



SPEAK UP
SPEAK OUT
About County Lines



CHILD EXPLOITATION GUIDANCE
FOR DRIVERS IN THE TAXI
AND PRIVATE HIRE INDUSTRY

Child Exploitation (CE), including Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation happens when anyone under the age of 18 is encouraged, forced or manipulated into criminal or sexual acts, often in exchange for something.

Everyone has a duty to act if they suspect a child is being exploited and being aware of it is the first step towards putting a stop to it

Victims

Children are being exploited by criminal gangs to carry drugs from urban areas to coastal and market towns and villages. Many of these children travel between cities and rural towns and other locations via trains, private hire vehicles and taxis. This is known as 'County lines'.

Taxi drivers are in a unique position to help

Evidence shows that taxis are often used to transport children (both girls and boys) between hotels, pubs and other places where they are exploited. So, it's not just a good idea for taxi drivers to be able to spot the signs of exploitation, it's their responsibility. Exploited children are usually too terrified and ashamed to ask for help themselves. Taxi drivers are in a unique position to notice when all may not be right with passengers in their vehicle, pass their concerns on to the police – and potentially save a child from the nightmare of exploitation.



SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING



Indicators of Child Exploitation for taxis and private hire vehicles

What to look out for

Whether it is day or night time, look out for children and young people (girls and boys) who may:

- Be from another area, so may not be familiar with an area (may look lost) and may have a distinct urban accent.
- Be travelling during school hours or unusual hours (eg late in the evening).
- Be with an older individual who appears controlling.
- Be a victim of physical assault or unexplained injuries.
- Be in excessive receipt of texts, phone or video calls.
- Look withdrawn, uncomfortable or distressed in the company of adults.
- Be in a vulnerable state due to drink or drugs, accompanied by older individuals
- Be using trains whilst under the influence of substances, anxious state or travelling late at night unaccompanied.
- Using terminology or slang that is not understood by others.
- Be collected and taken to hotels, B&Bs, parties or gatherings.
- Be with an adult who is expressing sexualized behaviour towards them.
- Be dropped off at any location that causes you concern.
- Have their fares paid by adults who are not in the taxi.

Be mindful of adults who regularly request taxi rides to and from a location, taking young people with them Frequent suspicious activity in the same place i.e. train station.

What to do if you have concerns about a young person:

SPEAK UP

Offer support to the young person:


- ask if they are ok
- check that they are not receiving unwanted attention
- check whether they know who they are with and if they feel safe being with them
- offer to call a parent/carers

SPEAK OUT

If you think the young person is at imminent risk of harm, call 999 to report your concerns

Make a note of your information and report it to the police. This might include: -

- names, locations and addresses
- descriptions of people
- car registration plates, make and models of vehicle



Don't hesitate. Information, however small it may seem, can help police build a bigger picture of what's going on. You can call Cleveland Police on 101