

Report of: Kate Coldwell

Report to: Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration

Date: 16 July 2015

Subject: Taxi and Private Hire Licensing: Safeguarding Training

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997 – 2013) led by Alexis Jay OBE, highlighted significant concerns regarding safeguarding controls for taxi and private hire licensing in Rotherham. It was found that taxi and private hire vehicles had been used extensively by those directly involved in the sexual exploitation of children to move children around the city and to other cities.
2. Given the issues raised in the report, it seemed prudent to review current arrangements in Leeds to ensure existing controls regarding safeguarding in taxi and private hire licensing were robust and to identify any areas for improvement.
3. As part of that review, a requirement to introduce safeguarding and child sexual exploitation (CSE) awareness training was identified. That training was developed by the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in conjunction with Carolyn Eyre, Safeguarding Consultant. Carolyn Eyre's services were procured by the LSCB to deliver the training which is currently being rolled out to licensed operators, escorts and contract drivers.
4. The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section would like to secure the same trainer and materials to expand the training to the existing 5,600 licence holders in Leeds to facilitate consistency and ease of delivery.

Recommendations

5. That the Head of Elections, Licensing & Registration approve the waiver of Contracts Procedure Rules No 8.1 and 8.2 – Intermediate value procurements and award a contract to Carolyn Eyre: Independent Safeguarding Consultant in the sum of £300 per three hour training session. The contract shall commence on the 1 September

2015 and expire on the 31 August 2016 with the option to extend for a period of 12 months.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 Under Contract Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 all contracts with a value of between £10k and £100k are to be competitively tendered by formally inviting a minimum of three tenders.
- 1.2 The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section are seeking approval to waive this requirement to ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding and CSE awareness training by engaging the existing training provider previously procured by the LSCB.

2 Background information

- 2.1 A report to Executive Board in December 2014 indicated that there are robust safeguarding processes in place at taxi and private hire licensing in Leeds.
- 2.2 That report advised Members that safeguarding training was being developed in conjunction with the LSCB and would focus as a priority on private hire operators, permit drivers, escorts and the regular private hire contract drivers; approximately 250 individuals.
- 2.3 It was anticipated that this first phase would take a year to complete with a view to extending the training to all licence holders from early 2016 but at a cost to the licensed trade. Resources from the LSCB commissioning budget were made available to prime and deliver the initial phase of the training programme.
- 2.3 The LSCB Business Unit commissioned an external trainer for the initial roll out of the programme. The procurement of an external trainer to undertake the roll out to all licence holders needs to be undertaken by the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section.

3 Main issues

Reason for contracts procedure rules waiver

- 3.1 Due to the potential role of licensed drivers in identifying abuse, as well as the need to ensure key messages regarding CSE are disseminated to the whole of the licensed trade in Leeds, the safeguarding awareness training has been developed to provide an introduction to safeguarding issues and licence holder responsibilities. The LSCB and the external training provider have worked collaboratively on the package and a consistent approach throughout the delivery of future training is desirable.
- 3.2 The issue of safeguarding training was raised to the Executive Board in December 2014 and Members endorsed the direction Officers were taking regarding improvements for safeguarding in Taxi and Private Hire Licensing. Now that the initial roll out to those licence holders identified as a priority has been undertaken, the Taxi and Private Hire Section must move quickly to introduce an on-going training programme.
- 3.3 Safeguarding is everyone's business and the safeguarding awareness course will form part of the conditions applied to the grant of a private hire and/ or Hackney carriage licence. The sessions need to be available within a short timescale to satisfy

that licence holders and new applicants to the trade are educated and alert to the signs of CSE.

- 3.4 Using the external provider already commissioned by the LSCB, it is anticipated that the cost of providing one 3 hour session would be approximately £300¹. The initial cost of developing the course and assessment process has already been covered by the LSCB.
- 3.5 There are circa 5,600 existing licence holders who would be required to undertake the training. The initial sessions held throughout 2015 have accommodated up to 30 individuals at any one time. It is therefore anticipated that up to 187 sessions would be required to ensure all existing licence holders are accommodated at a cost of £56,000 (5,600/30*£300).
- 3.6 The external training provider will be invited to submit a formal bid to demonstrate value for money and will also be required to demonstrate their capacity to deliver the training at a competitive cost. If the formal bid does not demonstrate value for money or that there is insufficient resource/ capacity to cover the training requirements then a contract will not be awarded and the contract will be subjected to open tendering.
- 3.8 The course would be chargeable to licence holders which will make the process self-funding.

Consequences if the proposed action is not approved

- 3.9 It is recognised that those who are licensed by the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section are the biggest providers of transport in the evening and night time economy and safe licensing and monitoring of licensed drivers and vehicles contributes significantly to the safety of the travelling public. In addition, the Council has recognised the challenge to educate so that drivers can be alert to the dangers of CSE– they are very often the eyes and ears of the City.
- 3.10 CSE and grooming takes many forms and the more people who are aware of the tell-tale signs the better; licensed drivers are very well placed for that and are able to contribute to reducing the risk to children and women who may be exploited. The training is an excellent way to restore some of the confidence the public may have lost in licensed drivers around the country.
- 3.11 By delaying the implementation of safeguarding training the Council is at risk of failing to act to make Leeds a child friendly city, failing to strengthen local accountability and not being responsive to the needs of local communities.

Advertising

- 3.12 The position of the external training provider has not been advertised by the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section.
- 3.13 The LSCB Business Unit have supported the development of the course and assessment process as well as commissioning the external trainer.

¹ Figure quoted in the Submission for provision of services, Carolyn Eyre: Independent Safeguarding Consultant, December 2014

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Consultation took place with the LSCB following on from the publication of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997 – 2013). The discussions highlighted that safeguarding training was not currently a compulsory part of licensing requirements.

4.1.2 A report was presented to the Executive Board in December 2014.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 There are no issues to consider at this time as all licence holders will be required to undertake the safeguarding awareness training as a condition upon the grant of a licence.

4.3 Council policies and city priorities

4.3.1 The Taxi & Private Hire Licensing policies contribute to the following aims:

Best Council Plan 2013 -17

Towards being an Enterprising Council

Our Ambition and Approach

Our Ambition is for Leeds to be the best city and Leeds City Council to be the best council in the UK – fair, open and welcoming with an economy that is both prosperous and sustainable so all our communities are successful.

Our Approach is to adopt a new leadership style of civic enterprise, where the council becomes more enterprising, business and partners become more civic, and citizens become more actively engaged in the work of the city.

Our Best Council Outcomes

Make it easier for people to do business with us

Our Best Council Objectives

Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth – Improving the economic wellbeing of local people and businesses. With a focus on:

- Helping people into jobs,
- Boosting the local economy
- Generating income for the council

Ensuring high quality public services – improving quality, efficiency and involving people in shaping their city. With a focus on;

- Getting services right first time
- Improving customer satisfaction

4.3.2 The Taxi & Private Hire Licensing policies contribute to priorities:

- Reduce crime levels and their impact across Leeds
- Effectively tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour in communities

4.3.3 Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults:

Leeds City Council has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure the duty of care for both children and vulnerable adults across all of its services. This cannot be achieved by any single service or agency. Safeguarding is ultimately the responsibility of all of us and depends on the everyday vigilance of staff who play a part in the lives of children or vulnerable adults.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 This option should represent value for money as the LSCB has supported the development of the course and assessment process which is now in place and has been rolled out. However, The external training provider will be invited to submit a formal bid to demonstrate value for money and will also be required to demonstrate their capacity to deliver the training at a competitive cost.

4.4.2 The course would be chargeable to licence holders which will make the process self-funding.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information and call in

4.5.1 Due to the value of the contract, less than £100k, this decision is not subject to call in.

4.5.2 The awarding of the contract to the existing training provider may be subject to challenge from other training providers who offer similar safeguarding and child sexual exploitation awareness training.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 The introduction of safeguarding training as a result of the Rotherham Report seeks to reassure the general public, the licensed trade, the Council and Elected Members that risks are being managed in Leeds.

4.6.2 The risk of not going ahead with the procurement waiver will be a delay to the implementation of safeguarding training to the existing licensed trade.

4.6.3 There is a risk that the external training provider may not have sufficient resources and/ or capacity to undertake the training sessions.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The initial rollout of safeguarding training is now underway and on target to reach the priority group as reported to the Executive Board in December 2014.

5.2 The development of the course and assessment process has already been undertaken by the LSCB and external training provider commissioned by the LSCB.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Head of Elections, Licensing & Registration approve the waiver of Contracts Procedure Rules No 8.1 and 8.2 – Intermediate value procurements and award a contract to Carolyn Eyre: Independent Safeguarding Consultant in the sum of £300 per three hour training session. The contract shall commence on the 1 September 2015 and expire on the 31 August 2016 with the option to extend for a period of 12 months.

7 Background documents

- 7.1 Executive Board Report: TPH Licensing & Safeguarding, December 2014
- 7.2 LSCB Executive Report: Safeguarding Training as part of Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Regulations, October 2014
- 7.3 Submission for provision of services, Carolyn Eyre: Independent Safeguarding Consultant