

29th October 2003

Employee welfare should be at the heart of railway safety scheme

In its response to the consultation on establishing a railway safety accreditation scheme, Northgate welcomed the additional powers available to the British Transport Police but called for employee health and safety to be placed at the heart of its operation.

Speaking today, Dave Meaden, managing director of Northgate public sector, said:

“Allowing certain employees of railway companies to have limited police powers, including issuing penalty notices for nuisance behaviour, could provide a useful tool to support the British Transport Police. But any accreditation scheme must ensure that there is sufficient monitoring and supervision to safeguard the welfare of employees at all times.

We recommend that the Chief Constable should have a duty to ensure that employers maintain satisfactory arrangements for carrying out regular health and safety risk assessments, and we would like to see the publication of mandatory guidance on the use of penalty notices to encourage best practice.”

-ENDS-

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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. Its task is to enhance public sector value through intelligent use of people and information technology systems and to share in the economic and social benefits that this brings.
2. Northgate assists local authorities and the police to promote community well-being by helping them provide citizens with accessible and responsive one-stop services. It provides enforcement systems for London's congestion charging scheme and is the country's leading provider of penalty notice systems for the police.
3. Used appropriately, penalty notices can be an effective way of dealing with high-volume low-level crime and nuisance which would otherwise be processed through the courts or where no action is currently undertaken.