

# Northern blows whistle on ticketless travel

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Northern is blowing the whistle on ticketless travel. The rail operator is reminding all customers of the need to buy tickets for travel before they board trains.

Millions have been spent on improvements to the Northern network over the past 12 months, meaning those returning to the railway following the coronavirus pandemic will find they have more options for ticket purchases than ever before.

It has never been easier to buy a ticket before travel. Northern has significantly improved its website and mobile app to give customers more options and more than 600 new ticket machines have been installed across the network.

Jason Wade, Head of Retail Operations at Northern said: "We've worked hard while people have been away to make improvements to our network. As well as giving our customers better ways to buy tickets, we've also introduced more new trains, completed the refurbishment of our older trains and delivered enhancements at stations.

"We've made a big difference with the improvements we've delivered and now we need our customers to play their part by following the rules on buying tickets."

Where facilities are provided to buy a ticket before boarding a service, customers are required by law to do so. Failure to buy a ticket prior to boarding, from stations where facilities are available, will mean customers will, at best, only be able to purchase full-price tickets on-board. In many cases though, customers who don't buy tickets before travel could face being issued with a penalty fare.

The on-the-spot penalties, which are either £20 or double the cost of a single fare for the journey taken (whichever is the greater), are being enforced on-board trains and at destination stations by Northern's authorised collectors.

Jason added: "Our digital platforms - mobile app and website - have been transformed in recent months and, together with our ticket machines, provide ample opportunity for our customers to be certain they are in possession of the correct tickets, with most providing the added benefit that passengers do not have to queue on the day of travel.

"Penalty fares and fines are designed to tackle the minority of rail users who persist in refusing to buy their tickets before boarding a train. They don't exist to criminalise our customers and we understand there will still be some circumstances in which customers are unable to buy tickets. In these cases, our authorised collectors are able to use their discretion to ensure no-one faces unfair penalties."

*Photo credit: Northern*