

RHONDDA CYNON TAF
PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION
& COMMUNITY SERVICES



SAFEGUARDING
advice for the Taxi Trade:
CHILD
EXPLOITATION

IF YOU HELP ONE PERSON,
YOU HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Exploitation can affect ANY child

- Care experienced children may be more vulnerable due to their previously lived experience
- Children who have been excluded from school or are in alternative provision.
- Children living in poverty may be groomed through offer of material possessions or for money for themselves or their family due to financial concerns.
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities may have increased vulnerabilities
- Children who are not UK citizens or do not have immigration status due to the precariousness of their status is an additional vulnerability that enables gangs to target them.
- Some children may have family members who are involved in criminal activity and therefore can be exploited to run errands. In other cases young peoples' families are threatened if the young person does not cooperate.
- Children not known to authorities – who may be from affluent families may be targeted because they go under the radar and are less likely to attract attention from authorities.
- Children with poor mental health and wellbeing, low self esteem, have experienced bereavement or are being bullied
- Children who have none of the above factors but may be in proximity to someone seeking to exploit children.



Child Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of a power imbalance to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into criminal or sexual activity or modern slavery.

This can be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, this is most likely to be the result of grooming, where a criminal had identified what a young person may need or want.

The power imbalance can be through a range of factors, including age, gender, cognitive ability, status, and access to economic or other resources.

The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual, and exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through technology.

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

If you feel a child is at immediate risk of harm ring 999

Child Exploitation is complex and takes a variety of forms....

• Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

There are different types of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) that range from the sending of sexual images online to being forced to have sex in order to pay for protection or a debt.

It can take place in person or via technology, and can occur without a young person's knowledge, for example through others copying images they have created and posting them on social media. Child sexual exploitation can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. This is in part due to potential imbalance of power.

• Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

This includes children who are involved in criminal activities including the movement of drugs or money which result in personal gain for an individual, group or organised criminal gang.

This can also include single perpetrators (including family members) and through Wales based gangs. One of the most common types of CCE activity is County Lines. This involves organised drug dealing networks to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move, hold and sell drugs across the UK using dedicated phone lines to take orders. Many of these children travel between cities and rural towns and other locations via trains, private hire vehicles and taxis.

• Modern Slavery

This is 'the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation'.

Some children may not be familiar with terms such as 'trafficking' or 'slavery' or be able to recognise their experience as abuse. They may think this can only happen to unaccompanied children or migrants. British nationals can also be trafficked into, out of and within the UK for some form of exploitation to take place.

• Radicalisation...

This refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Radicalisation is usually a process not an event. 'Extremism' is defined as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

The Crown Prosecution Service define this as 'the demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:

- Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
- Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
- Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts;
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

• Group-based violence (GBV)

GBV may be defined as actual, attempted, or threatened physical injury that is deliberate and non-consensual, perpetrated by one or more individuals whose decisions and behaviour are influenced by a group to which they currently belong or with which they are affiliated.

Further information...

You can access the **Wales Safeguarding Procedures** by downloading the App **safeguarding.wales**



How children are exploited

There are various ways in which children and young people are groomed for exploitation. Many perpetrators are skilled at identifying and targeting vulnerabilities, infiltrating social networks and isolating young people from protective influences. This can include the following:

• Grooming by criminal gangs

Perpetrators spend a lot of time and energy building relationships with their victims, for example showing an interest in their life or buying them things that they want or need. They will be building up a picture on how useful the young person is likely to be and how they might be able to help the criminal network.

• Grooming by technology

Perpetrators can use digital technology to target, groom and exploit young people. For example, through social media, or targeting through YouTube, the latter has been used by county lines gangs.

• Grooming by peers

Older family members or friends who are already involved in exploitative activity can target younger relatives and friends as a way of enlarging the network. There may also be cases where abused children are forced to bring in other children.

• Grooming by trusted groups

Perpetrators can be part of sports clubs, religious organisations and use this as an opportunity to build up trust with young people.

All those working with children and young people must be clear that **exploitation is never the child's fault**, even if some form of exchange has taken place (for example, if the young person has received payment, gifts, a relationship or status in return). All children and young people have a right to be safe and protected from harm.

How does this affect the taxi and private hire industry?

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.

Children who are exploited may not be able to fully express they have been a victim of exploitation, or they may not readily identify themselves as victim as they may be in denial or scared as they could still be being cored or they believe that the exploiter is their friend, partner or someone who cares for them. 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.

Signs of Exploitation

There are some behavioural changes that children or young people may display.

- **persistently going missing from school or home**
- **regularly being found out of the home area**
- **unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phone**
- **excessive receipt of texts/phone calls**
- **relationship with controlling / older adults**
- **leaving home and care without explanation**
- **suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries**
- **gang association and isolation from peers or social networks**
- **significant decline in school results and performance**
- **self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing.**

The following IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST but may help to identify a child or young person who is being exploited.

This is why it is important that anyone using or working within transport can recognise the signs and indicators of exploitation. They may notice when things look a little out of the ordinary and will be able to pass their concerns on to the police with confidence, preventing children from coming to harm.

**NOBODY can CONSENT
to being EXPOLITED
EXPLOITATION
IS ABUSE**

Indicators of Child Exploitation for taxis & 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 (e.g. 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.



Best Practice

This guidance aims to promote good safeguarding practice for drivers and staff working with vulnerable passengers in the taxi or private hire trade.

- Drivers should carry photo ID at all times.
- The booking process should include a check for vulnerability issues so that provision can be arranged, in other words are you aware of any previous concerns.
- When making a journey with vulnerable passengers, photo identification should be produced to the carer responsible for the vulnerable person. If necessary, the driver/staff should obtain a record of the carer's contact details if there is no chaperone.
- Never double up passengers unless formal consent and authorisation has been obtained.
- If a vulnerable passenger is refused service, a responsible person should be informed so that alternative arrangements can be made.
- Always ask if a vulnerable passenger needs help, do not assume.
- A log should be maintained by drivers when a service has been provided to a vulnerable passenger including the details of any incidents occurring/actions taken or refusals of service.

Drivers/staff should remain professional at all times and not:

- Touch a vulnerable person inappropriately.
- Make offensive or inappropriate comments (such as the use of swearing or sexualised or discriminatory language).
- Behave in a way that may make a vulnerable passenger feel intimidated or threatened.
- Attempt to misuse personal details obtained via the business about a child (for example communicating with a child at their postal address, or by social network, internet or mobile telephone or by using any other information disclosed as part of placing a booking, or obtained by any other aspect of the business).

Speak Out!

- If a driver or member of staff is concerned about the safety, welfare or behaviour of a vulnerable person, they should report this to the police or other relevant service and to the business manager.
- As with all professions if you are concerned about someone's conduct report your concerns to your manager or the relevant agency.
- Drivers/staff should familiarise themselves with any whistle blowing policy that may be in place for their business.

If you feel a child is at immediate risk of harm ring **999**



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

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

Offer support to the young person, if it doesn't put them at additional risk of harm:

- 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/carer

Report the concerns:

- Make a note of your information, what you see and hear, and your concerns; then
- Call South Wales Police on 101 if you require a non-emergency response or advice.

Information to share can include:

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

You can also report concerns to

Children Services IAA Team

☎ **01443 425006** (office hours)

✉ IAATeam@rctcbc.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team (Out of hours)

☎ **01443 743665**

✉ SocialWorkEmergencyTeam@rctcbc.gov.uk

RCT Licensing department work in partnership with South Wales Police, so if you prefer to contact this department for non-urgent information:

✉ Licensing.Section@rctcbc.gov.uk

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