

13th December 2016

BLTF (Bracknell Licenced Taxi Forum) - Report to the Licensing Committee

Reference– Safeguarding training

The 'Bracknell Licence Hackney Carriage' trade has been informed by Mr Sexton via email that the committee have agreed to his proposal for safeguarding training. Mr Sexton has used the dreadful cases of Rotherham and Oxford where criminal gangs were abducting and raping young girls.

We have not read the Rotherham or Oxford report but it is common knowledge that the local authorities, police, local councillors and just about anybody else in a position of responsibility and trust knew this vile abuse had been going on for decades and choose to do nothing.

We would request the following points be carefully considered:

1. If the Rotherham and Oxford reports came out in 2014, why has it taken 3 years for the Bracknell licencing department to decide that the licence trade needs this training?
2. Has there been in the last 3 years' reports or incidents where Bracknell hackney carriage drivers have been involved in the sexual abuse, exploitation, or rape of young girls? If not then why has this training been recommended?
3. Mr Sexton states that from the reports mandatory training for this kind of behaviour was recommended. It would seem hard to believe anybody could come to the conclusion that had these criminals participated in a safeguarding training course that it would have stopped them committing their crimes. There are hundreds of thousands of taxi drivers across the country who have driven taxis for decades are checked through the DBS to prove they are of good character and would be sickened to think that anybody would think that they would need training to deter them from carrying out some of the worst sexual abuse ever recorded. We believe the individuals in Oxford and Rotherham were not taxi drivers (Hackney Carriage) but were from the Private Hire sector, but more importantly they were criminals.
4. Has the Committee checked how many other areas in the country feel the need for their drivers to participate in this training? Has this been supported by 'Government best practice'?
5. Mr Sexton has recommended that the training course be repeated after every 3 years. All the drivers are first aid trained. It is deemed that we have a refresher course every 5 years. Has Mr Sexton explained to the committee why this course should be refreshed every 3 years, has he produced evidence from the reports that there would be a need for this? If not we would think it's fair to conclude that this training could be repeated on a 5 year basis.
6. Mr Sexton states that the courses will run between 11am till 2pm as this is quite time for the trade. We would like to make the committee aware that all drivers are self-employed and there is no good time to be off the road as it means loss of earnings. It may only seem like 3 hours, but we believe the course will be longer than that. We cannot take bookings before or closely after these courses and it therefore writes off most of the day's takings for the

drivers. We are requesting that if the committee did go along with this proposal, then a daytime and evening course should be offered to the drivers. A course from 6pm -9pm would be suitable for the day drivers and from 11am – 2pm for the night drivers.

The BLTF hopes the committee will give all the points mentioned in this report further consideration, and reject this proposal. We request that a decision on this proposal is deferred to the next committee meeting in April

Regards

BLTF