

# EDUCATION PACK

To accompany Cwmni Theatr Arad  
Goch's production of county lines.



# CROSSING THE LINE

drama by  
Mared Llywelyn Williams

# CONTENTS

Aim of the Pack	3
Definition of County Lines	3
Background of the Production	4
Rehearsal Period	4
Crossing The Line Timeline	5
Aim of the Performance	6
A Curriculum for Wales	7
Expressive Arts	7
Languages, Literacy and Communication	8
Health and Wellbeing	9
What are County Lines?	10
Further Information	10
Signs	11
Related Terms	12 - 13
Targeting and Attraction Actions	14
Activity	15
<b>Group Activities and Questions</b>	
Cian's Role - The Friend	17
Ways Out	18
Signs	19
Excerpts from the Script	20 - 23
Behind the Scenes	24
The Crossing the Line Team	25
Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch Team	25
Information about Arad Goch	26



## AIM OF THE PACK

- Providing information about County Lines to assist teachers or carers in leading discussions about the subject.
- Signpost teachers or carers to useful websites for more background and related subject information.
- Offer some discussion activities based on the performance.



## DEFINITION OF COUNTY LINES

'County lines' is a national issue, where organised crime gangs from cities such as London, Liverpool and Birmingham put children and vulnerable adults between themselves and the risk of detection by manipulating them into carrying and selling drugs. 'Runners' will be sent across county boundaries to areas like Llanelli, Newtown, and Haverfordwest to deliver and/or sell Class A drugs at the other end of the line.

- Dyfed Powys Police website  
(Operation Guardian | Dyfed-Powys Police)

## BACKGROUND OF THE PRODUCTION

County Lines is a problem that affects the busy big towns as well as quiet, rural areas. So a country like Wales, where there are examples of both, attracts a lot of County Lines. Much was learnt from doing thorough research for a previous production, Hudo / Tempted. That production discussed sexual exploitation, and as grooming and

exploitation is a big part of county lines, ideas were developed for a brand new production based on County Lines.

The same author who wrote the play Hudo, Mared Llywelyn Williams, was asked to once again collaborate with Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch to develop a new script - Crossing the Line.

## REHEARSAL PERIOD

### Week 1:

A couple of script readings, in both English and Welsh, before 'blocking' begins ('blocking' means the block process of creating movement patterns on stage). One thing that is important to do when starting to put the production on its feet is characterisation - the character creation process. Must explore psychology, background story, body shape, movement and voice to suit the character; this is more work if an actor has more than one character to play.



### Week 2:

There's a lot going on in the second week as this is the time when the actors rely less on the script, and there will be more 'props', costume and technical elements used. By the end of the week, we can go through the play from start to finish.

### Week 3:

With each rehearsal, the actors become more confident without the script and can adapt, improve and strengthen pieces while 'running' the production. The sound and lighting are used in every exercise. In addition, schedules of about two days are needed to rehearse the production in English and do a special run with a photographer to record the production.

# CROSSING THE LINE TIMELINE

**September 2018** - Hudo starts traveling to schools, four short stories including one about a boy being misled over Xbox Live.

**September 2020** - Syrian Graphic Novelist Hamid Sulaiman adapts the boy's story on his Xbox for an online project with Mared and Carwyn, thanks to Literature Across Frontiers.

**March 2021** - Two days of Research and Development work on zoom.

**September 2021** - Auditions for actors of the production.

**December 2021** - Create a possible stage design for the production.

**January 2022** - Rehearsals at Canolfan Arad Goch for three weeks.

**August 2019** - Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch and Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner's Office win Arts and Business awards Wales 2019, for collaborating on Hudo.

**January 2021** - Mared begins writing a brand-new production, about county lines, using the story of the boy on his Xbox as a starting point.

**August 2021** - 1st draft of Crossing the Line script ready.

**November 2021** - Two days of 'pre-rehearsal' period. A chance to chat with the actors and read the latest draft of the script.

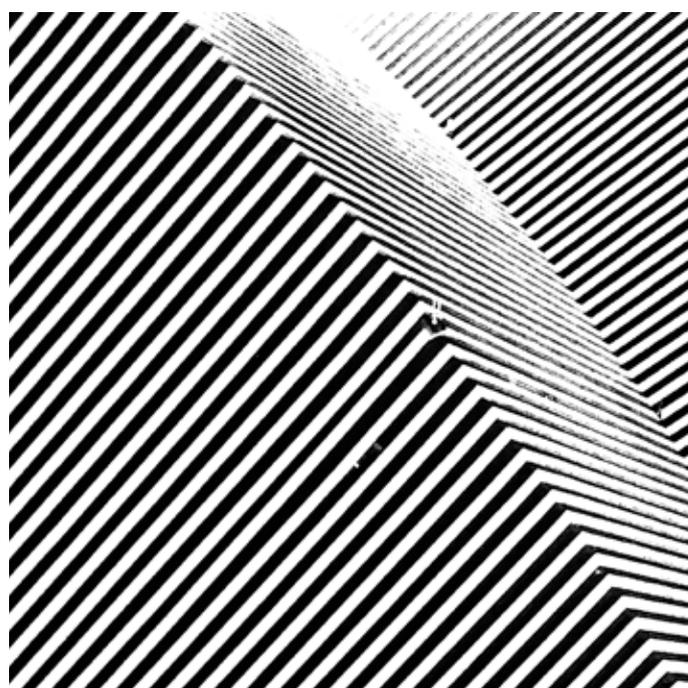


## AIM OF THE PERFORMANCE

County lines is a term that is becoming more and more prevalent in the media at present - in the news, as well as coming into plays and soaps on TV and movies. However, the term is still quite unfamiliar to many.

Crossing the Line:

- is an example of a young person being drawn into the world of county lines.
- gives young people a chance to see how county lines are happening and how young people are being drawn into the activities;
- encourages young people to look for clues or signs from county lines, so that they can identify the signs and dangers should they encounter them personally or are worried about their friends.



## A CURRICULUM FOR WALES

Drama, especially contemporary drama, helps us to consider personal and social situations in objective ways. The production and workshop can be used as follow-up to discuss several elements of the curriculum. The pieces below in *italics* are from the Curriculum for Wales and specifically from the sections that refer to 'what matters'.

They are included here (i) to identify the relationship between the play *CROSSING THE LINE* and the Curriculum and (ii) as questions to discuss with the pupils. All of the activities suggested in this pack are relevant to the Curriculum for Wales.



## EXPRESSIVE ARTS

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/expressive-arts>

What's important:

***Deepening arts skills and knowledge...***

How does the *CROSSING THE LINE* do the following:

- '... communication by visual, physical, verbal, musical ... ..?'
- '... use the expressive arts to question and challenge perspectives and be a force for personal and social change ...'?

***Respond and reflect ....as an audience.***

To what extent does *CROSSING THE LINE*:

- '...stimulate our emotions and understanding. '?
- '...encourage response, and motivate learners to reflect on the work of various Welsh artists'?

# LANGUAGES, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/languages-literacy-and-communication>

What's important:

*Languages connect us together.*

CROSSING THE LINE

include spoken and informal language.

How does the language develop:

- '... our own cultural identity ...'?
- '... pride of identity and belonging to Wales ...'?

*Understanding languages is key to understanding the world around us.*

To what extent does the language in

CROSSING THE LINE:

- '... develop our understanding, empathy and ability to respond effectively'?



*Expressing ourselves through languages is the key to communication.*

How does CROSSING THE LINE:

- '...use and modify [language] in a variety of roles, genres, forms and styles... in a suitable tone...'?
- '...in a bilingual context ...require the ability to choose an appropriate language... '?

*Literature fires the imagination...*

How does CROSSING THE LINE, as a piece of dramatic and contemporary literature,:

- '...broaden horizons...'?
- support us in appreciating the craft of writers... '?
- '...provide an insight into the culture and people of Wales... '?

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/health-and-well-being>

What's important:

***The way we make decisions affects the quality of our lives and those of others.***

How CROSSING THE LINE helps us to:

- '...understand how decisions and actions affect learners themselves, others, and the wider society, present and future'?
- '...understand the factors that influence decision making...'?



***Healthy relationships are essential for our wellbeing.***

How does CROSSING THE LINE:

- '...help learners understand and appreciate how the sense of belonging and connection that comes from healthy relationships has a powerful impact on health and wellbeing'?
- '...encourage [learners] to develop their ability to form, build and maintain relationships'?

***The way we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional wellbeing.***

To what extent does CROSSING THE LINE:

- '...explore the links between experiences, mental health and emotional wellbeing'?
- '...enable learners to understand that feelings and emotions are not fixed or consistent'?
- '...create a culture where talking about mental health and emotional wellbeing is the norm'?

***Developing body health and wellbeing has lifelong benefits.***

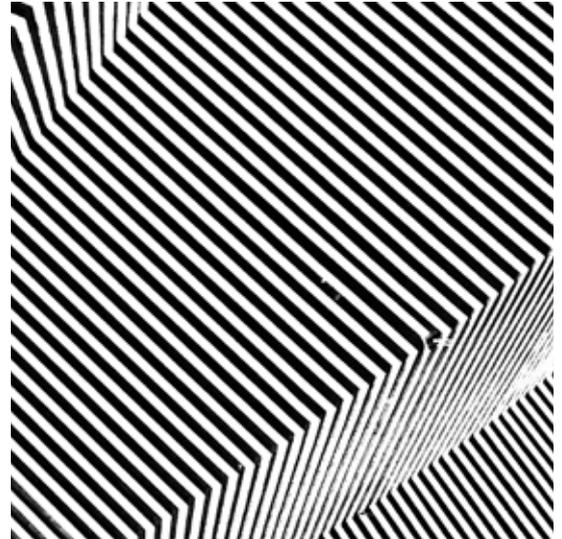
Does CROSSING THE LINE:

- '...include an understanding of health harming practices'?
- '...encourage them to protect, as well as respect themselves and others ...'?

***The way we engage with social influences shapes who we are, and affects our health and wellbeing.***

In what ways does CROSSING THE LINE:

- '...help learners understand the important role of social influences on their lives'? and how do they:
- '...affect identity, behaviour and health and wellbeing, often without us realising it'?



## WHAT ARE COUNTY LINES?

County Lines is the name for the way in which young people are targeted to move drugs from location to location. Young people tend to get money or presents (payment of any type) to carry drugs in their luggage or within themselves and use public transport to move the drugs from location to location. When using a young person (usually under 18) if the person were caught with the drugs, the risk is less than if an adult were caught.

## FURTHER INFORMATION:

### **The Children's Society Charity**

[https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/child-criminal-exploitation-and-county-lines?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI6IO9tfPj9QIVuoBQBh3KPghPEAAAYBCAAEgIx3\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/child-criminal-exploitation-and-county-lines?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI6IO9tfPj9QIVuoBQBh3KPghPEAAAYBCAAEgIx3_D_BwE)

### **South Wales Police**

<https://www.south-wales.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/cl/county-lines/>

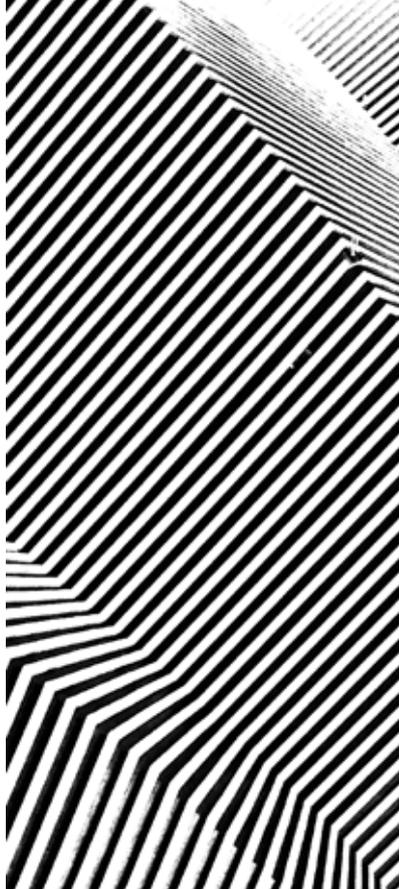
### **Cysur**

<https://www.cysur.wales/exploitation/county-lines/>

## SIGNS

Crossing the Line gives young people the opportunity to find out and consider the signs that indicate an individual is involved with county lines. Some of the prominent signs in Tal's story, *Crossing the Line*:

- phone is used much more;
- second phone, "burner";
- a quick jump in pocket money, and spending it on expensive goods (brand new Xbox);
- moving away from normal friends;
- spending less and less time at home, with no clear explanation of where he is spending his time;
- change in behaviour, skipping school and a different attitude;
- continued skipping of school;
- traveling alone and far from home.



### Other signs:

- new partner, who avoids sharing details;
- bruises, or signs of physical violence;
- new gifts - especially expensive things, with no clear explanation of where they came from;
- train tickets to places across the country;
- offer to sell drugs;
- carrying weapons;
- self-harm.

## RELATED TERMS



### **Burner Phone:**

Work phone, a cheap gadget that can be used for a while before being discarded and replaced. When using ever-changing lines and phone numbers, it is more difficult for the police to trace conversations and phone messages. In *Crossing the Line*, we see Nat giving Tal a Burner Phone as he starts work.



### **Cuckooing:**

When a group or individual occupies a vulnerable person's house or flat, and forces them to use it in a way that benefits them. People who use drugs are often targeted, and the group or individual who cuckoos the apartment offers a supply of drugs as payment or persuasion. In *Crossing the Line*, we hear Nat say "It's his (Jac) house, but, you know... we have a deal..." this suggests that Nat has cuckooed Jack's house.

## RELATED TERMS



### **Clean Skin:**

A person (usually a young person) who does not have a police record. If a group manages to attract a new young person who is "clean skin" this is very appealing, as they are less likely to be stopped by the police. In *Crossing the Line*, Tal overhears Nat talking about the children of "Clean Skin" and observes that he also falls into that category.

### **Grooming:**

The process of attracting and retaining an individual by rewarding or treating them in particular. Grooming takes time to attract the person to their side, and they could do this by offering gifts, money, company or a sexual relationship. In *Crossing the Line* Nat grooms Tal (and others) in meeting him through online games, playing, paying attention and confidence, talking about ways to make money quickly and then inviting him over to her apartment. There, she offers him drinks and gives him a sense of freedom.



# TARGETING AND ATTRACTION ACTIONS

## Targeting...

Offenders choose their targets on the basis of age, situation and if are they fragile.

## Experience...

This is when criminals make the young people get used to the 'new life' and the way of life.

## Hook...

Make the young person feel as if they are an integral part of the group / gang.

## Addicted...

The young person now feels completely dependent on the group / gang, and is unable to cope with living without the gang.





## ACTIVITY

1. When considering the steps on the previous page, are there any parts of the play that relate to them?

2. Think back to the play ...

One of Tal's last questions in the play is "Where did this start?" What is your answer to this? Is there a time in the play when Tal was completely trapped and couldn't escape the situation?

Ideas for possible solutions:

- When Tal grabs the bag...
- When Tal accepts Nat's invitation to come to the apartment...
- When Nat offers to buy Tal supper, saying "You can pay me back" ...

Discuss!

[Childrensocietyeast.org.uk/care](https://www.childrensocietyeast.org.uk/care)  
<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do>





# GROUP ACTIVITES AND QUESTIONS





## **CIAN'S ROLE - THE FRIEND**

Cian sees Tal being drawn in from the start - from the first time Tal met Nat on the Xbox.

### **Discuss:**

What could Cian have done differently to help Tal?

What signs might Cian have noticed that suggest Tal is in danger?



## WAYS OUT

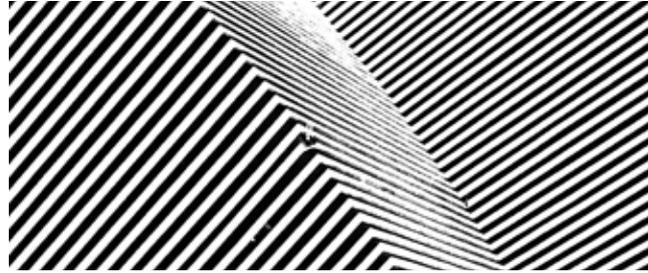
Think back to the play... Are there times when Tal could have gotten himself out of the situation?

### Discuss:

- Any opportunities to leave?
- Who could Tal have turned to for help?
- What could Tal have done differently when making a new friend online?
- It's possible to make friends online, but how can anyone do it safely?

# SIGNS

Make a table. On the left, note the County Lines signs that appear in the play, and on the right give other possible signs. Check back through this pack for ideas!



Signs in the drama	Other signs in the drama

# EXCERPT FROM THE SCRIPT

What's happening here?

*(Note that the author has used spoken and informal language)*

**Tal:** *A lot of Uni work to do?*

Nat: Yeah. Boring stuff, really. Essays and all that.

**Tal:** *I thought the whole point of going to Uni was to enjoy and not do work.*

Nat: Work hard, play harder, that's my motto!

**Tal:** *Yeah! I can't wait until I leave school and go to Uni.*

Nat: Where do you wanna go?

**Tal:** *London? New York? Tokyo?*

Nat: Wow, OK!

**Tal:** *Joking... But London's cool.*

Nat: Yeah London is cool. My friend lives there. We've had a couple of wild nights there. I'm banned from the Maccies in Brixton.

**Tal:** *What?! How?*

Nat: Long story. What do you want to do there then?

**Tal:** *No idea.*

Nat: Yeah right.

**Tal:** *Really! Haven't thought about it really.*

Nat: Someone clever like you? Bet you have a masterplan.

**Tal:** *No...*

Nat: Come on, you can tell me.

**Tal:** *Okay. Well, it may be a bit obvious. My dream is to be a video game designer.*

Pause.

**Tal:** *You think I'm sad.*

Nat: Sad? Tal. You'd be amazing.



## EXCERPT FROM THE SCRIPT

What's happening here?

Cian: You look awful.

No response from Tal. He's staring into space.

Cian: Tal. Wake up.

**Tal: Aye. Knackered.**

Tal's phone buzzes. He checks it.

Pause.

Cian feels frustrated.

Cian: I'm not going to sit here with you if you're just going to be on your phone.

**Tal: I have stuff to sort. Two minutes.**

Cian sighs. Tal puts the phone in his pocket.

Cian: What have you been doing then?

**Tal: Not a lot.**

Cian: Nat ok?

**Tal: (a little aggressively) Ela ok?**

Pause.

**Tal: Sorry. Just...stressed.**

Cian: What's going on with you, Tal? You've changed.

**Tal: Do you know what, I don't need this. You're supposed to be my mate. Mates don't hassle.**

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continued...

Cian: Still mates are we? News to me.

**Tal: Of course you are.**

Cian: Why don't you answer me then? I haven't heard from you in ages, you're never home. You're always there. I'm actually surprised that you haven't been suspended you're bunking off so much.

**Tal: No one cares that I'm not here anyway.**

Cian: And I also get fed up of making excuses for you when your mam calls my mam asking what we're doing all the time. I don't want to be dragged into your double life.

**Tal: (angrily) Why do you do it then? I've never asked you.**

Cian: I'm going.

Suddenly Tal panics and another persona takes over.

**Tal: Hey, there's a party in the flat Friday night. Come. Tell Ella to come too.**

Cian's unsure.

Cian: I don't think so.

**Tal: Come on, ask her. Or just come on your own. We could play Series X...**

Cian: Maybe. Just be careful, Tal. I'm worried about you.

Tal's phone buzzes again. He checks it.

**Tal: Nobody need to worry about me. I have to go.**

Cian: Where? We only have 10 minutes left.

**Tal: Say I have a dentist appointment or something. Or not. Whatever.**



## EXCERPT FROM THE SCRIPT

What's happening here?

The next morning. Tal and Jackass wake up.  
One on the floor and another on the sofa.  
Tal moans with a hangover.

**Tal:** *I need some water.*

Jac: Wimp. Kids these days don't know how  
to party. When we were in Uni we were out  
every night.

**Tal:** *What, you've finished in uni then?*

Jac: BA, MA... fancy letters after my name.  
Didn't finish the PhD though.

**Tal:** *PhD?!*

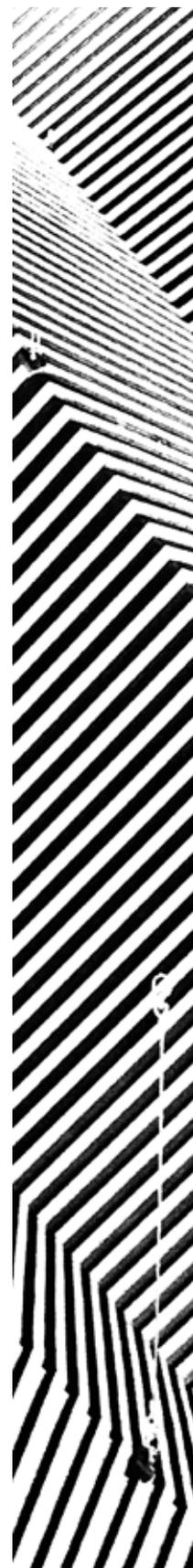
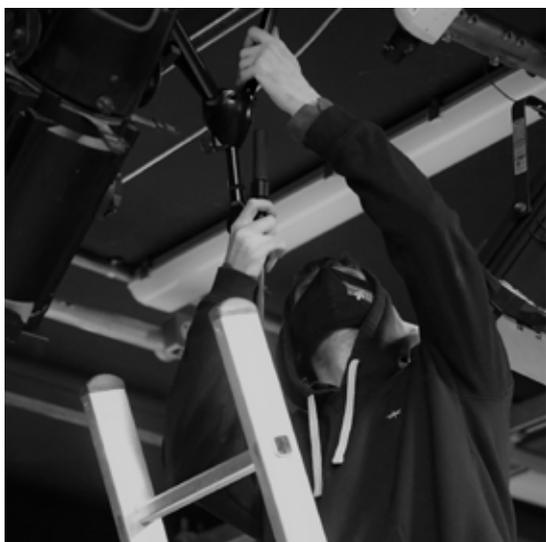
Jac: It was all rubbish.

**Tal:** *What happened, Jac?*

Jac: You're a clever bugger. She likes  
you, I can tell. More than the others.

**Tal:** *The others? What do you mean, the  
others?*

# BEHIND THE CURTAIN



## **THE CROSSING THE LINE TEAM**

**Performers:** Morgan Elwy  
Steven Andrew  
Carys Webb

**Director:** Carwyn Blayney

**Author:** Mared Llywelyn Williams

**Set Designer &  
Costume:** Valentine Gigandet

**Music:** Marc Thomas

**Brand Designer &  
Education Pack:** Gwydion Efans

**Sound & Lighting  
Designer:** Marc Thomas

**Filming &  
Video Editing:** Jamie Kenny

**Video Audio:** Eugene Capper

**Photography:** Carwyn Blayney  
Rolant Dafis

## **CWMNI THEATR ARAD GOCH TEAM**

**Artistic  
Director:** Jeremy Turner

**Administrative  
Manager:** Nia Wyn Evans

**Clerk:** Ann Penny

**Marketing  
Manager:** Owain Brodrick

**School Liaison  
Officer:** Anne Evans

**Assistant  
Director:** Ffion Wyn Bowen

**Technical  
Manager:** Sion Williams

**Technician** Marc Thomas





## **INFORMATION ABOUT ARAD GOCH**

Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch has been creating work since 1989 and performing for over 24,000 children and young people annually. The main aim of the company since its inception has been to provide Welsh language theatre of the highest standard mainly for children and young people. We have been at the forefront of developing a number of international initiatives such as the Wales' international festival of performing arts for young audiences such as Agor Drysau / Opening Doors.

[www.aradgoch.cymru](http://www.aradgoch.cymru)

