

Southport Inquiry

Witness Name: Liam Rice

OCT000002/003

Exhibits: MERP000266/216/115/730

6 Exhibits

Dated: 23 July 2025

THE SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF LIAM RICE

I, Liam Rice, will say as follows: -

INTRODUCTION

1. I am Liam Rice, General Manager of One Call Taxis Ltd. I have worked for One Call Taxis for 5 years and previously I held the same role at Kwik Cars North West Ltd for approximately 9 years and an additional 5 years in other roles at Kwik Cars North West Ltd before it was purchased by One Call Taxis Ltd. All of our drivers are Self-Employed.
2. This witness statement is made to assist the Southport Inquiry (the "Inquiry") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 23rd July 2025.

EVENTS of 22 JULY 2024

3. One Call Taxis does not have the call recording of Alphonse Rudakubana calling to ask us not to send any more taxis for his son. I have asked Yestech (our phone provider) to check the incoming calls for any calls 22nd July 2024 from **DPA** (Alphonse Rudakubana's phone number) and they have told me there was no calls from that number made to One Call so there are no recordings.
4. We would have had no way of knowing if the person calling was ARs father as it is very difficult to verify a person's legitimate relationship to a caller or to verify the age of the original booker. We come across this quite a lot in the taxi industry where jealous partners,

ex-Partners and/or stalkers call to try and find information about others' journeys. For this reason and the Data Protection rules we do not give any information out unless it's from the original booker i.e. same phone number or if we get a UK GDPR request from the police.

5. I remember a message being sent around either verbally or via the internal messaging system to not send any more taxis to the address. This information must have come from driver Steven Evason, who was the driver who accepted the job to pick up AR listed in MERP000216, who was told by Alphonse Rudakubana not to pick AR up. It is common practice for drivers who have driven to a fare and not picked up to report it to the office, so another driver is not sent, so as not to waste two drivers' time. I cannot 100% remember the circumstances as this is not something that is uncommon and our messaging system only stores around a month of messages so I cannot confirm this.
6. One Call Taxis were not aware that the name used to book the taxi was false. The destination was not on the booking due to the call being made through the automated booking service called Flip. Flip is a speech to text system that listens to customers and books taxis for them instead of a human telephonist. If Flip doesn't understand the destination given, the system will book the job 'As Directed', so although it is listed on the transcript, Flip states 'it couldn't hit your drop of location' hit has been mis-transcribed and should be listed as 'hear'. If a client's parents do not want them to get a taxi it could be for a myriad of reasons and would not generally raise any suspicions.

EVENTS of 29 JULY 2024

7. One Call Taxis do not have a policy on reporting crimes, but the reporting of child endangerment and Safeguarding is covered in the Taxi Driver NVQ that drivers must have before becoming a taxi driver and is also covered in Sefton Councils Handbook for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage drivers. This advises any driver suspecting children of coming to harm to call Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub or 999 (*Safeguarding Children and Young People & Sexual Exploitation (L & R 30th March 2015) Page 8 of Handbook Version 32*). I exhibit **LR/01 OCT000002**.
8. Sefton Council (who TD1 is licensed with) do not have a separate policy about reporting crimes with the exception of the Safeguarding Policy listed above. I am not aware of any Industry Guidelines on this topic, but I would assume any driver seeing a crime being committed would contact the police in the same way I would expect a member of the public to do the same

9. As a firm One Call Taxis did not perform an internal review in regard to the dealings with the perpetrator / his father. I now know I was not fully aware of what [TD1] reported to the police about what happened on 29th July 2025.
10. The Inquiry has provided me with [TD1] statement. I exhibit LR/02 - [MERP000266]. What I was told about the incident and what I thought to be true before reading MERP000266 is as follows:
- 12.1 If I remember correctly, I was told he dropped AR off and confronted him over not paying and as he was driving out, he heard 4 or 5 loud bangs that could have been gun shots. I was under the impression that [TD1] did not know what building AR had gone into i.e. unaware it was a child's dance party. Then he accepted a job and realised he should report it to the police. He then called our office to confirm the details then went home and reported it to the police.
- 12.2 One Call Taxis took no disciplinary action as we were not fully aware of the situation. We liaised with [TD1] to arrange counselling and reduce the settle/radio rent he pays so he could ease himself back to work, which he was unable to do so for some time after the incident as he blamed himself for what happened. [TD1] had a bereavement not long after so One Call Taxis continued the close monitoring of him to ensure he was mentally well by checking in with calls or WhatsApp messages.
11. As a company I am unsure what One Call Taxis could have done differently. The original incident 22nd July 2025 is not uncommon, One Call Taxis have people calling up trying to find out information about journeys not relating to them and our policy has always been to not give out this information as the person calling could be a partner, ex-partner, stalker, etc. If One Call Taxis changed this policy, it could lead to others being harmed. If we had a policy for immediate reporting of crimes to the police, then [TD1] may have reported what he had seen to the police immediately and this could have resulted in the police arriving earlier than they did.
12. After reading the attached statements I will be creating a policy for our driver's handbook with a section on the reporting of crimes by our drivers. I will also liaise with Sefton Council to have this added to the driver handbook.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a

document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed: _____

Signature

Dated: 23/07/2025

ANNEX B: EXHIBIT INDEX TEMPLATE

Index to the Witness Statement of Liam Rice

Exhibit No.	Inquiry reference No.	Document description
1	OCT000002	Safeguarding Children and Young People & Sexual Exploitation L & R 30 th March 2015 Page 8
2	OCT000003	Email from Yestech on the results of the search on DPA 22 nd July 2024

3

MERP000115

Transcript of Exhibit LAR3 Recording of AR call to One Call Taxis 12h21m01s on 22 07 2024

4

MERP000216

Witness Statement of Steven Evason (taxi driver - One Call Taxi's - 22nd July 2024)

5

MERP000730

Witness Statement MG11 of Liam Anthony Rice re. One Call taxis - calls relating to AR and 10 Old School Close

6

MERP000266

GRNBK.S29 - MG11 TD1