

## **SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS ASSESSMENTS FOR EXISTING DRIVERS**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on the proposal to introduce mandatory safeguarding training to be completed by all existing drivers, prior to renewal and issue of their drivers licence.

### **2.0 SAFEGUARDING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1 In recent years, awareness of the consequences of child sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable adults has been highlighted with several high profile cases across the country. Case reviews have identified the importance of licensing processes in order to prevent abuse and promote the safeguarding of the public.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 New Forest District Council as the Licensing Authority, issue approximately 500 dual drivers licenses which permit the licence holder to drive a New Forest licensed private hire or hackney carriage vehicle.
- 3.2 A Licensing Authority must not grant a licence unless it is satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold such a licence. The test assesses that the applicant is safe and suitable. It involves reviewing the applicant's character, and health through medical assessments, DVLA licence checks and criminal convictions checks to enhanced level with the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 3.3 In September 2017, Members of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee endorsed a knowledge test which included a safeguarding training module for all new applicants. Although there was no legal requirement or standardised format for the training, this amendment was implemented to ensure a robust scheme for new applicants that protected safety by driving up standards.
- 3.4 Members of the Committee also added their support for the future extension of the mandatory safeguarding training to all existing drivers and operators.

### **4.0 RECENT GUIDANCE FOR SAFEGUARDING**

- 4.1 In 2018, a Task and Finish Group with members from the Department of Transport, Parliament and Trade organisations undertook a review of existing taxi licensing legislation.
- 4.2 They published a report in 2018 titled "Taxis and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing - Steps towards a Safer and more Robust System". This contained 34 recommendations to assist Licensing Authorities in carrying out their duties to protect the public and address technological changes within the taxi trade.

- 4.3 Recommendation 25 in the report related to safeguarding and stated:  
*“Licensing authorities must use their existing powers to require all drivers to undertake safeguarding/child sexual abuse and exploitation awareness training including the positive role that taxi/PHV drivers can play in spotting and reporting signs of abuse and neglect of vulnerable passengers. This requirement must form part of future national minimum standards.”*
- 4.4 The Department of Transport responded to the report and fully supported the recommendations, particularly with reference to safeguarding.
- 4.5 Draft statutory guidance produced in February 2019, to aid consistency on the approach taken by Licensing Authorities, also provides a clear steer on how safeguarding should be addressed.
- 4.6 The guidance recommends that Licensing Authorities provide safeguarding advice to the trade and that drivers undertake safeguarding training. The training should help drivers and operators to:
- provide a safe and suitable service to vulnerable passengers of all ages;
  - recognise what makes a person vulnerable; and
  - understand how to respond, including how to report safeguarding concerns and where to get advice.

## **5.0 SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS TRAINING**

- 5.1 The safeguarding awareness training module has been successfully implemented with new applicants and positive feedback has been received from the Hampshire Safeguarding Children’s Board and other Hampshire Licensing Authorities.
- 5.2 The module has recently been reviewed by the Community Safety Team and consulted on with neighbouring Hampshire Authorities prior to making amendments to improve the user experience and ensure all key safeguarding points are raised in the training.
- 5.3 The revised e-learning safeguarding package will, once adopted, be compulsory for all existing licensed drivers to complete prior to renewal of their driver licence.
- 5.4 Existing drivers will receive safeguarding pre-reading information, before attending the training which is a 40 minute session, held at Appletree Court. Following successful completion of the training and demonstrating a good understanding by correctly answering 80% of the questions, the new licence will be issued.
- 5.5 Drivers who do not successfully complete the assessment will be given the opportunity to re-attend and undertake the safeguarding training again.
- 5.6 Drivers will be required to attend the training on a 3 yearly basis which ties in with their driver licence renewal.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The need to raise awareness of safeguarding issues within the taxi trade is clearly recognised and the trade has an important role to play in conjunction with Licensing Authorities to protect the public.
- 6.2 All existing drivers will be required to attend the safeguarding training and new licences will only be issued on successful completion of the assessment module.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Costs for administering the driver safeguarding training will be included in the renewal driver licence fee.

## **8.0 CRIME AND DISORDER AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no crime and disorder or equality and diversity implications for the committee to consider resulting from this report.

## **9.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 The Committee endorses that the safeguarding training module is introduced for existing taxi drivers and recognises the positive outcome of implementing this with all new and existing applicants.

### **Environmental and Regulation Service**

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### **Background Papers:**

NFDC Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy  
Taxis and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing, Steps towards a Safer and more Robust System.  
Draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Protecting Users Statutory Guidance for Licensing Authorities, February 2019