

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

meeting date: TUESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2022
title: CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION TRAINING
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: STEPHEN BARKER, SOLICITOR

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To enable Committee to determine the appropriate manner of training required for applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers' licences in respect of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and identifying the signs of CSE.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives }
 - Corporate Priorities }
 - Other Considerations }
- Provision of the appropriate training will enhance the safety and security of both residents and drivers.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers licenced by the Council are required to have completed a course in respect of safeguarding against and identifying the signs of Child Sexual Exploitation. To date this has been provided using a free online course run by Lancashire County Council ("LCC"). Unfortunately, LCC has now withdrawn access to this course.

2.2 Completion of this course remains an important aspect of the licencing process and so it is proposed that another provider is designated to provide this training.

3 ISSUES

3.1 It is proposed that applicants should be required to complete the safeguarding course provided by the Blue Lamp Trust in the future. This course covers a wider range of issues than that previously offered by LCC, it covers not only the issue of CSE but wider issues of safeguarding as follows:

"The course aims to provide Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers with a knowledge and understanding of Safeguarding, their responsibilities and best practice protocols. The candidate will be able to:

Understand what is meant by the term 'safeguarding'

Identify adults at risk and other vulnerable people

Understand what is meant by Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation, Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Domestic Abuse.

Recognise types of abuse, associated signs and indicators.

Identify suspicious activities.

Know how, and the whom, they can report concerns.

Understand their safeguarding responsibilities and best practice protocols."

- 3.2 The Blue Lamp Trust is a not-for-profit organisation and is an experienced provider of such courses to over 100 licensing authorities at a relatively modest course fee to the applicant. Courses can be provided either by the applicant attending a presentation in a virtual classroom for 2 ½ hours (cost £25) or viewing 3 modules of e-learning over one hour (cost £10) followed by a test consisting of 10 questions with a pass mark of 70%.
- 3.2 Officers have assessed the merits of the different courses and consider that the preferred option is the virtual classroom. This assessment is based on the following factors: better training of applicants; the assurance to the Council that training has properly been undertaken by the correct applicant, and consequentially there should be greater reassurance for residents and customers as to the quality of training which has been undertaken by drivers.
- 3.4 Throughout the course, attendees are encouraged to note their concerns and report these to their operator. Currently, there is no requirement for operators to have a trained safeguarding lead to receive such reports and refer them to any appropriate authority. Consideration could be given to requiring operators to nominate a safeguarding lead, and for that person to undergo appropriate training and refresher courses.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – no additional implications identified.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – approval of the course will enable drivers to meet their legal obligations.
- Political – no implications identified.
- Reputation – the Council's reputation will be enhanced through consideration of this matter.
- Equality & Diversity – no implications identified.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Resolve that applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers' licences in the Ribble Valley should attend the virtual classroom provided by the Blue Lamp Trust for taxi driver safeguarding training and that any consequential amendments be made to the Council's taxi policy and licence conditions.
- 5.2 Authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to consult with operators and other interested parties on the introduction of a condition requiring each operator to nominate a safeguarding lead and to provide for their initial and refresher training.

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