



Taxis, ride shares, private vehicles

Child Exploitation is a serious crime. It takes place when others take advantage of the power imbalance between themselves and children and then force, trick, or coerce them into criminal activity on their behalf.

Children can be exploited anywhere, but public transport such as trains, buses and taxis can be common places. Anyone using or working within transport networks can help recognise the signs of exploitation. They may notice when things look a little out of the ordinary and be able to pass their concerns on, preventing children from coming to harm.

We know that exploitation affects children from all walks of life, including girls, boys, LGBTQ+ children, disabled children, children from ethnic minority backgrounds and, increasingly, younger children. It is a form of abuse that has a serious impact on children, their families and our communities.

People who exploit children also come from all walks of life and backgrounds. Exploiters can be adults of all genders and can also be an older child. They perpetrate this type of abuse alone, with others, online, offline and through complex organised crime networks.

Children are never responsible for the exploitation which they experience, and in all matters, they should be treated as victims of abuse. They should be given support and protection to stay safe and recover from their experiences. Children who exploit other children may also be victims of exploitation themselves.

Exploitation is a complex form of abuse which can be hard to spot or identify. Children may not show signs of abuse, may not tell anyone and may not, at first, realise that what is happening to them is wrong. Exploitation can involve trafficking of children, forcing them to carry out criminal activities as well as coercing them to take part in sexual activities against their will.

Taxis, ride shares and private vehicles

If a taxi driver transports a child, knowing or believing that the child will be sexually or criminally exploited during or after the journey, the driver will be committing the offence of human trafficking.

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, they can pass their concerns on, and potentially save a child from exploitation.



As a driver, is a child:

Travelling alone?
Unfamiliar with the local area?

Travelling at unusual hours (during school time, early in the morning, or late at night)?

Travelling to multiple destinations in one day or night?

Travelling long distances and paying for a journey that is expensive and would seem unrealistic for a child to afford by themselves?

Paying for journeys in cash or prepaying?
Carrying lots of cash?

Anxious, frightened, angry, showing signs of neglect or displaying other behaviour that makes you worried?

Using words describing criminal or sexual activity?

Children (both girls and boys) being collected and taken to hotels/bed and breakfasts/parties at odd times, especially if they have no luggage?

Children being picked up from other cars?

Children who look uncomfortable, worried, frightened, or distressed in the company of adults?

Children being dropped off at any location that causes you concern?

People who regularly request taxi rides to and from the same location and take young people with them?

Children who are in a vulnerable state due to excessive drink or drugs, don't know where they are going and are accompanied by adults?

Frequent suspicious activity in the same place?

Children going to A&E or clinics accompanied by someone who is not a parent?

Car hire

As a member of staff working in a car hire business, is a child:

Being instructed or controlled by another individual?

Anxious, frightened, angry, showing signs of neglect, or displaying other behaviours that make you worried?

Appearing guarded around particular individuals?

Accompanied by another individual with suspicious booking information

If something doesn't feel right, don't wait, report it.

Call the police on 999 in an emergency if the crime is happening right now, the suspect is still at the scene, or anyone is seriously injured or in immediate danger.

Call the police on 101 in a non-emergency to share information, suspicions or details that can wait a day or two. Instead of phoning 101, you can report to the police on their webpages by using an online form. This can be found here: [Report a crime | Thames Valley Police](#)

Call Crimestoppers if you would prefer to make an anonymous report and it is a non-emergency. They can be contacted on 0800 555 111 or you can report on their webpages by using an online form. This can be found here: [Giving information anonymously | Crimestoppers \(crimestoppers-uk.org\)](#)

Call the NSPCC if you would like to speak to a trained professional who can provide expert advice and support if you are concerned about a child. They can be contacted on 0808 800 5000 or you can e-mail them at help@NSPCC.org.uk.

Free online training for anyone is available on the Children's Society webpages under Programme of Learning: [#LookCloser To Spot Exploitation | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)
Scroll up 2 pages for the training dates and times.