

July 15, 2010

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO RUMOURS OF ATTEMPTED CHILD ABDUCTIONS

Hertfordshire Constabulary is aware that there is widespread concern about attempted abductions of children in the area.

We would like to reassure you that there have been no reports of attempted abductions recently and these are rumours which have escalated following a small number of unrelated incidents.

Rumours have spread across the eastern side of the county and police would like to allay these concerns by clarifying what has happened.

In **Ware**, two incidents took place on Thursday (July 8).

The first occurred in Watton Road when a girl was approached by a taxi driver, asking if she required a lift. She wisely refused this approach. This incident is being investigated but at this time is not being treated as an attempted abduction.

The second occurred in Viaduct Road when a woman, who was with her child, was subjected to what is believed to be a racially aggravated assault. There was no attempt to abduct the child.

These two incidents have all be are all believed to be isolated and not being linked.

In **Hoddesdon**, police were notified of an 11 year old boy who believed he had been followed by a dark coloured vehicle on Wednesday (July 7) however this has been fully investigated and it was found to have an innocent explanation.

In **Stevenage**, there have been no reported incidents of a man driving around red or maroon coloured vehicle trying to entice children into his car.

Obviously, we would always advise parents to remind their children of advice about strangers, however we would reiterate that you do not need to be unduly concerned.

Hertfordshire Constabulary takes incidents of this nature extremely seriously. If anyone has any concerns they are asked to contact police via the non-emergency number, and ask to speak with their local Neighbourhood Team. If you do wish to report a suspicious incident, please contact immediately.

Advice to children about personal safety:

- Don't speak to strangers
- Stay alert
- Stick to busy and well-lit areas
- Avoid short cuts through quiet, unlit, secluded or wooded areas and alleyways
- Try to keep with friends rather than walk alone
- Make sure someone knows where you are going and tell them when you've arrived
- If you believe someone is following you, go to the nearest busy place, such as a petrol station
- Take a mobile phone with you if you have one



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