**A plea for your help**

Safer Communities Torbay is Torbay’s Community Safety Partnership, a statutory body made up of Torbay Council, Devon & Cornwall Police, Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, National Probation Service, Dorset Devon & Cornwall Community Rehabilitation Company and South Devon & Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group. Part of their role is to raise awareness of various issues that may affect individuals or communities with a view to reducing the risk of those things happening in Torbay.

As part of that awareness raising activity they have asked us to circulate information to all of our taxi drivers to highlight the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), what it is and, most importantly, what you as a taxi driver can do to help prevent CSE taking place in Torbay.

**You can help protect a child from being harmed**

You may have read about the sexual exploitation of children that took place in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013. An independent inquiry assessed that approximately 1400 children were victims of sexual abuse during that period. In the case of the Rotherham inquiry, it was found that taxi drivers were being used to take victims to the places where they were sexually exploited.

CSE is a type of sexual abuse and can affect both girls and boys. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online. Perpetrators of CSE can be adults, or in some cases, other young people.

Victims are often some of the most vulnerable young people in our communities and as such need our help and protection but, for many reasons, are often not willing to come forward to report what is happening to them.

**How you can help**

Protecting children and young people from harm is everyone’s responsibility. As a licensed taxi driver you come into contact with lots of people during the course of your day. Have you ever picked someone up and just thought “this doesn’t feel right”. Things to look out for (at any time of the day) include:

* Young people being collected and taken to hotels/B&Bs/parties at odd times
* Young people being picked up from other cars
* Young passengers who look uncomfortable, worried, frightened or distressed in the company of adults
* Young passengers who seem to be drunk or on drugs and who don’t know where they’re going but are accompanied by adults
* Young passengers being dropped off at any location that causes you concern
* Frequent suspicious activity in the same place
* Men who regularly take a taxi to and from a place accompanied by different children
* Young people going to A&E accompanied by someone who isn’t a parent

We aren’t asking you to intervene personally as this may put a young person or yourself at a risk of harm.

What we are asking you to do is report any concerns around child sexual exploitation giving as much detail and information as possible. You can contact the police by telephone 101 to pass on information and concerns. If you consider that a child or young person is in immediate danger, please always contact the police on 999. To find out more about CSE visit the NSPCC website at [www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/).

Please always trust your instincts and report any concerns. Your actions could help protect a child from serious harm.