

New support for victims of county lines exploitation

Hundreds of victims of county lines exploitation will be helped to escape drug gangs following the expansion of support services in four priority locations – London, West Midlands, Merseyside and Greater Manchester – where young people are often targeted.

The Home Office has today (24 September) allocated up to £5 million to better support young people and their families for the next three years, and help free them from the grasp of vicious county lines gangs.

A one-to-one specialist support service for young people under 25, delivered by not-for-profit organisation Catch22, will safely make contact with young people who have been referred by safeguarding partners, such as the police and children's services, and work with them to exit their involvement in county lines activity.

If under 25s are identified outside of their hometowns, a rescue service will be deployed to bring them home safely, offering a pivotal moment for them to engage with caseworkers and protect their futures.

The service will also offer mental health support and counselling to the young people and their families, to help deal with the trauma of their experiences.

They will operate across the four largest exporting areas for county lines activity, aligning with the police forces that are part of the government's county lines programme.

Home Office Minister, Jeremy Quin, said:

I want victims of exploitation to know that we are on their side – and that there is a way out, a brighter future available.

Since 2019, the government's county lines programme has shut down 2,400 lines, made over 8,000 arrests and engaged more than 9,500 individuals through safeguarding interventions.

These services will be relentless in their focus to carve out safe routes home for young people in danger and tear them away from the grip of these merciless county lines gangs, opening up their futures once more.

As part of the package of support, funding will also be allocated to continue the delivery of the national confidential and anonymous helpline 'SafeCall', delivered across England and Wales by Missing People – including bespoke support for parents and carers. Since it was established in late 2017, the

helpline has supported 480 young victims of county lines exploitation and their families.

Chief Executive Officer at Catch22, Naomi Hulston, said:

For children and young people who are victims of county lines activity, the impact on their lives – and the lives of those around them – is devastating. We know that grooming techniques are becoming more advanced and that escaping the clutches of these perpetrators can be incredibly difficult. That's why as part of this service we'll not only be bringing young people home safely, we'll be supporting them to make sure they can process their experiences and are protected from any future harm.

Director of Policy and Development at Missing People, Susannah Drury, said:

SafeCall provides confidential, anonymous support to young victims of county lines exploitation and their families – helping them get safe, stay safe and deal with the challenges they face. Our expert team is available 9am to 11pm, 7 days a week to provide support via our free helpline – text or call 116000. Missing People is proud to be providing the SafeCall service across England and Wales to help young victims and their families through crisis and trauma.

County lines activity refers to drug trafficking operations which often sees children or vulnerable adults groomed to run drugs from one city to other parts of the country, usually coupled with extreme violence and coercive behaviour.

[Stoptober launches to give smokers the confidence to quit](#)

- Launch of Stoptober encourages thousands of smokers to quit the habit this October
- Smoking remains the single biggest cause of preventable illness and death in England
- People are five times more likely to quit for good if they can make it to at least 28 days smoke free
- A new film has been released featuring recent ex-smoker and Strictly Come Dancing star James Jordan exploring how quitters can gain the confidence to quit for good this Stoptober

Smokers in England are being urged to stub out the habit as part of the

annual Stoptober public health campaign launching next month, as latest statistics show smoking costs the NHS £2.4bn a year while causing at least 15 types of cancers, including lung cancer and acute myeloid leukaemia.

Stoptober – now in its 11th year – aims to empower people to give up smoking during October, as [evidence](#) shows people are five times more likely to quit for good if they can make it to at least 28 days smoke free.

[Research](#) shows that self-confidence is a major factor in successful attempts at quitting smoking. This year's campaign will encourage people to take simple steps to help build their confidence and get the support they need from family and friends, as well as professional help, to stop smoking for good.

Despite smoking rates declining, there are nearly six million adults in England who still smoke, and smoking remains the single biggest cause of preventable illness and death in England. According to estimates by Action on Smoking and Health, the annual costs of smoking to productivity are £13.2 billion; treating illnesses associated with smoking also costs the NHS £2.4bn a year, with the wider cost to society in England being approximately £17bn a year.

To help launch the campaign and encourage smokers to drop the habit, a film has been released today (Saturday 24 September) featuring former Strictly Come Dancing professional dancer James Jordan, who opens up about his recent journey to quit the habit, having smoked for 27 years. He speaks to ex-smoker and NHS psychiatrist, Dr Max Pemberton, and stop smoking professional, Louise Ross, about the importance of self-confidence when quitting smoking, as well as getting the right support.

Former Strictly Come Dancing professional dancer James Jordan said:

I consider myself a confident person in most areas of my life, but have always faltered with smoking, so thought I wouldn't be able to quit. I smoked for 27 years. My quitting journey has shown me that I am more capable than I thought, thanks to the support of my own family and friends and the professional help I sought.

Quitting smoking can improve your health, quality of life and save you money. I am so glad I took this step and had the chance to speak to the brilliant experts to give myself and others the confidence that quitting smoking, even if you've been smoking for decades, is possible.

Most smokers say they want to quit, and latest [statistics](#) show more than a third of smokers (36.6%) tried to quit in the last 12 months.

Emeritus Professor Behaviour Scientist at UCL Prof. Robert West said:

What is really interesting is just how much of an impact self-

efficacy, that sense of self-belief and confidence, has on quitting success. That confidence is something we can really help to influence. It really does show the power of the mind – self-belief when combined with other quitting aids such as vapes or NRT effectively equip people in giving up.

What people considering quitting this Stoptober should also bear in mind is that even if you've tried to quit before and not managed it, that doesn't mean it won't work this time. You will have learnt something from your previous attempts: think of each quit attempt as a stepping stone to becoming smoke free for life."

Stopping smoking brings multiple benefits to health, some immediate and others that build over time. These include being able to breathe and move around more easily, a reduced risk of several cancers and financial benefits. [Analysis](#) from HM Revenue and Customs shows the average smoker is able to save around £2,000 a year when they quit.

Stoptober offers a range of free quitting tools including the NHS Quit Smoking app, Facebook online communities, daily emails and SMS, an online Personal Quit Plan, as well as advice on stop smoking aids, vaping to quit smoking and free expert support from local Stop Smoking Services.

Public Health and Mental Health Minister Dr Caroline Johnson said:

Smoking is extremely addictive and can have devastating health impacts in the long term. As a paediatrician, I have seen first-hand that smoking addiction usually begins in childhood, and once started it is very difficult to quit.

We are determined to support people to stub out the habit, so it is fantastic to see the return of Stoptober, equipping smokers with the tools and confidence they need to go smoke free.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy said:

Smoking is a major cause of ill health, cancer and disability in England.

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health, please give it a go this Stoptober.

NHS psychiatrist Dr Max Pemberton said:

As a doctor and an ex-smoker myself, I always urge my patients to quit smoking wherever possible as we know all too well how every cigarette smoked damages the lungs. I also know first-hand how much healthier and full of life I am after quitting now that my lungs

have had a chance to clear.

What is of particular interest to me as a psychiatrist is how much of an impact individual confidence has on attempting to quit. I want to help everyone feel confident in their own ability to quit, feeling that they can access the vast amount of support out there, so they are set to give quitting smoking a shot this Stoptober.

For free support to quit this October, search 'Stoptober'.

Notes to editors:

- Stoptober is the annual campaign under OHID's umbrella brand, 'Better Health Let's Do This' that encourages smokers across the country to join in and give quitting a go for the month of October.
- The film featuring former Strictly Come Dancing professional dancer James Jordan, NHS psychiatrist Dr Max Pemberton and stop smoking professional Louise Ross is available [here](#).
- Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking> to find out more on what support is available.

[Joint statement from senior officials meeting on Libya](#)

Press release

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Abdoulaye Bathily as he takes up his mandate to advance political stability and reconciliation among Libyans. The officials affirmed their full support for UN mediation aimed at producing a constitutional basis to enable free, fair, and inclusive presidential and parliamentary elections throughout Libya in the shortest possible time. The officials also discussed the importance of fulfilling Libyan aspirations for the transparent management of oil revenues and agreeing on a unified executive with a mandate focused on preparing for elections. Participants strongly rejected any use of violence and reiterated their support for full implementation of the October 23, 2020 ceasefire agreement.

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[Second vaccine doses to be offered to those at highest risk from monkeypox](#)

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has announced that second doses of the smallpox (Jynneos) vaccine will be offered to people [at highest risk from monkeypox](#), in order to maximise protection against the virus.

This targeted approach is also supported by modelling published in today's [technical briefing 8](#) which suggests vaccinating 25% of the groups most at risk could significantly reduce the risk of transmission.

Whilst sexual health clinics will continue to prioritise offering first doses to those at highest risk, some clinics will also begin to offer eligible people a second dose to provide longer term protection.

The [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#) has endorsed UKHSA's proposal to offer second doses to those at highest risk, while continuing efforts to maximise uptake of the first dose within this group.

There are no current plans to widen the offer of vaccination beyond the existing priority cohorts, though this decision will be kept under review.

The NHS will call forward those that are eligible for vaccination. Second doses will be offered from around 2 to 3 months after the first dose to maximise protection.

As of 20 September, more than 45,000 people have received a dose of the vaccine including over 40,000 gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men who are at highest risk of exposure.

In order to maximise the number of people that can be vaccinated, more clinics will offer the vaccine using intradermal administration in the coming weeks. This safe and clinically approved approach has been positively received by patients and staff where it has been used already.

UKHSA has confirmed delivery of 20,000 additional vaccines from Bavarian Nordic, the single global supplier of the vaccine being used in response to the current outbreak of monkeypox in the UK. The vaccines are available for NHS services to order and are being distributed now, with a further 80,000 vaccines expected to arrive later this month. The use of intradermal

administration will mean that everyone at highest risk will have access to two doses of monkeypox vaccine in the coming months.

As of 16 September, there are 3,585 confirmed and highly probable cases of monkeypox in the UK. Following a clear peak of more than 60 cases per day in mid-July, the number of cases has decreased throughout August and continues to fall, with less than 15 cases per day on average in early September.

Analysis of wider infection trends suggests changes in behaviour in the groups most at risk may have contributed to the reduced case rates.

Dr Gayatri Amirthalingam, Deputy Director, Public Health Programmes at UKHSA said:

It's encouraging that we're continuing to see fewer cases of monkeypox reported in the UK and we are grateful to everyone who has followed advice about potential symptoms, isolated as part of this outbreak or come forward for a vaccination to help limit transmission.

Prioritising vaccine stock where possible for second doses for those at highest risk will help us maximise protection and interrupt transmission. When you are called forward for vaccination, please take up the offer.

Professor Sir Andrew Pollard, chair of the JCVI, said:

The JCVI has endorsed the UKHSA's proposal that vaccination to protect against monkeypox should continue to be prioritised for those at highest risk of exposure to the virus, including offering second doses to individuals once they become eligible.

This approach will ensure the globally-limited supplies are used most effectively, continuing to break chains of transmission, as well as providing those at highest risk of exposure with longer-lasting protection.

The use of the intradermal vaccination method at some clinics also means more doses can be drawn from the vials, helping to maximise the reach of the UK's supplies and ensure second doses for all those eligible. The JCVI will keep the offer of monkeypox vaccination under review to ensure it continues to have the maximum impact on the current outbreak.