

Bystander training for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers

Bespoke training for drivers to tackle Violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the night-time economy (NTE).

First published

29 May 2024

Updated

26 August 2025

Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Violence against women and girls Community engagement Training and professional development
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Region	East Midlands
Partners	Police Local authority Private sector

Key details

Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	June 2023
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults General public Victims

Aim

To create a mandatory training package for taxi drivers to focus on improving the safety of women and girls. The training also aims to provide drivers with knowledge around the best reporting streams and support services for victims.

Intended outcome

To reduce levels of violence against women and girls (VAWG) within Northamptonshire's night-time economy (NTE) by equipping taxi and private hire drivers with the tools and knowledge to recognise signs of drink spiking, sexual abuse and domestic abuse. Crime statistics and other outcomes will be measured to observe the impacts of this initiative on VAWG related crime.

Description

Background

- Northamptonshire Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (OPFCC) were awarded £21,500 from the Home Office safer streets funding to complete this project
- safer streets round four was a Home Office funded scheme whereby the OPFCC and local authorities (LAs) could apply for funding to tackle targeted areas, as part of round four, VAWG was a priority area

- taxi drivers play a pivotal role in the NTE, so it was beneficial to equip them with skills to recognise VAWG

The Training Package

Procurement

- utilising the safer streets round four funding, Northamptonshire OPFCC decided to find a supplier with the abilities to create a mandatory training package for taxi drivers on how to create a safer NTE
- the procurement process of choosing the right supplier to create the resources took several weeks to complete
- suppliers were able to apply to work on the training packages, their applications were then reviewed with help from Northamptonshire OPFCC's commercial department
- the winning bidder was awarded the contract, this was NTE Solutions

Designing

- NTE solutions were the producers of the training package, videos and online platform in line with OPFCC's requirements
- the package took approximately 20 weeks to complete

There were eight people involved in the creation of the package including:

- a project coordinator
- three members of NTE solutions (director, project manager and script writer)
- three members of LA licensing teams
- a police detective inspector
- various team members from NTE solutions were also involved in the creation of the website and actors within the training videos

Throughout the creation process, both local authorities and Northamptonshire Police were involved to offer context and expertise to the online videos and knowledge check process

The training package has been created in an online format by using a hosting page on NTE Solutions website. An account must be created to view and complete the training. This way, it is available on all devices, meaning drivers can complete at their convenience on their own devices.

As part of the creation process, NTE Solutions surveyed all taxi and private hire drivers in Northamptonshire to establish the five most common languages. NTE Solutions then translated the training packages in accordance with this to ensure accessibility.

LA were responsible for informing all taxi and private hire companies about the training. This was done face-to-face during safeguarding training or by sending the link via email.

Content

The training package targets awareness in three areas:

- drink spiking
- sexual abuse
- domestic abuse

Ensuring drivers can recognise concerns and common themes of behaviour when affected by one or more of the three target areas.

Each area has a dedicated video, which discusses the common themes of behaviour and the best reporting streams/support services for each topic. The videos are two minutes long and present different scenarios using actors. The videos are mock real-life scenarios of members of the public (played by actors) getting into taxis and presenting VAWG related incidents. The scenario presented situations which taxi drivers could come across working in the NTE and taught drivers how to recognise VAWG behaviour, how to report correctly and how to signpost to other agencies.

At the end of watching all three videos, participants completed an online multiple choice knowledge check. This is not a pass/fail test, but a way to consolidate knowledge and reinforce what was demonstrated in the videos. The questions on the knowledge check were created and agreed during the bi-weekly meetings held with Northamptonshire OPFCC and partners involved in the project.

After completion drivers can download a certificate of completion, this certificate is also sent to the LA licensing teams to ensure completion.

The packages have been shared with drivers however there are no current figures on how many have completed the training.

Taxi and private hire license conditions are renewed every few years. When they are renewed, there is the capability to add in additional requirements. It is planned for this intervention to be mandatory as part of driver's license conditions however prior to these consultation periods the package will be encouraged across the county by both LA licensing teams.

Overall impact

The package continues to be rolled out to all taxi and private hire drivers across Northamptonshire. Over time, once the package has been disseminated to all new and existing drivers across the county, evaluation is planned to assess effectiveness and impact. Due to periodic license renewals over the coming years, this dissemination is gradual.

There have been some notable reductions in VAWG related incidents in specific areas in Northampton town centre linked to the night time economy, which could be attributed to this training and taxi drivers having a better awareness of key VAWG issues.

These results suggest early success in reducing harm in the night time economy, and further monitoring will help determine whether these positive trends can be sustained.

Evaluation is planned to be led by Northamptonshire OPFCC. The evaluation will include assessment of several areas:

- VAWG related crimes and incident levels/stats (taken from the force's crime recording system by a dedicated analyst).
- VAWG related crimes and incidents will be assessed before and after the project to identify if there has been any decrease. VAWG related crimes include: sexual assault, sexual violence & rape, coercive behaviour, human trafficking & forced prostitution, modern slavery, drink spiking, domestic or relationship abuse, street harassment, VAWG related physical violence/assault, honour-based abused.

Monitoring work is planned to assess the completion rate by drivers across Northamptonshire. LA's will be provided with certificate-based information when the training is completed to provide access to this data. Assessment of the completion rate by drivers across Northamptonshire will be monitored.

Learning

As this intervention specifically targets taxi and private hire drivers who are regulated by local authorities, early buy-in from these partners was essential to ensure the package was correctly and effectively disseminated to all drivers. Northamptonshire OPFCC discussed the training package with council elected members prior to submitting the Safer Streets bid to the Home Office. This ensured it was of interest to the Home Office.

At the very early stages, it was essential that this intervention was easily accessible and engaging to ensure high levels of completion and enhanced learning. This is why an online package accessible on all devices was created.

Involving LA's licensing teams was an essential part of the project for context but also for completion rates. Local context was also essential for this package to be engaging and relevant, so filming of the videos was completed within Northamptonshire.

If possible, where funding streams allow, creation of the package alongside local authorities reassessing license conditions would have been ideal as this way the package could have been mandatory from an early stage. However, this is all very dependent on timings and LA processes.

Early support from LA to roll training out to necessary recipients is key. This has allowed Northamptonshire OPFCC to target as many taxi and private hire drivers as possible, with best possible reach. It is vital to maintain good relationships with LA to periodically check in and review completion data, ensuring the training is still being rolled out and is still relevant. Training saturation is key to see successes in reducing VAWG related incidents in the night time economy.

Best available evidence

Currently, the [Crime Reduction Toolkit](#) does not include any best-available evidence on training taxi drivers to act as bystanders to increase the safety of women and girls.

Other educational approaches include bystander programmes to prevent sexual assault among young people aim to encourage young people to intervene when witnessing incidents or warning signs of sexual assault. The programmes are usually delivered in an educational setting, with the format of a single training or education session (for example, as part of university induction). See the [Bystander programmes evidence briefing](#) for further information.

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Tags

Violence against women and girls Crime reduction