

HANDBOOK FOR TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS



TOGETHER, WE CAN STOP CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



SAFER
WEST SUSSEX
PARTNERSHIP

This handbook has been designed to help raise awareness to taxi and private hire drivers within West Sussex of the issues of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and human trafficking.

Tackling CSE is a Government priority and in West Sussex we are looking to engage with all communities to help prevent children becoming victims of these crimes.

Child Sexual Exploitation involves:

Girls and boys, from any culture, ethnicity, religion or background, under the age of 18 who are encouraged/forced into a sexual relationship or situation by an adult. It often involves young people being offered something in return for performing sexual acts, for example:

- Alcohol
- Cigarettes
- Mobile Phones
- Gifts
- Money
- Drugs
- Love

It is likely that a young person experiencing CSE will not recognise that they are being exploited.

Where does it happen?

Young people can be groomed and sexually exploited anywhere. The below list shows the types of areas where CSE may be more prevalent:

- Parks
- Shopping centres
- Taxi ranks
- Restaurants
- Takeaways
- Gyms
- Leisure centres
- Hotels
- Hostels
- Pubs/bars/clubs

Trafficking

Children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation are also vulnerable to trafficking across cities, counties and even internationally. Trafficking involves the illegal trade in human beings for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

The recognition of trafficking within the UK applies irrespective of distance travelled, and hence can be applied to movements within the same city.

Section 59A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (SOA) specifies that trafficking within the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation is an offence punishable by up to 14 years in prison.



WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS PACK?

- **SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR**
- **ACTIONS TO TAKE**
- **GUIDANCE FOR OPERATORS**
- **SUGGESTED CODE OF CONDUCT**
- **CONTACTS**

How this information pack can support your business

West Sussex County Council and its partners cannot address CSE in isolation. Local businesses have a vital role to play - helping to prevent CSE and trafficking which puts children - and your business - at risk.

This handbook has been designed to help taxi companies and their employees to recognise the signs to look out for and actions to take to help ensure businesses do not become vulnerable to being associated with these types of crimes.

Drivers specifically can form a crucial part of the fight against child sexual exploitation (and trafficking); being the eyes and ears of the community they can help provide potentially important information to authorities whenever they see or hear something that appears suspicious or potentially serious.

There are a number of criminal offences associated with child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Businesses and their employees found to be facilitating exploitation can also be prosecuted. Licensing legislation and statutory regulations are in place to safeguard children. By working together we can play a positive role in protecting children and local businesses from exploitation.

It is vital that our local taxi companies engage and support the West Sussex campaign against Child Sexual Exploitation and therefore we are seeking the support and endorsement of those involved in this line of business.

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO HELP PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING.

SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Taking/collecting young people from hotels/B&Bs/house parties
- Taking/collecting young people from obscure places i.e being dropped off/collected from the middle of the road or somewhere which isn't an obvious destination
- Picking up young people from other cars
- Young people who look distressed or intimidated
- Young people frequently using taxis during the day when they should be in school/college/employment
- Observing suspicious activity in hot-spot areas
- Young people under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
- Attempts by young women to avoid paying fares in return for sexual favours
- Regular customers requesting taxi rides to and from locations - taking young people with them
- Taking young people to A&E, who are not in the presence of parents
- Young people with injuries such as bruising or blood stains
- A regular customer who has their fare pre-paid

THESE SIGNS RELATE TO BOTH GIRLS AND BOYS.

ACTIONS TO TAKE

- Make notes about the information you know
- Call the police non-emergency number 101 to report your concerns about possible sexual exploitation and quote Operation Kite

Information to share:

- Names
- Locations and addresses of concerns
- Descriptions of people
- Car registration plates, makes and models of vehicles
- Description of concerning activity



SUGGESTED CODE OF CONDUCT WHEN WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PASSENGERS

This guidance aims to promote good safeguarding practice in local taxi or private hire businesses that involves providing a service to vulnerable passengers. Vulnerability could be caused by a number of factors including mental illness and misuse of drugs or alcohol. Both children and adults can be vulnerable as a result of these factors. It is recommended that the business manager implements the following principles in training and operational practice:

At the point of booking, a vulnerable passenger risk assessment should be undertaken and recorded in writing. This should inform your operating policy and staff briefing in relation to the protection of the vulnerable passenger and the driver.

Drivers should be required to adhere to a Code of Good Safeguarding Conduct to promote safe practice in relation to vulnerable passengers.

Drivers should be required to produce photo-identification to the carer or if appropriate, vulnerable passenger, at the point of collection.

Never double up passengers unless formal consent and authorisation has been obtained.

If a vulnerable passenger is refused service a responsible person should be informed so that alternative arrangements can be made.

ALWAYS ASK IF A VULNERABLE PASSENGER NEEDS HELP, DO NOT ASSUME.

‘I remember at that time **wanting** someone to **notice** I’d changed - I would have told them everything.’

From the autobiography of Emma Jackson
‘The End of My World’



SUGGESTED CODE OF CONDUCT WHEN WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PASSENGERS CONTINUED

Drivers should remain professional at all times and should not:

- Touch a child/young person unnecessarily or inappropriately;
- Make offensive or inappropriate comments (such as the use of swearing or sexualised language);
- Behave in a way that may make a vulnerable passenger feel intimidated or threatened;
- Attempt to misuse personal details obtained via the business about a child (for example communicating with a child at their postal address, by social network, internet or mobile telephone or by using any other information disclosed as being part of placing a booking, or obtaining by any other aspect of the business.

Records should be maintained of complaints and any disciplinary action taken against drivers who breach the Code of Conduct for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

A whistle-blowing policy should operate to encourage the reporting of persons who breach the Code of Conduct for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

If the driver is concerned about the safety, welfare or behaviour of a vulnerable person, s/he should be encouraged to report this to the police (if it is an emergency dial 999) or other appropriate service and to their manager.

A log should be maintained by drivers when a service has been provided to a vulnerable passenger including the details of any incidents occurring/ actions taken or refusals of service.

CONTACTS

To report (non-emergency) concerns about a child or suspicious activity that you believe may be linked to child sexual exploitation please contact Sussex Police on 101 quoting Operation Kite.

Call 999 in an emergency if you think a passenger you're transporting is afraid, or you have concerns about someone in your vehicle.

For further support please contact Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01403 229 900 (Out of Hours - Mon-Fri 5pm-8am, weekends & bank holidays: on 0330 222 6664).

With special thanks to The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People, Hertfordshire County Council and Horsham District Council who have given permission for West Sussex County Council to reproduce this resource.