



**ATOC/GN029**  
**Issue 1**  
**November 2015**

## **ATOC Guidance Note – Responding to Vulnerable Persons**

### **Synopsis**

This Guidance Note provides advice on how Train Operating Companies should respond to vulnerable persons on the railway and how they should share information with the BTP.

Authorised by

Chair, ATOC Operations Council

## Contents

Section	Description	Page
<hr/>		
<b>Part A</b>		
	Issue record	3
	Responsibilities	3
	Explanatory note	3
	Guidance Note status	3
	Supply	3
<hr/>		
<b>Part B</b>		
1	Introduction	4
2	Purpose	4
3	Initiatives for responding to vulnerable persons	4
4	Common industry response	5
5	BTP's safeguarding command	5
6	Information sharing	6
7	Additional information	7
<hr/>		

## **Part A**

### **Issue Record**

This Guidance Note will be updated when necessary by distribution of a complete replacement.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
One	November 2015	Original version

---

### **Responsibilities**

Copies of this Guidance Note should be distributed by RDGP&S IG members to persons responsible for prosecutions policy and associated operational procedures.

---

### **Explanatory note**

ATOC produces ATOC Guidance Notes for the information of its members. ATOC is not a regulatory body and compliance with ATOC Guidance Notes is not mandatory.

ATOC Guidance Notes are intended to reflect good practice. ATOC members are recommended to evaluate the guidance against their own arrangements in a structured and systematic way. Some parts of the guidance may not be appropriate to their operations. It is recommended that this process of evaluation and any subsequent decision to adopt (or not to adopt) elements of the guidance should be documented.

---

### **Guidance Note status**

This document is not intended to create legally binding obligations between railway undertakings and should be binding in honour only.

---

### **Supply**

Copies of this Guidance Note may be obtained from the ATOC members' web site.

## **Part B**

### **1. Introduction**

Safeguarding commonly refers to protecting vulnerable people, children, adults and generally preventing harm to people. The College of Policing which offers best advice to police forces uses the following safeguarding categories in relation to officer development: adults at risk; hate crimes, child abuse, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based violence, human trafficking, managing violent offenders, missing persons, prostitution, serious sexual offences, stalking and harassment.

This is a long but not an exhaustive list and, operationally, safeguarding issues will often present themselves across different categories. The British Transport Police (BTP) includes the following additional categories in its safeguarding portfolio:

- suicide prevention and mental health issues;
- all children and young people using the railways;
- railway staff members; and
- Project Guardian, national roll out.

This Guidance Note has been worked up with the assistance of the BTP. The working assumption for rail staff is that it does not matter what the reason is for a person's vulnerability – the response they can expect to receive will be proportionate and professional as set out below. In each case, the way that vulnerable individuals are dealt with should be commensurate with their need at the time that they present themselves to rail staff. A standard framework within which each member of staff may respond is seen as the best way to protect vulnerable persons and support the BTP (and other agencies who might be involved) in their effort to tackle safeguarding matters effectively.

### **2. Purpose**

This framework outlines how railway undertakings will respond to incidents where a member of rail staff is presented with a vulnerable person or persons. It is designed to ensure that the needs of vulnerable persons are addressed at the earliest opportunity and that appropriate steps are taken to safeguard the individual(s) until assistance can arrive from the police (usually the BTP).

### **3. Initiatives for responding to vulnerable persons**

#### Sexual offences

Industry representatives participated in an Executive Event entitled Reducing Sexual Offences on Public Transport (25 March 2015). This was a follow on to Project Guardian which started in London and has now been implemented across all BTP Divisions and as forerunner to the 'Report it to stop It' campaign launched by the BTP in April 2015.

The BTP's focus on detecting sexual offences and its aim to increase reporting has led to a significant rise in recorded notifiable sexual offences (as at November 2015). Rail staff should expect to see a continuing rise in recorded notifiable sexual offences until such time as the effect of 'Report it to stop it' reaches its peak (which is not known). This has led to a significant rise in the number of cases which railway undertaking staff might come across in their normal duties. The BTP, as part of the 'Report it to stop it' campaign, has already issued separate advice to the industry.

The increase in recording of sexual offences will provide the BTP and railway undertakings with additional intelligence about the problem, thereby enabling better problem solving plans to be developed and acted on by the BTP and the industry. Customers in general and victims in particular should feel reassured that the police and industry are serious about tackling this type of unacceptable crime.

#### Vulnerable children

Railway Children, an international charity which fights for vulnerable children who live alone at risk on the streets, has been working with the industry on a number of pilots looking into a structured approach to responding to vulnerable children found at stations (less so on trains). This includes the development of material with input from the BTP. There is a separate approach to communication around this initiative which includes briefing crime and security managers and front line rail staff.

#### People trafficking

Although the risk of perpetrators using the railway for the purpose of trafficking is very low, Hope for Justice points out that public transport might be one of the means by which a victim can escape from their captor. Invariably this would mean that the victim would have no money or identification and would potentially be traumatised so that effective communication is challenging. In addition, many such victims may have little or no English.

Hope for Justice has a training package which can be delivered to railway undertakings on request. The key messages for railway undertakings are exactly the same as those mentioned for responding to other aspects of vulnerability.

#### Suicide prevention

There is a well-established cross industry approach to tackling attempted suicides on the railway which includes a comprehensive training package for rail staff. The preventative work is overseen by the National Suicide Prevention Steering Group.

#### **4. Common industry response**

The approach to responding to safeguarding matters when individuals are presented to rail staff does not need to differ based on their individual aspect of vulnerability. With this in mind, the industry has agreed with the BTP a common approach which each member of staff is expected to follow when presented with a vulnerable person(s).

The approach is set out below in the form of a number of sequential steps:

**BE AWARE** – children and adults who are at risk, vulnerable, suicidal and victims of crimes (e.g. unwanted sexual behaviour, child exploitation, trafficking) will frequent stations and use trains.

**BE CONCERNED** – be curious, ask questions about their safety, their well-being and their welfare to check that they are ok.

**LISTEN** – take what they say seriously and always treat them with respect and dignity.

**REASSURE** – show kindness and consideration, offer to provide help and support.

**REPORT** – encourage them to seek support, to report offences and report your concerns about others to the BTP by calling 0800 405040 or texting 61016. In an emergency always call 999.

#### 5. **BTP's safeguarding command**

The BTP has developed a new 'safeguarding' command and portfolio, under Force HQ Crime and Investigations. It has developed a common operating model for safeguarding of children and adults.

This central BTP capability will be designed to lead on development of policies and standard operating procedures, co-ordination of activity, provision of specialist advice/support, strategic stakeholder engagement, collation of information, provision of data and management of some aspects of work, for example the referrals and subsequent engagement with social services and other partners.

The lead contact within BTP (as at November 2015) is Det. Supt. Richard Mann. His contact details are:

British Transport Police, Pennine Headquarters, 1st Floor, Westgate House, Grace St,  
Leeds, LS1 2RP.  
Office Tel: 0113 247 2266  
Mobile: 0787 6681 256  
Email: [richard.mann@btp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:richard.mann@btp.pnn.police.uk)

#### 6. **Information sharing**

The BTP is currently preparing with the industry a common approach to information sharing. Information about vulnerable persons should not be shared routinely and where it is necessary the sharing will be through secure email (or other secure method).

All railway undertakings have at least one member of staff who has access to Egress secure messaging (i.e. the nominated National Security Contacts). This is the BTP's preferred method by which information about vulnerable people will be shared between itself and the industry. The BTP is currently researching other options and it will be issuing separate advice under the auspices of a generic Information Sharing Agreement which is being developed with railway undertakings through the Rail Delivery Group Policing & Security Implementation Group.

**7. Additional information**

Additional information about the various initiatives to address safeguarding matters on the railway may be found at:

Sexual offences –

[http://www.btp.police.uk/advice\\_and\\_information/how\\_we\\_tackle\\_crime/report\\_it\\_to\\_stop\\_it.aspx](http://www.btp.police.uk/advice_and_information/how_we_tackle_crime/report_it_to_stop_it.aspx)

People trafficking – <http://hopeforjustice.org/human-trafficking/>

Children –

<https://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/get-involved/corporate-partnerships/transport-community-awareness-programme/>

Suicide prevention –

<http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/saving-lives-railway/suicide-and-railways/working-prevent-railway-suicide>