



Station Adoption
**Our Community
Volunteers**

Introduction

Arriva UK Trains took over the Northern franchise in April 2016 and it came with a thriving Station Adoption scheme, one that we knew was excellent, but which we believe can do so much more.



Back in 2015 the Department for Transport invited bids for the Northern franchise and they too recognised the huge value station adopters bring to the railway. One of the elements they specified was a Station Adoption scheme, but based on groups from across the communities Northern serves, rather than based on dedicated individuals. Like us, they believe that adoption by groups can achieve more for the community and will be more sustainable for the future.

This guide describes the new scheme. Much of it is the same as it was before the start of the new franchise. But there is now a lot more money available and we want adopters, our community volunteers, to be part of a much larger national family, recognised by customers and communities for the huge contribution they make to their local station.



What is station adoption?

Since the mid 1990's, Britain's railways have been organised in a very different way. Network Rail owns all the track, bridges, tunnels and almost all the stations. Network Rail then leases the stations to train operating companies, like Northern, for the time they hold their franchise, to operate train services.

During that lease period Northern (or whichever train operator it is) is responsible for maintaining the station and for the safety of everything that happens on the station. We need to ask Network Rail for their agreement if we want to make any changes to the station. If someone wanted to put a new building up to open a café for example, we would need their agreement.

Northern currently has 475 stations ranging from major town centre stations such as Bolton and Bradford Interchange to halts such as Reddish South, with its parliamentary service and an annual footfall of just 122 in 2013-14.

Like most other train operators, we don't have the money to do everything we would like to at our stations: we have only two sources of money, the taxpayer and the customer. Having more money to spend on stations either means fares have to go up or more money coming from the taxpayer.

So like many other train operators we have welcomed various groups and individuals who have stepped in to 'adopt' their station and make it better for customers and for the local community.

These 'community volunteers' are vital to help us deliver an attractive, clean, well-managed station that encourages non-users, makes people using the station feel safe and shows existing customers that their train operator cares about their personal comfort and wellbeing. Research also clearly shows that customers want their stations staffed and having volunteers around our stations helps us provide that presence. We know that when local people get involved and active at their station it reduces anti-social behaviour and helps bring the station into the heart of the community it serves.

Who are station adopters?

Stations are often the gateway to local communities, but they are not always as attractive or welcoming as they could be. Groups who want to make sure that first impressions reflect the pride they feel in their community may well want to get involved at their station, groups such as Britain in Bloom. Community organisations like Round Table or Rotary Clubs may want a presence which could help them recruit new members and will make an active contribution to their local community.

It might be people living near the station (or even in the old station buildings) that want to make sure the station doesn't become a local eyesore and that anti-social behaviour is actively discouraged.

Other groups might include the local Community Rail Partnership (CRP) or health organisations who can use activity at the station as part of their therapeutic work with disadvantaged groups or people with disability or mental health issues.

Businesses keen to contribute to the local community as part of their social responsibility agenda might wish to become involved or the local Chamber of Commerce, keen to encourage inward investment and make sure the place where many people will arrive to visit local business makes a favourable impression.

The involvement of schools can introduce the next generation to rail travel. Station adoption could form part of their curriculum in civic studies or horticulture.

Or it could be local horticultural groups, keen to make their town or village that bit more attractive.

There are many reasons people adopt and we welcome them all. The bottom line is local people have pride in their community and they want their station to reflect that pride.





What station adoption does not involve

There are a few things that station adoption does not do:

- it does not replace Northern staff on station where we already have staff working
- it does not replace the requirement for us to keep a station clean and litter free, although adopters may well want to do a periodic litter pick in public areas which helps keep the station looking neat, tidy and welcoming
- it does not replace Northern's own inspection or repair arrangements. We have a contract with Carillion to inspect, clean and repair our stations

Important principles

We will cover safety in more detail later in the document, and you will receive a full safety briefing before any adoption scheme starts, but there are a few really important principles to be aware of:

- station adopters **MUST NEVER** go on the track or in any place where they could distract train crew, be a risk to themselves or a risk to others
- station adopters must never be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when on or around the station undertaking their adoption duties
- station adopters must follow our Code of Conduct and any regulations in our agreement with them
- station adopters will only carry out minor 'construction' in connection with gardening schemes etc, they will not repair station structures and they will not paint station structures (other than those associated with their gardening schemes) except by express agreement with a Station Manager. Possible exceptions might include fencing where this can be done safely and without risk to other station users
- electrical work will never be undertaken by station adopters
- digging will only be permitted where we can be certain there are no buried cables



How do we want to organise our new scheme?

Northern's new Station Adoption scheme is intended for groups. Those groups might come from many different parts of the local community. There are only three things we will be looking for:

1. that the group is based within five miles of at least one station they are adopting
2. if they are looking to adopt more than one station they are all either on a line of route or are close to each other
3. the group is really committed to station adoption and will be sustained throughout our franchise

Recruiting the groups

We will be encouraging adoption at every one of our stations and we will run an active recruitment campaign to encourage local people to take up the challenge. We hope that Northern's previous station adoption groups and station friends will continue to adopt in the new scheme. We also hope that many of Northern's former 'Level 1' adopters will either join an existing station adoption group or will consider forming a new one.

If you want to set up a group think about all the ways you can contact people in your area: local papers including 'freesheets', local radio including any community radio stations in your area and notice boards in libraries and pubs: many supermarkets provide 'community notice boards' that are another way of letting people know how to get in touch with your group. Do check with us first whether the station you want to adopt is already adopted, we will be happy to put you in touch with existing groups.

Where there is a Community Rail Partnership (CRP) we will be encouraging the CRP to facilitate the station adoption groups and look for new ones where a station is not adopted. We will be encouraging CRPs to work towards a 'whole line' approach to improvement, ideally involving every station on a particular line of route. The CRP should be able to help you recruit people to the station adoption group.

We will consider alternative approaches to facilitating station adopters on non-CRP lines and will be looking at the best way forward for each station or group of stations.

ACoRP's Station Adoption Guide provides more practical advice and checklists if you are thinking of starting a group. ACoRP's contact details are at the end of this leaflet.



How adopters will help us

We want to encourage new uses for stations and station adopters can help identify possible opportunities and play an active role in making them happen. We have identified funding for the development of Community Hubs, station buildings that provide a number of alternative uses by and for the local community. The objective is to get the station to be an active part of the community.

Many adopters want to concentrate on gardening, harking back to the days when station gardens were matters of huge local pride. We will look for adopters to produce a simple annual plan against which we can provide resources: planters, compost, etc. It may simply be a planting plan, but it might be a bit more, if you have other things in mind. The plan need only be a few lines on the form we provide, but it does show a bit of forethought.

We will require sight of the group's constitution (there is a suitable model in ACoRP's Station Adoption Guidelines) and we will require the group to adhere to the Code of Conduct at the end of this leaflet.

We will ensure that the group and its activities are covered by our insurance at all times when they are on or about the station. There is more on insurance later in this leaflet.

We will have a written agreement with the group. It will include a plan of the station, showing the areas in which the station adopters may operate. It will also highlight any specific risks such as cables and other underground services and overhead lines, and will specify what the group is allowed to do/tools to be used etc.

Generally speaking, we would only expect adopters to be in areas that are open to the public, but by exception there may be areas of fallow ground, which would not generally be used by the public but which station adopters could improve. Such areas are usually outside the station lease and we will work with Network Rail if the situation arises.

Over the course of your station adoption you will meet several Northern staff. We are encouraging our senior team to come out and meet you and see what a great difference you are making. Your Regional Community and Sustainability Manager (RCSM) will also be a regular visitor, there to provide help and advice and provide monetary support for your activities.

Where there are specific local issues such as siting of poster boards and general information we will arrange for the



Station Manager to visit. We recognise that station adopters are critical friends of the railway industry and we want you to feedback all the positives and negatives to us: it's the only way we can make our stations better.

For some stations an annual review by the RCSM or Station Manager with the group will be desirable to decide what medium-size work needs to be done for the coming year. For example, cutting back vegetation that is too big for hand-held battery trimmers and which needs help from us.

We hope station adopters will form links with the British Transport Police and the local police force in order to provide them with intelligence on anti-social and criminal behaviour on or around the railway.

We have set up a reporting system with our facilities management partners, Carillion, for anyone to report issues at stations. Our station adopters should report faults to our Customer Experience Centre or they can use our fault reporting app. We will feedback on faults to a nominated contact in the group.

We will provide passes to attend meetings, station adopters' conferences etc. We may also provide passes between stations where this is appropriate. Our policy on passes gives full details.

We will ask you to keep a log of the hours you put in. This helps us show just how big a commitment our community volunteers give.

We want you to enjoy station adoption. It can be huge fun and very rewarding. By celebrating your successes, it will raise your profile and may attract new people to station adoption, either at your station or as part of another group. We will help you to promote your schemes locally: we can help you draft press releases and give you some pointers on other things you might think about such as social media.



Safety arrangements – how it works

We will arrange a safety briefing for every group before they start work. When new members join the group they must be briefed before they start work. If the group leader is less than confident about giving a safety briefing, we will arrange for one of our colleagues to come and provide a briefing.

We will require a list of the volunteers who may be on the station along with a nominated lead and nominated deputy. We will provide a written safety brief for every adopter in the form of a Z-card. This will have key contact numbers and will be personal to them. It should be kept with you whenever you are working on the station so that a member of railway staff or the police can see you are authorised to be working at the station.

We will provide a high-viz tabard for all members of the group. The tabards will be branded and only these tabards may be worn as they provide an easy visual identification to railway staff.

We will ask station adoption groups to undertake a simple risk assessment for your particular station. We ask you always to err on the side of caution. If you need more specific training for your station, we would be delighted to discuss what is required.

If you are working at a staffed station you must sign in at the ticket office.

More detailed information on safety appears in our Safety Briefing Document.

Just one more thing: if you are planning to work with children or vulnerable people it is really important you provide a comprehensive method statement describing how you will control the work so as to make sure people stay safe at all times.

There are risks to everybody at stations, with fast moving trains or with the tools you use for gardening for example, you must think about all the risks we take for granted as adults and think about whether a child or someone vulnerable in other ways would see the risk in the same way. If you want to take photos of the children or vulnerable people involved in your work you must seek permission from their parents or guardians, whatever the use for the photos you have in mind.





Friends of stations/station adopters Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct has been developed by ACoRP. We require all Station Adopters to comply with it.

- comply with all terms and conditions for Station Adoption/Station Friends specified by their Train Operating Company (TOC)
- ensure that the correct permission is sought from the TOC before undertaking any work at a station
- ensure that the group operates within the guidelines set out in ACoRP's Station Adoption Guide
- ensure that no member of the group acts in such a manner as to bring the Station Adoption movement into disrepute. Remember that the behaviour of the group affects not only its own standing within the local community but also the reputation of every station adoption group within the rail industry
- ensure that any issues regarding the TOC are handled internally within the rail industry and not through the media
- ensure that the group is open to everyone regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, by being a gay man or lesbian [sexual orientation] or religious belief or by conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justifiable within the context of the Equal Opportunities Act
- ensure that at no time are volunteers working at the station under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- ensure that no volunteer goes on the track or lineside under any circumstances

ACoRP Membership

ACoRP – the Association of Community Rail Partnerships – is the national federation of voluntary station groups. You do not have to be a member of ACoRP to be involved with station adoption, however, by joining ACoRP you will receive:

- access to a national network of station friends and community rail groups
- regular information
- copies of specialist toolkits
- invited to conferences and seminars and
- access to a range of funding sources. To find out more visit www.acorp.uk.com



Insurance

Provided you are working within the area to which the general public has access, and you are part of an approved station adoption scheme, working in accordance with our agreement and Code of Conduct, you are covered by Northern's insurance arrangements.

If as part of your scheme, you are working on Network Rail land, they may be able to arrange for you to be included in their policy, but you must agree this with Network Rail first.

It is a good idea to have your own insurance policy (if your group are also working at other locations in your town for example). However, insurance is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, therefore Northern employees are not able to give advice on insurance over and above the fact that it's a good idea. However, ACoRP has provided details of its broker who can provide this advice:

Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers Ltd (AJG) specialises in 'community' type insurance. They have been fully briefed in what station adoption groups do and will be happy to give you a quote for your group. Contact:

Megan Sones
Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers Ltd
2nd Floor
Devonshire House
Riverside Road
Pottington Business Park
Barnstaple Devon EX31 1EY
Tel: 01271 345005
Email: megan_sones@AJG.com

Money

Station Adoption is voluntary, but we don't want you to be out of pocket. The annual plan helps us all agree how much you will spend and your RSCM will explain the arrangements for reclaiming that expenditure from Northern. We will not pay for travel costs to or from the station, nor will we pay for meals or refreshments. If you are attending one of our station adoption conferences, we will provide a pass for that and if your group is adopting a number of stations we may provide a number of limited passes to enable you to get between the stations. Full details will be published in our policy on passes.

What's in it for you?

We hope that the principal reason people become one of our Community Volunteers is because they care about their local community. There may be many reasons why people want to volunteer at their local station, but behind them all is pride in their local community.

We recognise the huge contribution our Community Volunteers make, and we are looking at ways we can show that recognition. We will publish full details when they are finalised.





Easy ways you can help us

We are always looking for new ways to make it easy for customers and our Community Volunteers to submit feedback that will help make our railway even more safe, comfortable and attractive. We have launched an app that you can use to report any faults directly to our Customer Experience Centre. The app keeps you up to date with what we are doing and to address any issues raised.

The app can be used to give feedback about maintenance, cleanliness, presentation, buying tickets, customer information or safety and security.

You can download the app now to your Android or iPhone by visiting the app store on your phone and search 'Northern', whether it's for the next time you travel with Northern, or the first time you volunteer at one of our stations.

If that doesn't work for you there are other ways to contact us:

- if the matter is urgent use the platform Help Point to speak to staff at our Customer Experience Centre

- you can email us at enquiries@northernrailway.co.uk
- you can call us, 24/7 (except Christmas Day and Boxing Day) on **0800 200 60 60**
- if you spot weeds or litter on or near the line, please call the Network Rail National Help Line on **03457 484950**
- if you think a crime is being committed, do not intervene and call the British Transport Police on **0800 40 50 40**
- if you witness a non-emergency incident you can now text the British Transport Police (BTP) on **61016**. You may wish to consider saving the BTP text service number to your phone. To find out more about this service you can visit www.btp.police.uk



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