what they are doing regularly across nearly all of our towns.

We had a week of action aiming to disrupt County Lines offenders from operating but also aimed at protecting those most at risk. In South Somerset and Mendip alone we visited 47 households, speaking to individuals we know are targeted, we worked with colleagues in housing and social care to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures were in place for those at risk.

The visits led to the seizure of what we believe to be Class A drugs, and other items connected with dealing drugs. I have copied in the press release below, which can be found on our website and accessed via this link;

<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2019/05/county-lines-drug-dealing-lines-bombarded-with-disruptive-text-messages-during-week-of-action/>

We have had the support of specialist officers from across the force to help us tackle County Lines drug dealing, including patrols by our mounted colleagues in Yeovil. Other specialist units are less visible but are here helping us to catch those responsible. Our Traffic colleagues have been supporting us trying to find vehicles used by drug dealers, and while in our towns seizing uninsured vehicles they come across.



ASPolice Mendip  
@ASPMendip

It was a busy Sunday in Shepton Mallet for @ASPRoadSafety. 4 cars were seized in total, one for no insurance, one for no licence and two had no licence or insurance. It was great to have them here making our roads safer and they'll be visiting again very soon. #RoadSafety



The additional officers helped us increase our pro-active capability and numerous searches and arrests have been made as a result, cash and drugs once again seized, causing further disruption to those offenders. In addition to this we have carried out 4 warrants searching suspected premises responsible for dealings drugs in just the Mendip area alone.

I hope you can see tackling those intent on causing our communities most harm is a real team effort – and that includes you.

We actively monitor addresses and persons of concern, but obviously only when we know, and rely on information being passed to us from the public and professionals.

If you would like me or a member of my team to come and brief any groups or staff about County Lines or indeed any other issue you are worried about please just ask myself or a member of your local team.

Thank you for your continued support of our local teams.

*Sharon Baker*

Chief Inspector

Local Policing Area Commander

East Somerset (South Somerset & Mendip)

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## County lines drug dealing lines bombarded with disruptive text messages during week of action



Text messages were sent to hundreds of suspected drug users and three drug deal lines believed to be operating in the Avon and Somerset area last week.

The messages were part of a week of action targeting county lines drug gangs co-ordinated by the National County Lines Coordination Centre.

'County lines' is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs out of bigger cities into one or more smaller towns in the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'.

The text messages directed 600 users to support agencies while also making dealers aware we knew what they were using the phone number for.

In response, we received a number of calls requesting help or providing us with information – including one call from the family of a potential drugs runner believed to be being used to sell drugs from London.

In addition, Avon and Somerset officers also visited 157 properties during the week which were thought to have either previously been cuckooed or were believed to be at risk of being cuckooed in the future.

'Cuckooing' is the term used for when drug dealers use violence, exploitation and intimidation to take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for drug dealing.

During the visits our officers spoke to 173 adults considered vulnerable and potentially at risk of being exploited by dealers. Safeguarding measures were also put in place for three children aged four, five, and 15 respectively.

A number of warrants were also executed at properties linked to drugs, resulting in the arrests of 13 men and five women. Nearly £2,000 in cash was seized during this enforcement action along with dozens of wraps of drugs, three

*Sharon Baker*

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