

**30<sup>th</sup> January 2004**

**Northgate calls for Anti-social Behaviour Bill to be strengthened**

Northgate Information Solutions today called for the considered use of penalty notices as part of an overall programme of education and enforcement, in a response to the Communities Committee inquiry.

The response calls for the publication of mandatory guidance to encourage best practice in penalty notice enforcement. The guidance should provide that public authorities review their enforcement systems to ensure compliance with discrimination and human rights law and to reassure citizens that they will be used proportionately and equitably.

The response also recommends that public information campaigns accompany any extended use of penalty notices to remind citizens of their rights and responsibilities and prepare them for any changes in law. Northgate would like to see both a duty to inform the public and the publication of mandatory guidance placed on the face of the bill.

**Speaking today, David Meaden, Managing Director of Northgate Public Services, said:**

“Penalty notices must be used proportionately to maintain public confidence. Particular care and attention should be given to the training and resources of those involved in enforcement. They must be adequately equipped to understand how human rights and diversity issues impact on service delivery, and deal with the public in a fair and courteous manner.

“Penalty notices can be a useful tool to deal with minor crime and quality of life issues, but their long-term effectiveness is dependent on fair enforcement.”

-ENDS-

**For further information:**

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**Notes to editors**

1. Northgate is a technology company with a difference. It is committed to high quality public services and understands the public sector. That knowledge is core to its business.
2. Northgate delivers innovative technology solutions to the public sector. Our clear customer focus and collaborative approach has helped us to work with all 52 police authorities and over a quarter of local authorities. Our task is to enhance public sector value through the intelligent use of information technology and to share in the economic and social benefits that this brings.
3. Northgate assists local authorities and the police to promote community well-being by helping them provide citizens with accessible and responsive one-stop services. Northgate is the country’s leading provider of penalty notice systems.