

19 November 2016

Dear Sir / Madam,

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR LICENSED DRIVERS AND OPERATORS

Due to the events in Rotherham, Oxford and other locations within the UK, it is clear that taxis have been used in the transporting of children involved in sexual exploitation. In the report released in August 2014 by the Rotherham Public Enquiry, it was stated "time and again we read in files and other documents of children being violently raped, beaten, forced to perform sex acts in taxis and cars when they were being transferred between towns".

The outcome of the public enquiries is that there is a call for mandatory training for taxi drivers in safeguarding matters. The Licensing and Safety Committee have considered this and have agreed to introduce such training as a mandatory condition on all existing and new driver and operator licence applications.

The Council is now in discussion with a training provider to deliver a course which will meet this licence condition. The intention is to hold 25 to 30 courses per year at locations within West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading and Bracknell Forest. The proposal is for the courses to take place between 11am and 2pm which is generally said to be a quieter period for the licensed trade. Attendees will be provided prior to attendance with subject information and will be required to pass a short multiple choice questionnaire at the conclusion of the course. The trainers will be available at the time to assist any attendees that may have problems with reading or understanding the questions.

A new driver / operator will be required to attend and pass the test before a licence will be issued. All existing drivers / operators will be required to attend the course and pass the test prior to the next renewal of their licence. Failure to do so will result in the suspension or revocation of the licence. The course will be required to be retaken by licence holders upon a three year cycle otherwise the licence will be revoked. The Council will be making a charge to drivers and operators upon cost recovery. Whilst no fee has yet been established and set, it is anticipated that the cost will not exceed £20 per applicant

Those drivers and operators that have already undertaken training through the Integrated Transport Unit of Bracknell Forest will not be required to undertake the initial course although they will be required to take the course within a period of three years of their attendance at that course.

If you have any comments upon this proposal please respond to me in writing at Robert.sexton@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or to the address on this letter by Thursday 15 December. Any comments will be reported to the Licensing and Safety Committee for them to consider prior to final approval of this training.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Sexton
Head of Regulatory Services