

County lines informed Cumbria (1-CLIC) – supporting those at risk of exploitation

In response to an increasing county line threat, county lines informed Cumbria (1-CLIC) is a partnership approach with The Well Communities (TWC) to support those at risk of being exploited or becoming involved in county line (CL) activity.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Adults at risk Child abuse County lines
Organisation	Cumbria Constabulary
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Cumbria Constabulary
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Key details

Partners	Police Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Health services Local authority Private sector Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of Implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	March 2022
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Communities General public Offenders Victims

Aim

County lines informed Cumbria (1-CLIC) is a response to an increasing threat from county lines (CL) in South Cumbria. At the time of initial implementation, seven active embedded lines were operating with an increased association of violence and threats to life, often involving the use of knives.

This initiative aims to target harden South Cumbria from the threat of CL and support those most vulnerable from becoming involved in CL activity, through a preventative model and partnership working.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of 1-CLIC are:

- reduction in CL activity
- reduction in violence relating to CL
- increase in intelligence relating to CL
- increase in number of people referred to support away from the 'CL lifestyle'
- increase in awareness around CL activity, how to spot the signs, how to report and who to, including training for partners, schools, and private companies

Description

A proactive approach to 1-CLIC has been taken in partnership with The Well Communities (TWC). This is a lived experience recovery organisation that give support to people recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, with a focus on raising awareness of CL. They also provide day and residential rehabilitation programmes.

Before 1-CLIC, TWC had an existing partnership with Recovery Steps Cumbria. Other partners, such as probation services, council, housing providers, and mental health providers, were brought on board for their specific links to what 1-CLIC was working towards.

As part of this approach, training inputs have been given to partners including:

- NHS
- fire services
- student police officers
- housing services (both council and private)
- substance misuse practitioners
- probation services
- schools and colleges

When forming partnerships, information sharing agreements (ISAs) were quickly put in place to establish and promote open collaboration between partners. ISAs were put in place for all partners, and they remain as a live document so any new partners can be added. This followed an existing process that Cumbria Police had in place for the general sharing of information and was tailored in this instance towards 1-CLIC.

The primary element of 1-CLIC is vulnerability visits to known individuals across the community involved in CL. Visits are conducted by a police officer and a lived experience worker from TWC. Visits take place at all levels, including individuals using Class A drugs, those known to be involved in house or street drug dealing, and those exploited by having their houses cuckooed. Visits to known individuals increase the flow of intelligence that is not otherwise available by other means. CL activity has been observed whilst in the community carrying out visits, leading to positive action being taken and arrests being made.

When carrying out vulnerability visits, support packages tailored to the individual's needs are put in place, which can include:

- leaving calling cards which assist in deterring criminal activity at the address
- SAFE alerts on addresses; where a marker is put on an address so that any calls to service to that address can be graded accordingly
- implementation of county lines individual protection plan; activity of those most vulnerable to exploitation is recorded on police systems, alongside enhanced visits and a multi-agency approach to support them
- referrals to partners for additional support; this includes food banks, mental health support, substance misuse support, adult social care, heating grants, and housing
- provision of harm reduction kits to known users including sharp boxes, naloxone, nitazine testing trips and clean needle syringes

Following referrals from 1-CLIC, additional security measures have also been used to target harden premises, including the fitting of:

- spy holes
- key chains
- community protection warning notices
- repairs to CCTV
- communal access entry systems

The cost for these additional security measures is absorbed by the housing provider, as part of their contract and strong partnership working. CCTV has also been installed through partner work at Roose train station, with an increase in automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) to further target harden the area of Barrow.

The support provided and measures put in place have provided push back to home invasions from CLs looking to cuckoo. The measures have also provided homeowners with the opportunity to show the calling cards and use them as a deterrent when being visited by a CL either at their premises or in the area.

Evaluation

Cumbria's Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner funded an initial evaluation of the impact of 1-CLIC. Information used to evaluate the project's progress included:

- police-held information
- 1-CLIC referrals
- interviews with partner organisations and service users, as well as the 1-CLIC team
- interviews with police officers previously seconded to the Met police
- lines task force
- case studies

Main findings of the initial evaluation are:

- the ease of information sharing is important in providing support
- there are well-established referral processes with evidence-based joint working, including recovery steps, housing providers and supported housing from TWC
- the empathy of those involved has been crucial, and in any replication of 1-CLIC in other areas, it would require carefully selected staff who do not have just a CJS focus, but are committed to rebuilding the lives of those in the community

There are no plans for a full evaluation. However, yearly reports are prepared showing performance indicators relevant to the project.

Data from 2024 to 2025 shows that 1-CLIC has had success in reducing the amount of CL operating in the target area of South Cumbria. At its inception, seven active embedded CLs were operating as well as 11 threats to life relating to CL activity, specifically violence. There has been a reduction in the number of CLs operating, alongside a reduction in threats to life.

Overall impact

Many individuals have received support that has moved them away from being involved in CL activity. As a result, CL activity has become more sporadic, with CLs having changed their operating model to increase sales. The 1-CLIC model has been designed for replication in similar areas, therefore, it can be used for the movement of CL.

As a result of 1-CLIC, working relationships with partners and the community has improved, as well as a general uplift in intelligence from improved data sharing. Partners now report more freely, with referrals growing year-on-year.

Because of its success, 1-CLIC was expanded to Carlisle in January 2024. Further expansion into West Cumbria is planned following ongoing discussions resulting from a presentation to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and local councillors.

Learning

- A main factor of ensuring 1-CLIC was a success was finding the right people for the roles; local knowledge has been a factor in this. The police officer has a good level of service with knowledge of the community having dealt with a high level of known drug users. This made it easier to support known users as there was existing rapport. This was also the case with The Well Communities worker, who is local to the area and has knowledge of people from working in the community. This ties into taking a 'boots on the ground approach', having people on the team that can be active in the community, carrying out visits, and spending time in known dealing locations. Having a strong presence in the community has enabled the team to put interventions in place quickly and support individuals at risk in real time.
- It was important to gain buy-in from partners so a range of support services could be easily accessed. It was important to ensure that information sharing agreements were in place from the start, so open and honest conversations could take place.
- During the set up, it was important to keep in touch with partners through partnership meetings. Presentations were given to partners to promote 1-CLIC and show them how they could support.
- Generally, the force did not face challenges during implementation, which may be attributed to the strong support provided by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in South Cumbria.
- In terms of replication, once the model is set up in one area of the force, with strong partnership work, it is easily transferable to another area. This modelling system may be harder to replicate in cities due to threat-harm risk being higher, and communities being harder to reach and build rapport with. However, there are elements of strong partnership which could be adopted to gain

intelligence and reduce CL.

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