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Baroness Twycross
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19 December 2024

Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

INT2024/10327/DC

Dear Baroness Butler-Sloss

I am writing to you further to the points you raised on county lines in the Oral Question on Youth Strategy on 10 December.

This government recognises County Lines is the most violent model of drug supply and a harmful form of child criminal exploitation. To deliver our pledge to halve knife crime in the next decade and take back our streets, it is crucial that we tackle the drug gangs that run county lines. We also recognise the importance of youth services to help young people live safe and healthy lives and we are committed to intervening early to stop young people being drawn into crime and other poor outcomes.

As part of the Strategy, we will be engaging with young people and the youth sector from across the country over the coming months to fully understand their needs and the issues they consider to be most crucial in addressing. This will allow us to better target funding and services where they are most needed to tackle issues such as county lines. We will also be engaging across government and working closely with other departments to ensure we are moving away from siloed working and build a more coordinated offer for young people.

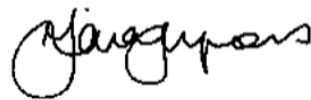
Through the County Lines Programme, we are targeting exploitative drug dealing gangs whilst breaking the organised crime groups behind this trade. We are also providing specialist support for children and young people to escape county lines and child criminal exploitation. Since July 2024, policing activity delivered through the County Lines Programme has resulted in over 400 deal lines being closed, the arrest and charge of over 200 deal line holders, 500 arrests and 800 safeguarding referrals of children and vulnerable people. Over 220 children and young people have also received dedicated specialist support through our county lines support service since July.



The Government will be launching the Young Futures Programme which will include the rollout of Young Futures Hubs across England and Wales as well as the establishment of Prevention Partnerships in every Local Authority. The network of Young Futures hubs will reach every community, delivering positive activities for young people as well as extra support for young people at risk of being drawn into crime or facing mental health challenges. The Prevention Partnerships will map local provision, identify at risk young people and bring local services together to tackle local drivers of serious violence and better support young people.

I will place a copy of this letter in the Libraries of both Houses.

With best wishes,



Baroness Twycross
Minister for Gambling