

Operation Sweep

26th – 27th June

2024



Operation Sweep was a County Line Taskforce led operation to work in partnership with other agencies and law enforcement bodies, with the intention to disrupt, deter, and detect offences committed by people using the rail network to courier drugs.

Objectives

- To intercept children/Vulnerable adults leaving or entering the GWR transport route
- Identify and pursue offenders involved in the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults in CL.
- Safeguard juveniles and vulnerable adults involved in County Lines Drugs Supply.
- To identify individuals involved in controlling County Lines.
- Contextual Safeguarding Piece across the railway network working with social services and local authority.
- To work with partners to target harden railway and to deal with offences robustly.

Operation Sweep brought together partners from Devon and Cornwall, Avon and Somerset and the City of London Police, along with Immigration and safeguarding partners from Barnardo's against child exploitation, Devon and Torbay children's services, Railway Children, Bristol City Council, Risk outside the home and Somersets preventing exploitation team. The aim of safeguarding personal was to assist at the reachable and critical moments to enhance the safeguarding response and/or provide robust diversion to appropriate services, avoiding an enforcement response where proportionate and appropriate.



Op Sweep contextual safeguarding, relationship building and reachable moments:



- Overall 27 professionals joined us in the op over the 2 days. These included representatives from children's social care, Barnardo's, Ysmart (local young persons drugs team), inclusion, youth justice, community safety and youth intervention.
- Connections were also made with the heads of service for the relevant MASH's, licencing and trading standards.
- Information about missing children was shared by children's social care with BTP Detectives in the morning, with briefings and photos sent to all BTP officers in situ.
- Approximately 35 staff were spoken to in various local businesses in and around the stations including taxis, hotels, pubs, café's, kfc, stationers, chemists and services for the homeless. Issues regarding unlicenced taxis raised and shared via community safety.
- Approximately 200 Look Closer cards were distributed and left for wider distribution.
- 21 members of staff from TOCs spoken to and demonstrated good level of awareness of county lines and vulnerability.
- 24 young people spoken with and engaged in awareness raising and some relevant intelligence shared regarding local drug dealing.
- Approximately 62 conversations held with general members of the public; awareness raising and local intelligence gathered. E.g. Potential information shared regarding local shop will be taken back to relevant MACE for place based response. Evidence of disruption with some drug users.
- 10 support interventions when concerns raised but no arrest, 3 of these were with the YSMART worker who was able to offer immediate support re cannabis use and onward referral. One intervention very positively received by child and mother, child said 'he was thinking of giving up smoking cannabis and this might be the sign to do it'.
- 8 safeguarding checks and information sharing, this was done with the staff based with the teams so could be done live reducing delay and ensuring good responses. Follow up SVRs were done where relevant. One child arrested with suspected MDMA, and support offered by social worker to support him whilst waiting for parent to arrive, led to positive conversations and engagement. One care leaver identified as at risk of exploitation and significant liaison with the PA and housing support, professionals meeting and leading to potential Modern Slavery investigation.



Operation Sweep Safeguarding Feedback

Operation Sweep brought together a variety of partners with positive feedback given:

“I really enjoyed the day. I think there is lots of opportunity to try more brief interventions at the point of arrest. I spoke with two other young people who had been stopped in possession of cannabis, both 17. 3 in total for the day. The other two walked away from Ash so officers went and spoke with them. One of them is already working with us. The other was a little more reluctant but his friend was saying how he thought we could help. I provided a leaflet to him and spoke about using this as moment to take action on making some changes now as he has an opportunity. I will let our worker for the other know I met with him yesterday and she is due to see him on Monday so will follow up.”

“We found being involved with the operation extremely interesting and beneficial to see how the BTP work as well as the officers joining from other areas of Avon and Somerset and further afield. It was good to see first hand how young people were treated and that the officers were not wanting to criminalise them and were sympathetic to their situations. (The police dogs are also amazing!) We were made to feel welcome and included on the days we attended and had some good exchanges of information on how we work in our team in Somerset and with how the BTP and other officers work with county lines in their areas. Thank you for the opportunity.”

“I wanted to say again, a massive thanks to the teams for accommodating us and other partners on both days – they were exceptional in terms of being able to talk with us about the links between South West and other areas of the country, as well as talk about their practice and experience and allow us to talk about ours. It was also a real treat to see Ash (and his handler) working! Also, thanks for the time we spent being able to talk about different practice across the UK, and being able to contribute to the safeguarding activity. “

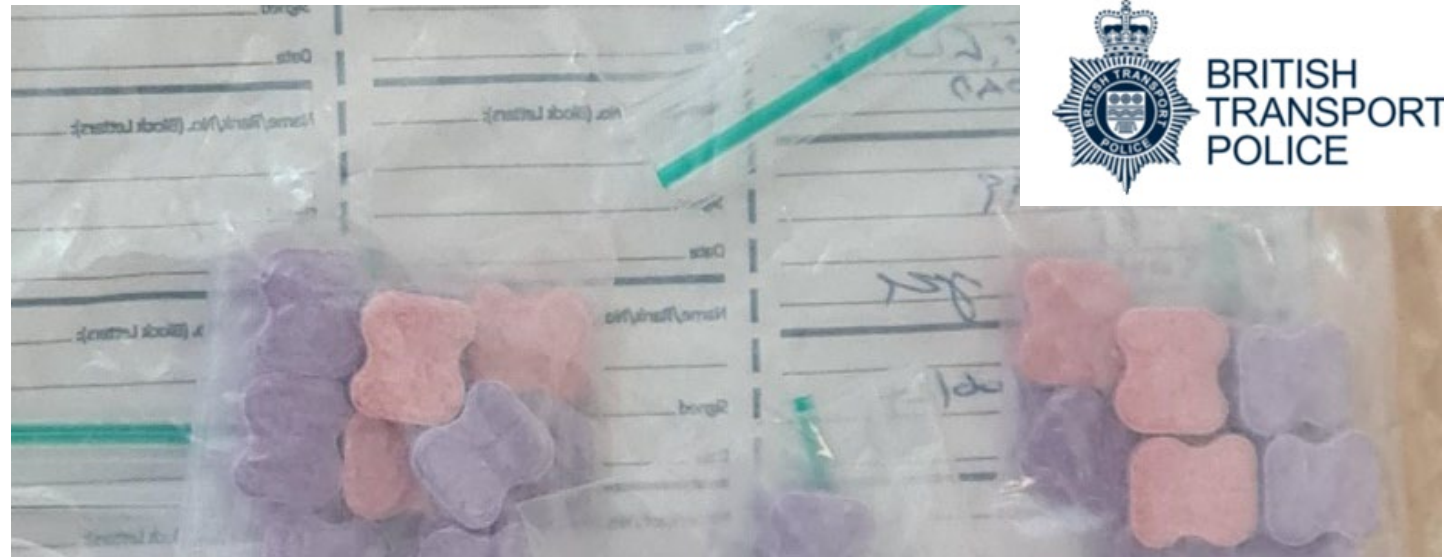
Op Sweep arrest details:

Male arrested at Bristol Temple Meads for Possession of Offensive weapon 26/06/2024

- Passive drugs dog indicated on a male, after speaking to him, he admitted to having a gram of cannabis in his bag. He was detained for a s23MDS search, bag of cannabis located and 2 x knuckle dusters. Male charged to court for both offences.

Male arrested at Bristol Temple Meads for Possession with intent to Supply Class A- 26/06/2024

- Officers stopped a young male who on being approached appeared as if he was going to make off. Visibly nervous, officers-built grounds for S23 MDA search. On being searched, he was found in possession of numerous Ecstasy tablets, male stated he was being forced to deal drugs due to a debt that he owed. Further drugs found at home address. Suspected to be 100 tablets. Operation Calix has now commenced which is an MDS investigation.



Op Sweep arrest details continued:

Apollo Cinema Paignton 26/06/2024

- Male stopped after officers witnessed him dealing in the street. Found in possession of 10grams of heroin and in possession of the "P" Line phone. Charged for offence.

Exeter Railway Station 26/06/2024

- Male stopped and on being searched was found in possession of a knuckle duster.

Exmouth area 26/06/2024

- Drugs warrant executed at the address in conjunction with D&C Police, for class A drugs which are suspected to being sold from the address, suspected linked to a 'Scouse' County Line. 2 persons arrested for concerned in supply of class A.

Shobrook area 26/06/2024

- Suspect arrested by D&C Police for conspiracy to supply drugs class A & B.



Op Sweep arrest details continued:

Newton Abbott- 26/06/2024

- Passive drugs dog indicted on a male, he was stopped and searched and found to be wanted on a recall to prison.

Weston Super Mare- 27/06/2024

- Male stopped and wanted for protection of harassment order.

Bristol Temple Meads – 27/06/2024

- Male was detained for a S23 MDA after being seen to avoid the passive drugs dog. A large quantity of suspected class A was recovered during the search, approx. 100 snap bags of cocaine- estimated total weight of 56grams.

Exeter St Davids – 27/06/2024

- Male stopped and searched, found in possession of £160 cash, 10 tablets (possibly MDMA) and cannabis edibles.

Torre Railway Station 27/06/2024

- Male stopped and searched, found in possession of a credit card which had a concealed knife within it. Charged.



Op Sweep arrest details:

Male arrested at Bristol Temple Meads for Possession of an imitation Firearm, bladed article, and possession of class A and B. 27/06/2024.

- Male was walking through Bristol Temple Meads when PD Elvis indicated on him. He was stopped and admitted to having cannabis on him. Male searched, found in possession of imitation firearm, bladed article and possession of cannabis.






Op Sweep summary of results

 2 Days

 102 Stop & Account

 14 Arrests

 47 Drug Seizures

 99 Stop Searches

18 Safeguarding interventions

 17 Phones Seized

59 grams of cocaine
11.10 grams of heroin
56.43 grams of cannabis
Nitrous oxide
112 ecstasy tablets

 10 Intel Reports

 8 Deal lines identified

 7 Weapons Recovered

 £1960 Seized

