

TAXI NEWS

December 2015

Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Young Persons and Adults

You may have seen in the local newspaper recently the story about a number of persons suspected of entering the country illegally who jumped from the back of a lorry in Old Road Clacton. The Police have concerns that those persons may have been subject to Human Trafficking. Human trafficking is a form of modern slavery where people profit from controlling and exploiting others. People, who are often desperate or vulnerable, are tricked into coming to the UK and then told that they must work for the trafficker to pay them back.

You may recall that we included an item about awareness of Human Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation and how this could impact on you as a taxi driver in our April 2015 newsletter. The newsletter is available to view on the Taxi Licensing web pages of the Councils web site which is www.tendingdc.gov.uk or we can e-mail you a copy of this newsletter on request.

The Police have asked that we send out the following information to drivers just to remind them about this issue and also to ask everyone to be vigilant over the festive season about this problem and the vulnerable persons who are exploited by the traffickers.

What to look out for:

- Women and girls frequenting/ hanging around where they meet men. Some men may be linked to certain businesses and use them to target potential victims.
- Those working in the licensed trade should be aware of girls and women who may be vulnerable due to being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Takeaway owners should look out for girls and women hanging around outside and being befriended by groups of men.
- Hotel and bed and breakfast owners should look out for men accompanied by girls or women clearly under the influence of alcohol or drugs and young girls accompanied by older men.
- Be aware of lots of people coming and going to a hotel room especially guests who ask for a specific room number but don't know the name under which it's booked.
- Females who appear to be in a vulnerable state due to excessive drink or drugs.
- Female passengers who are accompanied by a man when in this state and don't know where they are going.
- Passengers being dropped off at a location which causes you concern. Contact police immediately.
- Unlicensed vehicles hanging around areas where there are likely to be women in a vulnerable state looking for taxis to go home.

In terms of the trafficked persons themselves, the Police advise that the following questions and contact details may help someone in need to escape the traffickers.

If you can answer yes to these questions you could be a victim?

- Is it the better life you were promised in the UK?
- Are the job conditions and pay what you were told?

□ Are you being abused, threatened and intimidated?

□ Do you feel controlled and exploited by others?

Don't be afraid to call for help:

Call the Police on 101 or 999 if it's an emergency

Don't want to speak to the police, call Migrant Help on 07766668781

Christmas Safety Advice from Essex Police

Police colleagues have also sent us the web site link details shown below for their Christmas Safety Campaign which may help give advice to someone who has a problem over Christmas. It could be you or a family member, a friend or a loved one.

http://www.essex.police.uk/be_safe/christmas/christmas_safety.aspx

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Door Sign Advertising

The restriction on general advertising on door signs was reviewed by the Licensing Committee at its meeting of the 29 July 2014 and you may recall that we gave details of the changes agreed to door sign advertising by the Committee in the September 2014 taxi newsletter. For anyone who may still need to know what these changes are the policy can be seen in the September 2014 taxi newsletter which is available to view on the Taxi Licensing web pages of the Councils web site which is www.tendringdc.gov.uk or we can e-mail you a copy of the policy/newsletter on request.

Adverts must be approved by the Licensing Team first however and we have had a couple of instances recently where door signs have been on display without prior approval having been given. We don't want anyone to waste any money on getting signs done so please run the content and size of the sign past us first before you place your order with your supplier.

This is important, because the Council reserves the right to refuse any request for door sign

advertising that does not comply with the above code and to suspend the licence of any vehicle displaying signs that breach the code shown in the Council's policy or that have not been duly authorised by the council.

The **maximum** size of door sign that Tendring District Council will allow to be fixed to a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licensed by the Council is as follows:

Large
(447 x 292 mm)
(17.5 x 11.5 inches)

The **maximum** number of door signs permitted per vehicle is four, but if two doors are being used to display the taxi company's own logo then any advertisement can **only** be placed on the remaining two uncovered doors. **All** door signs must be of the same size (**see maximum size details shown above**) and **all** advertising signs must carry/display the same identical advertisement. **I.e. advertisements for different products on each sign will not be agreed or permitted.**

Once again the Council's policy on door sign advertising can be seen in the September 2014 taxi newsletter which is available to view on the Taxi Licensing web pages of the Councils web site which is www.tendringdc.gov.uk or we can e-mail you a copy of the policy/newsletter on request.

We hope that the policy itself and the guidelines in the policy are fairly self-explanatory but should-you have any questions please contact the Licensing Team and we will be happy to answer your queries. We will also do our very best to turn applications for door advertising round as quickly as we possibly can for you. Recent economic times have been tough for the taxi trades and the Council hopes that relaxing the policy on door advertising will help to bring additional income in for proprietors.

Medical Certificates

The medical certificate is an integral part of your application as it certifies that you are in a medically fit condition to drive a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire vehicle, this form should be completed by your own GP.

Please be aware that some GP's do not test for the acuity of vision and you will therefore need to have this carried out by an optician before the remainder of the medical is carried out by your GP.

Disclosure and Barring Service Certificates

Can we remind everyone again please that all drivers applying for the renewal of their Hackney Carriage/Private Hire driver licences should be aware that it is essential they bring into us the DBS/CRB certificate they received back through the post as the Council no longer receives copies of these directly. Without the certificates we are unable to issue new/renewed licences. Failure to do so is likely to result in the applicant having to re-submit their DBS/CRB enquiry form again which will include a further £44 fee to the DBS.

Fare Tariff's

We have had a few enquiries asking about fares and fare tariffs. Just to clarify that the fare tariff in Tendring is a maximum fare tariff only. This means that you cannot charge more on the taximeter than is allowed by the maximum tariff, but you can agree to charge less (if that's what you want to do or agree to do with your customer). It is therefore a matter of personal or business choice to charge less than the maximum fare tariff.

Licensing Section Christmas Opening Times

Aside from the scheduled Bank holidays, during the Christmas period between 12 Noon on the 24th December 2015 up to the 4th January 2016, the licensing office will only have a skeleton staff available. We would therefore advise that anyone wishing to call into the offices at Weeley during this period makes a

timed appointment to do so to avoid any unnecessary waiting time.

Licensing Section Shut on Friday 11 December 2015 from 1pm onwards

Please be advised/aware that the Licensing Office will be shut to personal callers on Friday the 11 December 2015 from 1pm onwards. Colleagues from our Planning department will be taking telephone calls and will take messages for the team. If you need to ring us that afternoon please leave your details of who you are (i.e. name, badge number or plate number) and why you are calling, along with a telephone contact number and we will do our best to respond to you as quickly as possible. **If there is anything that is urgently required before that date however you are advised to ensure that you contact us before the 11 December so that we can give you every help that we can.**

Finally

The Licensing Team would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families all a very merry and safe Christmas and a very prosperous and happy New Year. Please keep yourselves safe and sound out on the roads and late at nights over Christmas when one or two of your customers may be a little worse for wear through drinking a little too much, or the weather may not be that good for driving. Without you being there at all times day and night and in most weather situations to take the responsibility and stress out of driving when the weather is bad but there is that party to go to, or 'I want to go to the party and be able to have a drink safely', life would be a lot more difficult for the rest of us at those times. So take care and thank you on behalf of the public.

LICENSING TEAM CONTACT DETAILS

Contact details for the Licensing Team are:

E-Mail - taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk

Phone - 01255 686565

Fax - 01255-686343