

Extracted from the Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Omnibus Licensing Scheme Handbook

Safeguarding Children and Young People & Sexual Exploitation

(L & R 30th March 2015)

1. As members of the general community, drivers of hackney carriages and private hire cars are in a good position to help to keep children and young people safe. Drivers work with all sorts of members of the public, and will often see things that seem strange or troubling, but they do not necessarily know what to do about it. The following advice is given in order to help licensed drivers to help us protect the children and young people in our area.

2. Child protection is the business of all members of every community. If a driver sees anything that seems troubling or wrong, he or she has a responsibility to report this to the relevant authorities, so that the child might be helped. People are often unwilling to get involved, but without the help of all members of the public, social workers and the police have no way of knowing which children are at risk.

3. The things that could indicate that a child or young person is at risk or being mistreated could include the following:

- Someone punching or kicking a child or young person, or hitting them in a way that goes further than reasonable chastisement or normal physical discipline
- A child or young person with physical injuries
- Someone screaming or shouting at a child or young person in a way that seems more than just a person telling a child off. This can involve calling the child nasty names and speaking in a way that would be very distressing to the child or young person, and would be likely to make them feel worthless and unloved
- A child or young person who looks very poorly dressed, perhaps, for example, a child who is wearing clothes that don't seem warm enough in the cold winter weather
- An adult bullying a child or young person
- A child or young person who seems hungry
- A child or young person who seems scared and cowed
- A child or young person who looks dirty and neglected, or is smelly and unkempt
- A child or young person who seems to have nowhere in particular to go
- A young child in the care of someone who seems to be so drunk or drugged that they are not in a fit state to look after them properly

- A child or young person who seems to be going somewhere they shouldn't, such as places where there are known dangers

4. If a driver should see anything similar to the above, or anything that gives them a sense of real unease about a child, then they should ring the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, (the MASH) and report their concerns. The number for the MASH is **0845 140 0845**. **If, of course, you feel a child or young person is in serious danger of immediate harm, you should call the emergency Police telephone number 999.**

Child Sexual Exploitation

5. Child sexual exploitation is another area of child protection where licensed drivers may help to protect our children and young people.

6. Child sexual exploitation is widespread across all communities, and presents a very real risk of harm to our children and young people. Children and young people of any class, race, age, religion or culture are equally vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation, and both boys and girls are at risk. Similarly, those who sexually exploit children and young people can be from any class, culture, race, religion or background, and both men and women might be involved in the exploitation of children and young people.

7. The following is a list of things that might indicate that a child or young person is being sexually exploited:

- Drug or alcohol use
- Physical injuries
- The child or young person has run away from home or care
- Involvement in offending and criminal activities
- Repeated sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy and termination, especially a pattern of this
- School truancy
- Change in physical appearance
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites
- Estranged from family
- Receiving gifts from unknown sources
- Having money from unknown sources

- Poor mental or emotional health
- Self harm
- Thoughts of suicide or attempts to commit suicide
- Children or young people who may seem to be getting others involved in situations that are exploitative

8. If you pick up a child or young person who seems to be involved in these kinds of activity or situations, you can do a lot to help us to help them. It is very useful to Police and Children's Services if you make a note of anything worrying that you see or hear that makes you suspicious that a child or young person may be involved in sexual exploitation. The sort of information that would be very helpful would include things like

- Anything that is said that makes you suspicious
- Any names that are mentioned
- Descriptions of the children, young people and adults involved in the suspicious activity or conversations
- Addresses of pick up and set down. This could be houses and flats, or might be, for example clubs, pubs or fast food or other premises
- Dates and times of when you have seen and heard suspicious things happening or being discussed.

9. If you have any information that makes you concerned that a child or young person is being sexually exploited, there is a special phone line to use, so **please ring 101 to pass on any concerns regarding possible sexual exploitation of children.**

10. Alternatively, ring the MASH on 0845 140 0845.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE IN A GOOD POSITION TO NOTICE THINGS THAT COULD BE STOPPED IF REPORTED AND HELP KEEP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE.