

**Report of the Head of Legal Services to the
General Licensing Regulatory Board
to be held on the 22 June 2022**

Driver Safeguarding Refresher Training

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report, is to inform Members of a planned programme of driver safeguarding refresher training to be rolled out to all licensed drivers by the end of 2022.

2. Background

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enabled the Secretary of State for Transport (DfT) to issue statutory guidance on exercising taxi and private hire vehicle licensing functions which was designed specifically to protect children and vulnerable individuals over the age of 18 from harm when using these services.

In line with the statutory standards published by the DfT in July 2020 and our statutory duty to have regard to the DfT's Guidance, Officers published the new Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy in March 2022 with a key aim of protecting the public and safeguarding children and the vulnerable. For this reason, all applicants for a driver's licence, and all existing licensed drivers, must undertake basic safeguarding training.

3. Current Position

Officers consider that those in the taxi and private hire vehicle industry can play a crucial role in spotting and reporting the abuse, exploitation or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. As with any group of people, those working within the industry can be an asset in the detection and prevention of abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults.

However, this is only the case if they are aware of and alert to the signs of potential abuse and know where to turn to if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

4. Proposal

Officers provide appropriate safeguarding advice and training to all taxi and private hire licensed drivers. This is delivered on a monthly basis to all new drivers by the Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding and there is now a programme of safeguarding refresher training for all existing drivers to complete by the end of December 2022. The training will take two hours and will be free of charge to all drivers.

All licensed drivers must undertake safeguarding refresher training unless they have attended their original safeguarding training in the last 12 months. The programme of training has been developed to help drivers with the following:-

- Provide a safe and suitable service to vulnerable passengers of all ages;
- Recognise what makes a person vulnerable;
- Understand how to respond, including how to report safeguarding concerns and where to get advice.

Safeguarding awareness refresher training will also include the ways in which drivers can help to identify 'county lines' exploitation by being aware of the following warning signs:-

- Children and young people travelling in taxis or private hire vehicles alone;
- Travelling at unusual hours (during school time, early in the morning or late at night);
- Travelling long distances;
- Unfamiliar with the local area or do not have a local accent;
- Paying for journeys in cash or prepaid.

The key purpose of safeguarding training is to make drivers aware of what to do if they believe a child or vulnerable person is at risk of harm.

As always, the principal consideration must be one of public safety. Any drivers who fail to attend their safeguarding refresher training will be referred before a panel of the General Licensing Regulatory Board for determination.

Members are asked to support Officers and encourage private hire and hackney carriage drivers to attend their safeguarding refresher training as soon as possible.

5. Background Papers

N/A

6. Officer Contact

Debbie Bailey

07786525961