

# **Guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation and Safeguarding**

## **Introduction**

Set out below is information for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers and operators to help them report, to the relevant authorities, matters of concern that could relate to the safety of children and vulnerable persons, particularly as it relates to child sexual exploitation and trafficking.

## **General information**

Rugby Borough Council's Licensing Service is helping to tackle child sexual exploitation and trafficking by working together with key partners particularly Warwickshire Police, Children and Adult Services at Warwickshire County Council and the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children's Board.

Through partnership working and sharing information, we aim to identify and prevent sexual exploitation, disrupt the activities of perpetrators, protect children and young people and prosecute perpetrators of sexual exploitation. Sharing information with Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire Safeguarding Children's Board helps to protect young people from harm. Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's business and everyone's responsibility.

Child sexual exploitation is a crime that can affect any child, anytime, anywhere regardless of their social or ethnic background.

Sexual exploitation of children and young people involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive something, e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money, etc. as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Violence, coercion and intimidation are commonly involved in such exploitative relationships.

Child sexual exploitation involves perpetrators grooming youngsters and using their powers to sexually abuse them. Sexual exploitation of children and young people can take many forms, whether it occurs through a seemingly 'consensual' relationship with an older boyfriend, or a young person having sex in return for attention, gifts, alcohol or cigarettes.

## **How hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers and private hire operators can help tackle child sexual exploitation.**

Drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles as well as private hire operators are in a good position to help identify victims of sexual exploitation because, through the transport services they provide, drivers and operators regularly come into contact with children and young people. This means that licensed drivers and private hire operators are in an ideal position to help protect young people.

In particular, drivers should ask themselves the following questions when picking up a fare:

- Does your customer appear to be under 18 years old?
- Are they with a much older person and appear to be in a relationship?
- Do you think that they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs?
- Are you taking them to a hotel, party or secluded location? If so, ask yourself why?
- Are children/young people being taken regularly to the same localities? If so, ask yourself why?

*If the answers to any of the questions above gives you even the slightest cause for concern, these concerns should be reported.*

**If you have reason to suspect that a child is being abused or at risk of abuse it is your responsibility to report your concerns to and share information with Warwickshire Police**