

NEWS RELEASE



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Close the anti-social behaviour enforcement gap

Northgate today called for the use of penalty notices as an additional means of tackling minor offences, in a response to the Northern Ireland Office's consultation on anti-social behaviour.

The consultation proposes the use of a range of measures to deal with persistent anti-social behaviour, such as Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs). There is no mechanism to deal with one-off offences that contribute to the fear of crime and a reduced quality of life in local communities.

Penalty notices offer public authorities an additional tool to tackle low-level offending, but they are only as fair as they are fairly enforced.

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

"Used fairly and proportionately, penalty notices can be a useful means of tackling low-level offending. They help to close the enforcement gap and reassure communities that minor one-off offences will be dealt with.

"To secure and maintain public confidence in their use, it is essential that people are prepared for any changes in law. Particular attention should also be paid to the training and resources of enforcement staff.

"The right to live free from environmental and social nuisance should be enjoyed and respected by all. It is crucial that public authorities in Northern Ireland are given the tools they need to deal with anti-social behaviour."

-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.
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 in Britain 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.