

**TO: LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
13 JULY 2017**

**SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR LICENSED DRIVERS AND OPERATORS
(Public Protection Manager)**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Committee agreed at its meeting on 5 January 2017 to introduce a licence condition requiring mandatory safeguarding training for licensed drivers and operators.
- 1.2 One of the elements of the decision was that the drivers would have to pass a test at the training course, and that this would have to be repeated every three years. On reflection, the trainers chosen to provide the course have asked that this part of the decision be amended to simply require attendance at the course.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees that the test element of the safeguarding training is removed, subject to the trainers having the ability to feed back to officers if they have concerns about the levels of comprehension of any attendees on the course.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The trainers have asked that the test be removed on recommendation from Reading Borough Council's Safeguarding team, on the grounds that they do not require the inclusion of a test for any other groups like school staff, after school clubs and children's club organisers.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Committee could choose to retain the test, as per the original proposal.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Reading Borough Council has already commenced training their taxi drivers, without a test, and have commented as follows:

“Our Safeguarding coordinator Becky Heron has provided 7 training days to date with more being dates being programmed in, the attendance rate has been over 50 drivers per-session. The training has been delivered in an interactive manner with Becky getting drivers to discuss safeguarding situations and identify types of incidents drivers may find themselves in.

The feed-back has been very good with drivers understanding the reasons for the training, the content and delivery. Whilst this training is free at the moment the vast majority of drivers have been positive about future compulsory training 'even' with a cost incurred. Having attended the majority of the training sessions I have seen first-hand the interaction of drivers on what is a difficult subject, their willingness to participate has been good and provided us with confidence that drivers have taken something away with them to help in their work”.

- 5.2 Slough Borough Council has also delivered safeguarding training to their licensed trade, also without a test, and commented as follows:

"The Safeguarding training has been well received by the hackney carriage and private hire trade. Feedback questionnaires were given to the attendees to complete. In total, 190 were completed and 73% stated they felt they had 'very good knowledge' of the subject matter after attending the training, while 89% said that the training met their expectations. The drivers and operators engaged with the subject matter and made contributions to discussions during the training. In addition, numerous people stayed behind at the end of the sessions to discuss specific issues in private with both licensing officers and the safeguarding co-ordinators. Overall we are extremely proud that after a lot of hard work and effort, the Safeguarding training has been successfully delivered to 860 drivers and operators".

- 5.3 One of the Bracknell Forest Council licensing officers attended a recent safeguarding course at Reading, and his view was as follows:

"The audience at Reading seemed to be engaged with the speaker, giving sensible answers to the questions and table discussion subjects. Admittedly it is impossible to know from that whether some people are not really listening or engaging and are instead letting the others answer everything. The range of material on the slides was good, and was not limited to CSE type matters that have been in the most prominent in the news lately. The material handed out looks informative and relevant.

In the format that the training was held, I do not see how a written test could be carried out; the audience were too close together on the tables and it would be pretty impossible to stop people copying from one another. Either the group would need to be much smaller, or perhaps the tests could be done in batches at the end of the talk. At the end of the Reading training there were a few 'what would you do in this situation' questions which were answered by the room as a group."

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 There are no implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The training provided will help suppliers of taxi services to understand potential issues with vulnerable groups including children and adults.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 A failure to take action to protect children and enable the taxi trade to identify and report issues such as CSE would leave children and the Council at risk.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Officers have spoken to other local authorities in the Berkshire area and their comments can be found within the body of the report. Reading and Slough are already in the process of carrying out safeguarding training for all their drivers, and West Berkshire and Wokingham will be considering the proposal at their next Committee meetings.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 As above.

Representations Received

- 7.3 As above.

Background Papers

None

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