Conclusion In conclusion, national guidelines have allowed for investigation for suspected FII/PP cases and yielded a diagnosis in the majority of cases studied. While not all alerting signs were seen in each case, it is interesting to note the shared alerting signs and presenting complaints seen in all confirmed cases. Deeper investigation is warranted to look further into these findings. Given the rarity of this problem a multi-centre audit would be essential to reveal overarching trends and to assess the prevalence of FII/PP.

WHAT DO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN A CHILDREN’S EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT KNOW ABOUT COUNTY LINES?

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Aims County Lines (CL) is a drug supply model and form of Child Criminal Exploitation that uses young and vulnerable people to transport drugs from cities to rural areas. Children and young people may present to hospitals with injuries sustained as a result of criminal exploitation, however there is minimal research into how such presentations are responded to in a clinical setting. This report summarises activity undertaken to investigate the confidence of healthcare professionals (HCP) and medical students in understanding, identifying, and referring cases of CL from within Emergency Departments.

Methods A quantitative survey of HCP was distributed within a Children’s Emergency Department in a city centre children’s hospital, both electronically and in person. The questions were chosen to allow a broad reflection on the understanding and confidence of HCP relating to CL and associated safeguarding.

1) How would you describe your understanding of County Lines activity?
2) How confident do you feel in identifying patients involved in County Lines activity?
3) How confident do you feel in initiating the correct safeguarding protocols surrounding County Lines activity?

A separate survey was sent to medical students through the local university. This included the same questions with the third tailored to the role of a medical student.

Results There were 22 responses to the HCP survey. 68.2% of HCP had either limited understanding or had never heard of the CL model (see figure 1), 54.5% of HCP were not so confident or not confident at all in identifying signs of CL involvement (see figure 2) and 36.4% of HCP were not so confident or not confident at all in initiating the relevant safeguarding protocols (see figures in main text).

There were 44 responses to the medical student survey. Knowledge was also limited; 86.5% had little or no understanding of the CL model, 81.8% were not so confident or not confident at all in identifying signs, and 81.8% were not so confident or not confident at all in who to contact if such a case arose (see figures in main text).

Conclusion The results highlight that there is a gap in the knowledge of HCP and medical students surrounding CL. This may limit their ability to identify the involvement of young people and support and refer individuals vulnerable to criminal exploitation. There is therefore capacity for service improvement in this domain.

THE EFFECT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON CHILD PROTECTION REFERRALS IN LEEDS

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Aims The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a national lockdown to be imposed in the UK in March 2020. Social restrictions resulted in children being isolated within their homes with little to no contact with teachers, social workers, or health services. These measures decreased the opportunity to detect children suffering from abuse. Nationally, social restrictions contributed to 8,500 fewer referrals to children’s services during COVID-19. Increased financial strain alongside domestic violence is suggested to have potentiated an increase in child abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study therefore aimed to assess how COVID-19 affected child protection referrals in Leeds and evaluate the concern that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in more child abuse yet fewer child abuse referrals.