



Middlesbrough Council Code of Conduct when Working with Vulnerable Passengers

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A vulnerable passenger is a passenger whose age or disability means that they are more susceptible to harm than a typical passenger. This may be a child, an elderly person or somebody with learning difficulties for example. In addition, an individual should be considered vulnerable if they do fall within the description above, but their condition is such as to render them more susceptible to harm than may otherwise be the case (for example as a result of being under the influence of alcohol).

This code of conduct aims to promote good safeguarding practice for drivers and operators working with vulnerable passengers in the hackney carriage and private hire trade. The following safeguarding principles should be embedded into driver and operator working practice:

- Drivers must carry their hackney carriage/private hire driver identification badge at all times, and wear it in accordance with the conditions of licence.
- Drivers must not allow a vulnerable passenger to be transported in the front passenger seat of the vehicle other than a passenger with an assistance dog.
- Operators must check at the point of booking if there are any vulnerability issues. This will allow for the driver to prepare for the journey in the right way.
- The driver / operator must confirm that appropriate provision has been made for the vulnerable person prior to accepting the booking or commencing the journey. This does not necessarily mean that the driver / operator is responsible for the provision of appropriate measures, however if appropriate measures are not in place then the driver / operator must not undertake the journey.
- The driver must let their office know (or keep a record) of the time they picked up the vulnerable passenger, the time and place they dropped them off and whether there was any incident or anything significant on the journey.
- If a driver thinks the passenger is afraid, he/she must offer to call their operator to tell them they have a passenger named XXXX with them and give the address and approximate time of arrival; this reassures the person that they are safe and someone is monitoring the trip
- When making a journey with vulnerable passengers, drivers should produce photo-identification to the carer responsible for the vulnerable person. If necessary, the driver should obtain a record of the carer's contact details if there is no chaperone.
- If a vulnerable passenger is refused service the driver/operator should inform a responsible person (e.g. hospital staff; family; security staff if from a club/pub) so that alternative arrangements can be made. For example, this situation may arise if the customer has an assistance dog and the driver has a medical exemption granted by the Council.
- Drivers should always ask if a vulnerable passenger needs help, and should not make assumptions.

- Drivers should ask or explain to passengers if using a centralised locking system - don't just put it on without an explanation.
- Driver should ask before making a journey shorter by going off the main roads/using isolated country roads and explain and give the passenger (or person booking) a choice of route.
- Drivers must remain professional and behave in a civil and orderly manner at all times and should never:
 - i) Make offensive or inappropriate comments (such as the use of swearing or sexualised or discriminatory language)
 - ii) Accept an offer of a sexual favour instead of payment or engage in any sexual activity with their passengers.
 - iii) Behave in a way that may make a passenger feel intimidated or threatened
 - iv) Set off with a passenger without a specific destination address
 - v) Double up on a booking – even if passengers are travelling in a similar direction, they may pose a threat or risk to the other passenger.
 - vi) Attempt to misuse personal details obtained via the business about a person such as passenger's telephone numbers or Facebook address.
 - vii) Follow a passenger into the house unless previously agreed and properly authorised.

These standards are equally applicable when working with vulnerable and non-vulnerable passengers.

- A hackney carriage driver should maintain a log when a service has been provided to a vulnerable passenger including the details of any incidents occurring / actions taken or refusals of service. Private hire drivers should report any incidents/actions taken to their operator.
- Drivers and operators must remain alert to issues around the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. If a driver/operator is concerned about the safety, welfare or behaviour of a vulnerable person, they should report this to the police by telephoning 101 (or in appropriate cases by calling 999).
- If a driver/operator is concerned about someone else's conduct, they should report their concerns to the Council's licensing department (01642 728010), Police (101) or Crimestoppers (0800 555111).