

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect passengers, specifically children, young people and adults at risk, colleagues, and contractors from harm.

Our policy applies to all colleagues and any private health and personal data will be treated confidentially, sensitively and in line with data protection regulations; the UK GDPR and DPA 2018.

RELATED POLICIES

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following:

- POL034 Whistleblowing Policy
- POL036 Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Policy
- GUI011 Driver Partnering Guidelines; Safeguarding & Child Exploitation

PRINCIPLES

The guiding principle is our duty of care to passengers, colleagues, and contractors. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; people should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to act in a way that protects them.

EXPECTATIONS

Veezu is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk and requires colleagues and contractors to share this commitment.

Everyone we interact with regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Veezu will not tolerate abuse and exploitation, or the risk of such, by colleagues or contractors.

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. We interpret this to mean protecting people, including children and adults at risk, from harm that arises from coming into with our colleagues and contractors.

WHAT IS CHILD EXPLOITATION?

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse; individuals under the age of 18 who are encouraged/forced into a sexual relationship or situation by an adult. This often involves young people being offered something in return for performing sexual acts, for example: alcohol, cigarettes, mobile phones, gifts, money, drugs etc.

Children and young people are often tricked into believing they are in a loving and consensual relationship; this is called grooming. They may trust their abuser and understand that they are being abused.

Young people can be groomed and sexually exploited at a variety of premises and locations such as: parks, shopping centres, taxi ranks, restaurants, takeaways, gyms, leisure centres, hotels, hostels, pubs/ bars/ clubs.

WHAT IS TRAFFICKING?

Trafficking is where people are tricked, forced, or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work, or sold.

Children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation are also vulnerable to trafficking across cities and counties within the UK, and international trafficking into and out of the UK.

Trafficking and the exploitation of children is a key feature of organised crime gangs in facilitating the supply of drugs across 'County Lines', taking away from their homes, parents or carers and exposing them to significant physical, mental and welfare risks and abuse.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Sometimes a young person will need to undertake a journey alone. It is particularly important that the passenger, parent/ guardian, and Driver Partner understand what is required of them. Health, safety, and wellbeing always comes first.

All passengers under 16 years of age are treated as minors where their age has been verified at the time of booking.

HOW TO REPORT A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

All colleagues and contractors should have a basic awareness of safeguarding issues. This includes:

- Being alert to the possibility of abuse and neglect.
- Having enough knowledge to recognise an abusive or potentially abusive event or set of circumstances.
- Knowing who in Veezu to raise concerns with.
- Being competent to take the appropriate immediate or emergency action.

DRIVER PARTNERS

Local licensing authorities must not grant a taxi or private hire driver licence unless it is satisfied that the applicant is a 'fit and proper' person to hold such a licence, this includes undertaking an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The wide-ranging 'fit and proper' person test ensures that licensed drivers command the highest level of confidence before being entrusted with the responsibility of transporting passengers including children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups. In many licensing areas, applicants to the taxi and private hire trade must undertake a safeguarding awareness training course prior to the grant of a licence.

Driver Partners should report any safeguarding concerns to their local authority in the first instance however, if a colleague is made aware of a safeguarding concern via a Driver Partner, they should contact compliance@veezu.co.uk providing their full details and their concern. If a Driver Partner tells us that a child or adult at risk is in immediate danger, they should be advised to dial 999 immediately.

Driver Partners are provided with GUI011 Driver Partnering Guidelines; Safeguarding & Child Exploitation when they engage with Veezu, and this is available to view and download from the Driver Partner Portal.

COLLEAGUES

Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to Veezu Compliance compliance@veezu.co.uk immediately.

The National Safeguarding Director has ultimate responsibility for the investigation and resolution of any safeguarding concerns.

If a child or adult at risk is in immediate danger the colleague or contractor who first becomes aware of the danger should dial 999 for the police.

ABUSE OF THIS POLICY

Any abuse in the application of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with Veezu's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal.



ALTERATIONS AND AMENDMENTS

Veezu reserves the right to amend or withdraw this policy at its absolute discretion, in accordance with the needs of the business. You will be notified about any changes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The policy is available to view and download on Veezu.Net or from Veezu Compliance. For further information, please contact your Line Manager or compliance@veezu.co.uk