



Social Services/Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

Safeguarding Information for Drivers of Private Hire, Buses, Taxi Drivers and Escorts when transporting children and young people and Vulnerable Adults





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when transporting children and young people and Vulnerable Adults

Introduction

As part of your job you may have to transport or escort children or young people under the age of 18.

This leaflet is aimed at providing some basic safeguarding advice and giving links to sources for further information. It is not intended to be a lengthy guide but a summary of the guidance and best practice needed to protect children and young people.

Your employer

If you are employed the company you work for may have its own requirements and procedures on safeguarding issues - it is essential that you ask for them and make sure you read and understand them.

You

As a driver / escort you must follow safeguarding advice to prevent problems from arising and know how to deal with issues if they do arise, how to report concerns, and to be aware of what happens if an allegation is made.

Employers of drivers and escorts need to know that too, and how to deal with/report allegations.



Transporting a child or young person under the age of 18

Drivers and escorts must make themselves aware of any needs of the child / young person they are transporting. Transport units should ensure that relevant information is provided.

You should be made aware if the child or young person;

- has behavioural needs that may require special assistance for his/her own personal safety or that of a driver and/or escort.
- uses any medication, or has any health conditions which may affect him/her during the journey (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, diabetes)-it is not your responsibility to administer any medication.
- has any disabilities which require additional support, such as assistance entering or exiting a vehicle

Safeguarding children, young people, vulnerable adults - and yourself

Advice for drivers and escorts

An operator (if applicable) should provide parents and/or carers with the details of the car and driver transporting a child.

Seat belts, or other suitable restraints (depending on a child's physical needs), should be used and wheelchairs and occupants (if appropriate) properly secured.

Care must be taken when assisting a child/young person to enter/exit the vehicle, or when fastening a seat belt.

Where possible, children should exit a vehicle on a pavement away from traffic.

Drivers and escorts must always maintain a strictly professional relationship with the children and young people that they transport.



To minimise the possibility of a child or young person being at risk drivers and escorts must not;

- Hug, cuddle, tickle or have any unnecessary contact with the child or young person
- Make any personal remark about, or to, a child or young person
- Call any child or young person by an endearment such as love, darling etc. please use their given name.
- Use bad language (swearing), innuendos or sexual comments and should discourage others from doing so.

If a child has special needs, there may be physical or emotional behavioural issues which demand special handling; whilst reasonable verbal reprimands are permitted, minimal physical action should only be taken that is proportionate, reasonable and absolutely necessary.

Please seek advice and/or guidance from your employer or the local authority. In exceptional circumstances and if a child is abusive and endangering a driver or him/herself, then a driver should stop the vehicle and call for assistance.

Drivers and escorts must understand the need for clear boundaries in their contacts with children, young people and adults.

Do Not's

Drivers and escorts should avoid being over friendly with any children transported; they should not seek to find out personal information about a child or share any personal information about themselves.

Drivers and escorts must never exchange any personal contact details with the children/young people they transport, and they must never photograph a child or young person.



Any information about the child / young person must be treated as confidential and not discussed with anyone such as your family or friends.

Sometimes transport is for “contact visits”. It is important that in these instances, drivers and escorts must remember to be careful not to give any information to parents / family members that has not been authorised.

Drivers and escorts should not engage in personal email or telephone contact with children / young people (including instant messaging, text messaging and social network sites).

Drivers and escorts should not seek to have social contact with children, young people and their families – unless the reason for this contact has been established and agreed with their line manager.

Drivers and escorts should not take photographs of children and/or young people – including pictures using mobile phones.

Drivers and escorts who are aware that a child or young person is becoming over friendly with them, should discuss this with their manager as soon as possible so that appropriate actions can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress, or embarrassment.

What should you do if you are worried about a child or young person?

You may be concerned about a child or young person if he or she:

- is frequently dirty, smelly, hungry or inadequately dressed
- is constantly insulted, sworn at, humiliated or is constantly blamed for things that go wrong
- seems afraid of their parents or carers
- has illnesses which haven't been treated
- is not properly supervised
- who wants inappropriate attention and affection from any adult
- is growing up in an environment where there is domestic abuse, drug or alcohol abuse



- displays sexual knowledge or behaviour which doesn't seem appropriate for their age
- is being encouraged to be secretive about their relationship with an adult
- is a baby with an injury that they would be too young to get on their own
- has burns, scalds or bruises with clear outlines

They may show their unhappiness in many ways, including:

- being unusually nervous, anxious, withdrawn and isolated
- being unusually angry and aggressive
- truanting or running away from home or school
- using drugs or alcohol
- deliberately causing serious harm to themselves or others

These are not the only signs to look for, and some may not be caused by abuse. What is important is that you trust your judgement and take action if you are worried about a child.

If you have concerns about the safety of a child it is your responsibility to report it.

If you have any doubt about reporting your concerns, please remember that we can only take action if we know something is wrong.



PLEASE ACT PROMPTLY - IT CAN BE VERY DIFFICULT TO INVESTIGATE CONCERNS IF THERE IS A DELAY, AS SOME SIGNS OF ABUSE CAN DISAPPEAR VERY QUICKLY.

If a child or young person discloses that s/he is being abused you must listen carefully, make a note if possible and then report the information immediately, by telephone, to the services listed below;

Newport Children and Family Services Duty and Assessment Team (01633 656656)	If you need to contact Children and Family Services out of normal office hours, call the 24-hour South East Wales Emergency Team on 0800 3284432.	If you feel urgent action is needed because a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, contact the Police immediately on 999.
Monday – Thursday (8.30am – 5pm)		
Friday (8.30am – 4.30pm)		

Will I have to give my name?

If you feel very strongly that you cannot give your name, you need not do so – your concerns for a child will still be investigated.

What happens next?

Children's Services will follow up every report where they believe a child may be at risk of harm. They will make enquiries about the child's safety and assess what services will help. This is done in strictest confidence.

They will talk to other people who know the child/young person and may be able to provide a clearer picture. This includes teachers, health visitors and members of the child's family.



After this several things could happen:

- No further action will be taken.
- Help and support will be offered to the family.
- An investigation will take place.

The child, family and those professionals who work with the family will be involved in the assessment. In all cases, what the family does well for the child is considered alongside the concerns. In most situations children remain at home safely with their family, while professionals work with the parents to get the right services involved. In all circumstances action will be taken to safeguard the welfare of the child and improve the situation.

Are children taken away from home?

Very rarely. Social workers cannot remove a child from their family without the permission of the court. This only happens when there are real concerns that the child will not be safe at home. Every effort is always made for the child/young person to be looked after by a relative or a friend.

Allegations

Any allegations of abuse made against you are likely to cause a great deal of anxiety and concern.

Information regarding allegations made against adults who work with children and young people can be obtained from the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board Website;

<http://www.sewsc.org.uk/>

If you are concerned that another driver or escort may be acting in an inappropriate way towards a child or young person that they transport, you must immediately contact the relevant services detailed in this leaflet.







