Safeguarding Awareness

Licensed Drivers Handbook

HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Introduction

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is at the heart of any civilised society.

At Halton Borough Council we want to make sure that taxi/private hire drivers are fully aware of how important Safeguarding is and how to raise any concerns about the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
We recognise that the taxi trade has a very important role and is the eyes and ears of the community. Taxi/private hire drivers can play an important role in helping to safeguard vulnerable people in the Halton area.

You have a duty of care to all your passengers, which means that you should take all steps which are reasonably possible to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing.

Demonstrating concern for the physical and mental health of your passengers shouldn't just be seen as a legal duty - there's a clear business case, too. It can be a key factor in building trust and reinforcing your commitment to your passengers.

Legally, you must abide by relevant health & safety and employment law, as well as the common law duty of care. As a professional you also have a moral and ethical duty not to cause, or fail to prevent, physical or psychological injury/harm.

This booklet helps to explain and understand Safeguarding. It will help you to look for signs of abuse, child exploitation and human trafficking.
The booklet can be used as a guide to recognise and report any concerns you may have.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the prevention and action taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

We can all be vulnerable at some time in our lives. Children and adults can be more vulnerable due to:

- having some physical or learning disabilities
- their age
- suffer with mental health issues
- misuse alcohol and drugs
- children unaccompanied or accompanied by someone who isn't their parent or guardian.

Types of child abuse

There are 4 categories of child abuse:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Types of Adult Abuse

- There are
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic violence
- Institutional abuse and poor practice
- Self-Neglect
- Modern Slavery

What are the signs of abuse?

If you are picking up a customer on a regular basis you may notice some changes in their behaviour:

- extreme anger, sadness and upset
- aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- suspicious bruises/self-injury
- lack of self-esteem, depression, change in appearance
- age-inappropriate sexual behaviour or language.

People react in different ways to abuse. If you feel that something is just not right please make sure you recognise and respond by phoning the relevant authority.

What is child exploitation?

Child exploitation (CE) is the act of using a child for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage. Child exploitation often results in cruel or harmful treatment of the child, as the activities he or she may be forced to take part in can cause emotional, physical, and social problems.

CE affects boys and girls under the age of 18.

By law, no child can give consent to be exploited! EVERY child who is at risk of exploitation needs a supportive adult to help them!

Often a child is groomed and manipulated over a period of time and does not realise that they are a victim being exploited.

Some children and young people are trafficked into the UK just for CSE. For more information on Child Sexual Exploitation please see: **www.nspcc.org.uk** or visit: **www.listentomystory.co.uk**

What to look for

- young people being out late with older adults who do not seem to be family members or friends
- being taken to a hotel/B&B/house party by adults who do not seem to be family members or friends
- not attending school
- taking young people to A&E departments who are not with parents
- being bought food or drinks by an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- being bought alcoholic drinks when the young person is already intoxicated
- under the influence of drink or drugs
- regular males or females requesting taxi journeys to and from locations accompanied by young people
- indications of sexual activity with one or more adults
- young people loitering near premises
- a young person with a large amount of cash
- a person who will not make eye contact and try to hide their face
- an offer of sexual favour in exchange for the fare from a young person

It could be that one of the instances above could actually have a genuine explanation. It is always worth listening to your gut instinct. If you feel that something is not right please make sure that you tell an authority.

Consider

Is the child at risk of being exploited or groomed?

Is the child at risk of being harmed?

Is the child in an environment where an adult could abuse their trust?

Don't make assumptions

- CE can happen to boys and girls
- perpetrators can be females as well as male
- offenders can be from any age group
- social class is no barrier to abuse
- it doesn't just happen at night it can happen at any time of the day
- perpetrators can come from any ethnic background

Why are drivers involved?

You are the eyes and ears of our community. This matter cannot be dealt with solely by policing. Working in partnership with the Police and other agencies you can help to make a difference. If you have any concerns you should share them, please see contact list on page 11 of this booklet.

What would you do?

If you have a bad feeling about a child or young person you have come into contact with?

You are working in the early hours of Saturday morning when you go to pick a customer up from a pub in town. The customer is a young girl.

She is very drunk. As she gets in the Taxi an older man pushes her in telling her to sit down. You overhear the conversation and he is talking to her about sexual activity. You can see that the girl is not even awake and is totally intoxicated. She looks like she is under the age 18.

Conclusion

The action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

As there is an immediate danger to the young person you should contact the police and tell them of your concerns as soon as possible by contacting 999 or 101.

Human trafficking

Children and young people are trafficked for:

- sexual exploitation
- benefit fraud
- forced marriage
- slavery
- criminal activity - pick pocketing, stealing

What is human trafficking law?

Human trafficking is regulated by Section 2 Modern Slavery Act 2015. Human Trafficking is a person intentionally arranging or facilitating a meeting of a child or young person and transporting them to that meeting within the country for the purpose of exploitation.

How does it happen?

Children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their home. Traffickers can become friends to children and young people using social media and then trick them into leaving home and meeting up with them.

Traffickers may promise children an education or persuade parents that they can have a better future. Traffickers can make a profit from the money a child earns; this can be used as an incentive for the family to pay any debt off that they owe.

Who trafficks children?

Traffickers are a network of people who each have their own task and role. They can work as an individual or in a small group often from areas they know or live in.

Be aware

You could have concerns about young people in your vehicle, locations you drop young people off at, adult paying for taxi fares and conversations in the taxi.

Be aware at all times, recognise and report. You may overhear or see something in your car you are not happy with, or hear conservations at work between drivers. Listen to your gut instinct and report any concerns. Always safeguard yourself and act on any concerns you may have, don't risk being caught out.

Code of good safeguarding conduct

- Always display your taxi licensing badge. Show that you are in a position of trust
- You should remain professional at all times and should not engage with a child or young person inappropriately
- Never make offensive or inappropriate comments such as swearing, sexual or discriminatory language.
- Never behave in a way that might intimidate or threaten a child or young person
- Do not attempt to obtain and misuse the personal details of a child or young person
- Don't attempt to develop inappropriate relationships with a child or young person
- Don't assume that your passenger wants help, but be prepared to ask
- Never follow a passenger into a house
- Never restrain a passenger in your vehicle
- Do not accept sexual favours instead of payment
- Always give a passenger a choice of journey and don't just go off the main road. Ask if they are happy to take a different route because of traffic etc.

- Never give your telephone number or address to a child/young person.

- Always get a specific destination address

- Always keep a record of any incidents or situations you were not happy with, the record should include a description of what happened, any action taken or refusal of service

- Report any concerns to the Police, your Operator, Licensing Authority and or any relevant service (contact details are at the back of this book)

- Always keep in contact with your Operator

- Make eye contact with the passengers when entering your vehicle. Greeting them is good customer service but it also makes them aware that you have identified them

- Sit lone passengers in the back of the Taxi unless otherwise agreed

- If you feel something isn't right, report it!

What if a child or young person tells me?

Do	Don't
Listen carefully	Jump to conclusions
Take it seriously	React strongly
Reassure the child that they are right to tell	Tell the child you will keep their secret
Say what will happen next	Stop a child who is speaking freely
Consult immediately with an organisation i.e. Police or Licensing Authority	Make promises you cannot keep
Make a careful record of what was said	Ask leading questions

Remember the 5 'Rs'

If you suspect a child has been abused remember the 5 'Rs'

Receive the information the child/vulnerable adult is telling you about. **Reassure** the child/vulnerable adult that it was right to tell you as you will help them.

Respond in a positive way and explain what you will do next to help. Then do exactly what you said you would do.

Record make a careful accurate record of what was said and what you did to help. State the facts only.

Report follow your Operator's professional policy for reporting concerns by contacting the relevant organisations as soon as possible.

Recognise and report

You may feel that you cannot report any safeguarding incidents. The NSPCC states that many adults do not report safeguarding incidents. The NSPCC believe that people do not want to get involved, don't feel that they have the knowledge of what to do or who to contact, many feel that they make it worse. You need to trust your gut feeling and speak out and pass on the information to an authority.

Contact numbers

Immediate danger (Police)	**999**
Not in immediate danger	**101**
Crime Stoppers (Intelligence information)	0800 555 111
Halton Borough Council Children's Social Care (Office hours only) (Out of office hours only)	 0151 907 8305 0345 050 0148
NSPCC	0800 555 111
Barnardo's nightwatch.org.uk	0808 800 5000
Halton Borough Council licensing	0151 511 6475

Person description 1

If you suspect there is a safeguarding issue, please record the information below.

Time and date of sighting:

Male ☐	Female ☐	Approximate age:

Ethnic Origin:
Build/Height:
Description:
Accent:
Clothing:
What happened?
Where?
Were they carrying anything?
Where did they go?
Did they have any distinguishing feature?
Did you hear them speak?

Person description 2

If you suspect there is a safeguarding issue, please record the information below.

Time and date of sighting:

Male ☐	Female ☐	Approximate age:

Ethnic Origin:
Build/Height:
Description:
Accent:
Clothing:
What happened?
Where?
Were they carrying anything?
Where did they go?
Did they have any distinguishing feature?
Did you hear them speak?

Vehicle description 1

If you suspect there is a safeguarding issue, please record the information below.

Time and date of sighting:
Vehicle colour:
Make/model:
Registration/plate no:
What happened?
Where?
Who was in the vehicle?
How many occupants?
Where did they go?
Did they have any distinguishing features?

Vehicle description 2

If you suspect there is a safeguarding issue, please record the information below.

Time and date of sighting:
Vehicle colour:
Make/model:
Registration/plate no:
What happened?
Where?
Who was in the vehicle?
How many occupants?
Where did they go?
Did they have any distinguishing features?

Additional Notes



Licensing Section
Municipal Building
Kingsway
Widnes
WA8 7QF
Tel: 0151 5116475
Email: legalservices@halton.gov.uk
Website: www3.halton.gov.uk