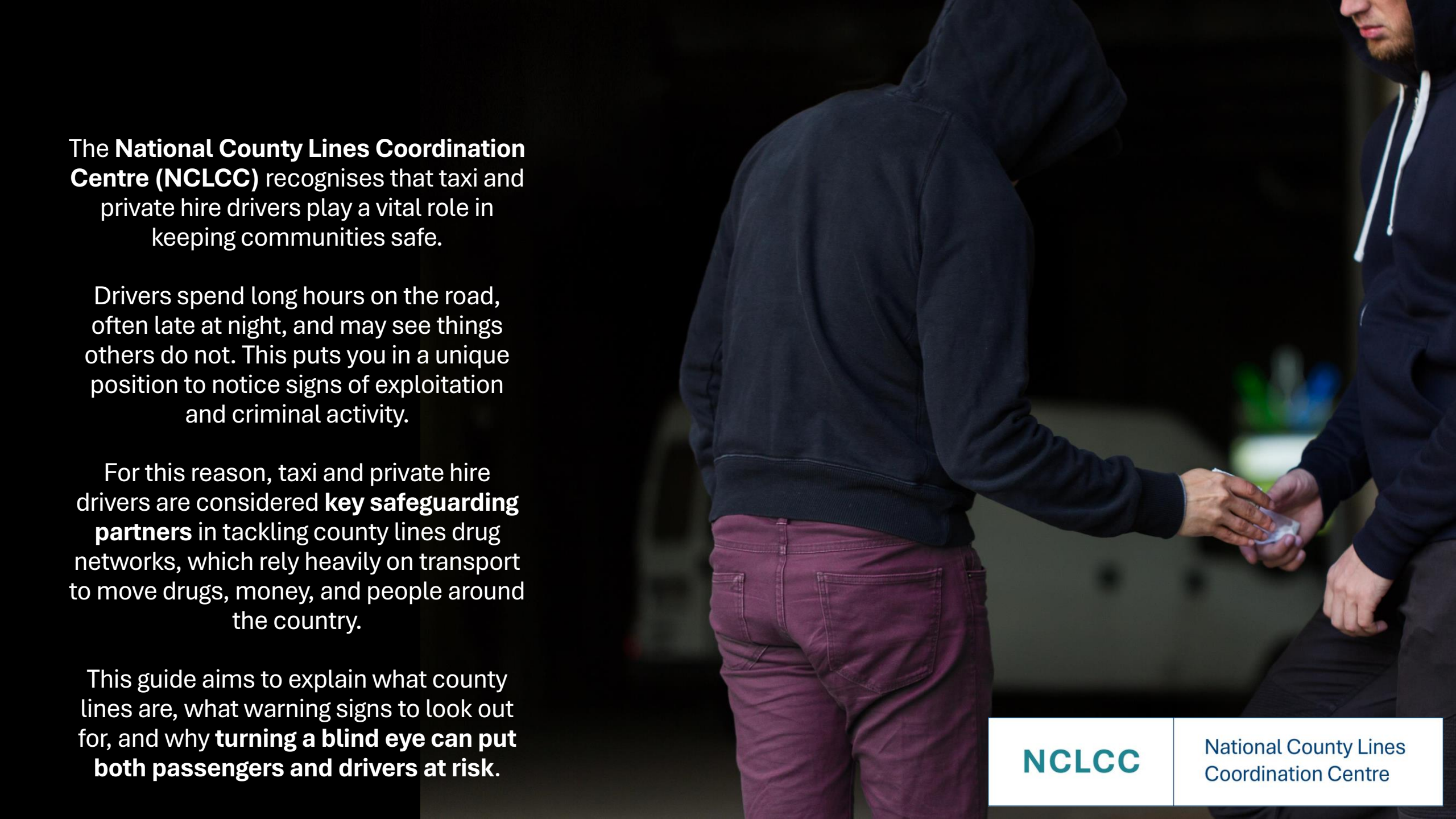
County Lines

Your Role in Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults.



NCLCC

National County Lines Coordination Centre



The **National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC)** recognises that taxi and private hire drivers play a vital role in keeping communities safe.

Drivers spend long hours on the road, often late at night, and may see things others do not. This puts you in a unique position to notice signs of exploitation and criminal activity.

For this reason, taxi and private hire drivers are considered **key safeguarding partners** in tackling county lines drug networks, which rely heavily on transport to move drugs, money, and people around the country.

This guide aims to explain what county lines are, what warning signs to look out for, and why **turning a blind eye can put both passengers and drivers at risk**.

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Why Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles Are Involved

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Travel is a key part of county lines, and it is often where the **risk is highest**. Crime groups regularly use taxis and private hire vehicles because they are discreet, flexible, and readily available.

Passengers may:
Be children or vulnerable adults being controlled by others

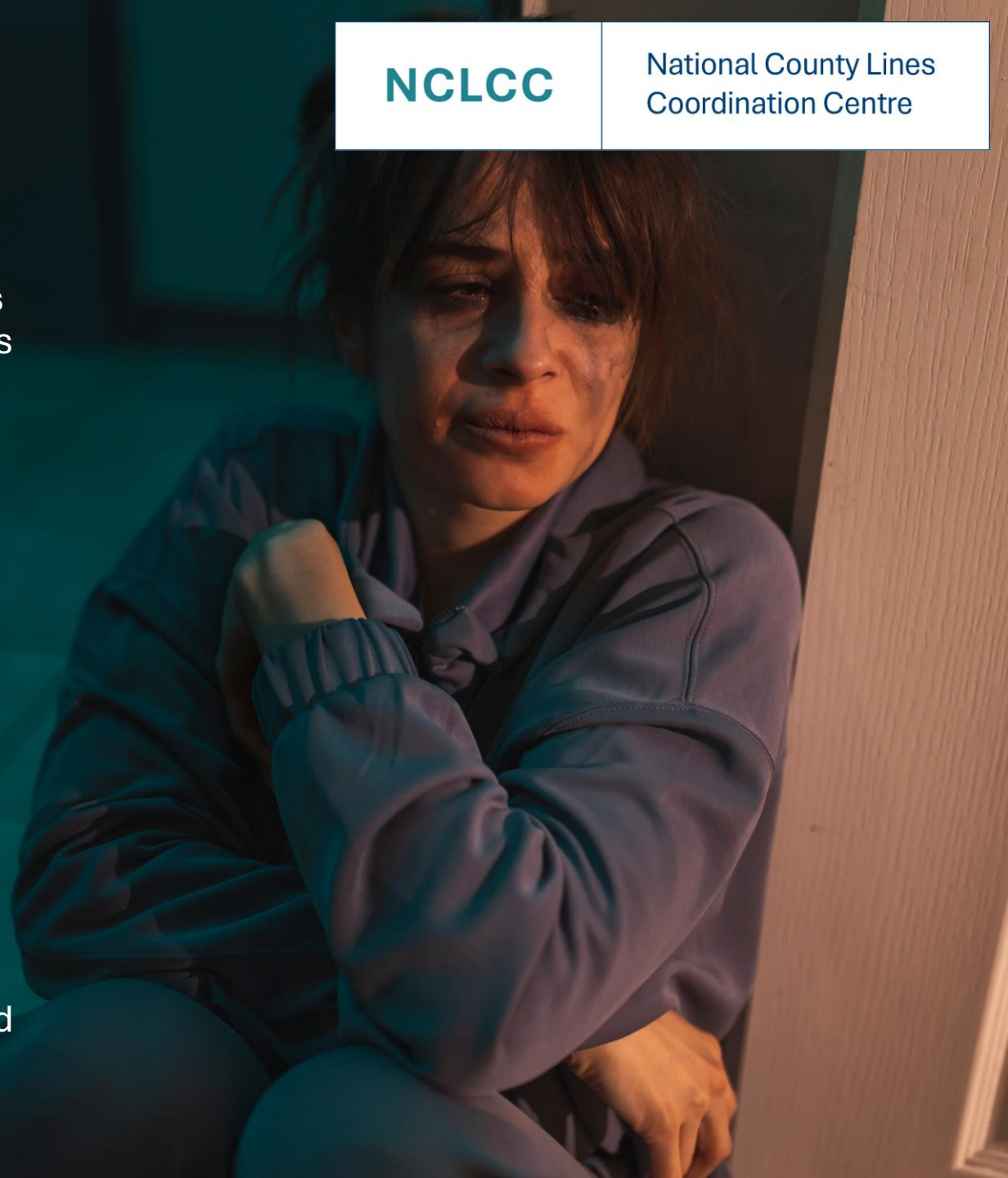
Be fearful, quiet, or unsure of where they are going

Carry drugs, cash, or weapons such as knives

Be asked to deliver packages without knowing what is inside

Be at risk of sexual exploitation, particularly young people

Drivers may also notice signs of **cuckooing**, where a vulnerable person's home is taken over for drug activity. This can include repeated trips to the same address, unfamiliar people coming and going, or passengers behaving nervously when approaching a property.



Warning Signs to Look Out For

You do not need to investigate or challenge passengers. Simply being alert to warning signs can help protect you and others.

Things that should raise concern include:
Requests to avoid police or take unusual routes

Large cash payments or offers of extra money for secrecy

Frequent short journeys or repeated trips to the same address

Passengers constantly making calls or carrying multiple phones

Someone else directing the journey or speaking on the passenger's behalf

Passengers who appear frightened, controlled, or under pressure

Being asked to carry or deliver packages, instead of transporting a passenger.

If something does not feel right, trust your instincts.



Your Responsibilities as a Licensed Driver

Under the **Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards**, safeguarding is a priority.

Licensed drivers are expected to:

Stay alert to signs of exploitation or criminal activity

Use reasonable professional curiosity

Follow local reporting procedures

Act in a way that protects public safety and vulnerable passengers
In short, **doing nothing is not an option**.

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Turning a Blind Eye: The Legal Risks

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Drivers sometimes believe that simply "doing the job" protects them from responsibility. This is not always the case.

Drug Offences:
Under the **Misuse of Drugs Act 1971** and the **Serious Crime Act 2015**, knowingly assisting drug supply is a criminal offence. Continuing a journey when you strongly suspect drugs are involved may amount to involvement.

Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery:
The **Modern Slavery Act 2015** makes it an offence to arrange or facilitate travel if you know, or should know, that someone may be exploited. Consent does not matter. Simply driving someone from A to B can be enough.

Safeguarding Children:
Under the **Children Act 2004**, safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Failing to act on concerns can place children at serious risk.

Financial Consequences:
Under the **Proceeds of Crime Act 2002**, money earned from criminal activity can be seized. Drug supply and trafficking offences trigger strict asset recovery rules, meaning fares and assets can be confiscated.

What You Should Do

Put your **own safety first** at all times

End journeys where you reasonably suspect illegal activity

Report concerns using your local licensing authority, police, or safeguarding routes

You do **not** need proof. **Reasonable suspicion is enough**.

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Reporting concerns protects:

You

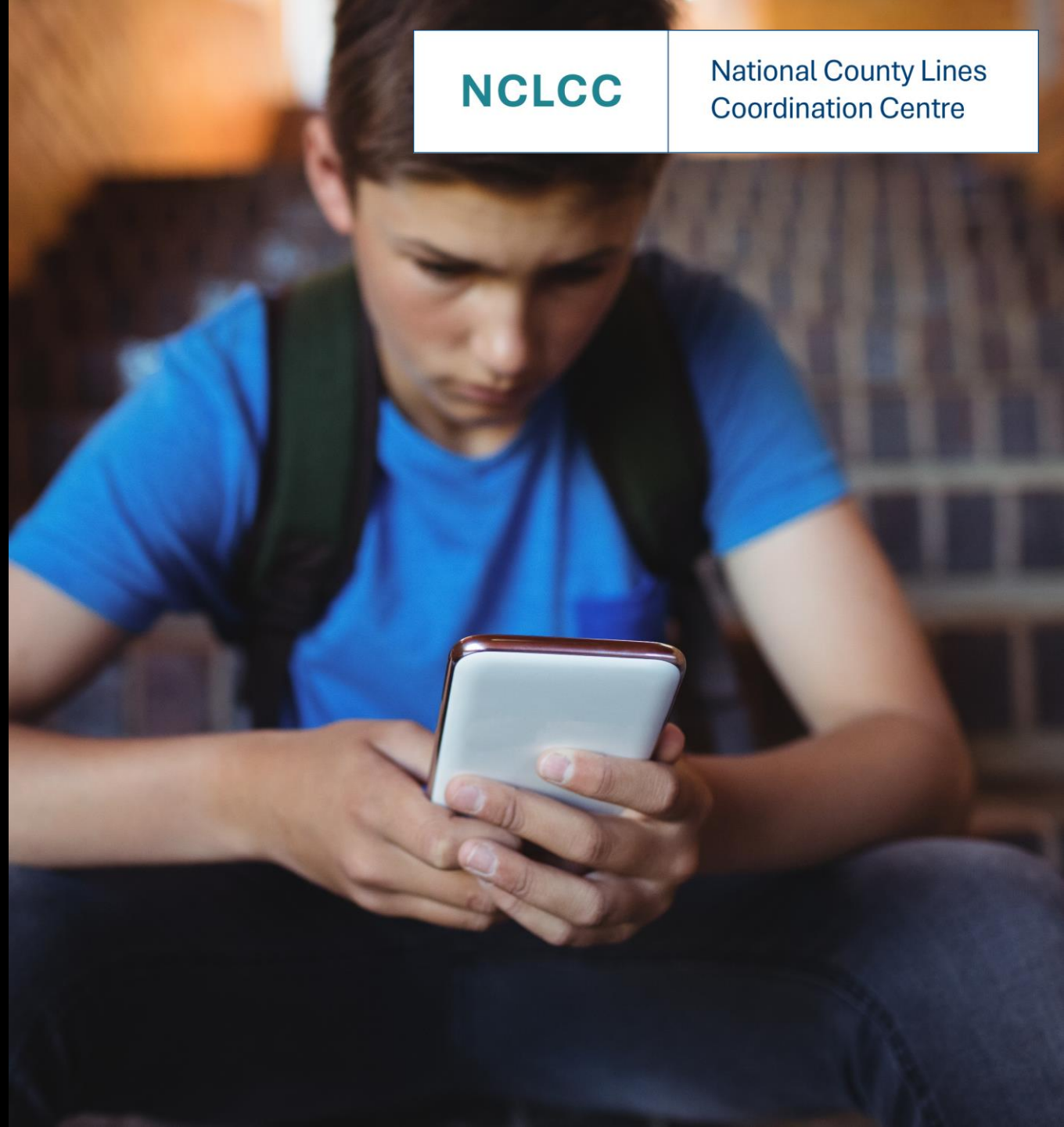
Children and vulnerable adults

Your licence and livelihood

By staying alert and reporting concerns, taxi and private hire drivers play a crucial role in stopping exploitation and serious harm in our communities.

The NCLCC have developed a variety of resources to help professionals understand the County Lines model of drug supply and the indicators of exploitation to be aware of.

You can access useful resources and further information via our Youtube channel here:
National County Lines Coordination Centre - YouTube



Further Resources

#LookCloser To Spot Exploitation | The Children's Society

Criminal exploitation of children | Barnardo’s

Film - signs of exploitation - Ivison Trust

The Orphan (2026) Crime Drama Short Film | MYM

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