

# Northern sends message to fare evaders on National Poetry Day

October 6, 2022



Fare dodgers often provoke some choice words, however train operator **Northern** has taken the opportunity today, on National Poetry Day, to issue a more elegant prose aimed at making these tricky characters think twice before they chance their luck.

BAFTA-winning actor and writer Phil Mealey, best known for his work on *The Royle Family*, *Early Doors* and *Sunshine*, has released a poem called *The Dodger*. It follows the trials and tribulations of a shady fare-shirker as they duck and dive across the network:

The Dodger, by Phil Mealey

*I am a dodgy geezer  
Dodging all my rail fares  
Dodging the conductors  
And their suspicious stares*

*Dodging the collectors*

*When they come walking through  
Dodging into the next carriage  
Or even dodging in the loo*

*But these days of being a dodger  
Aren't like dodging days gone by  
I see it's others who must pay  
For every time I don't comply*

*So now my dodging days are over  
It's not artful it's a crime  
And it doesn't pay to be dodger  
When you've got a twenty pound fine!*

According to research from the [Rail Delivery Group \(RDG\)](#), it is estimated that around £240 million a year is lost through fare evasion on the country's railways. With everyone feeling the pinch, that's a figure none of us can turn a blind eye to.

The Penalty Fare Regulations allow TOCs to issue a charge of £20, or twice the full applicable single fare to the next station at which the train calls, whichever is the greater (if they've had the opportunity to buy a ticket and have passed signs stating the consequences of not having a valid ticket). Fare evaders can also be prosecuted under the provisions of the Regulation of Railways Act 1889 and the Railway Byelaws made pursuant to the Transport Act 2000. With this lost revenue boosting costs for fare paying passengers, it is key that our TOCs are on top of this pricy problem. As the country's second largest operator, with nearly 2,000 services a day across the north of England covering 550 stations, Northern is no slouch when it comes to challenging this costly issue.

Mark Powles, customer and commercial director at Northern, said: "Phil's poem has perfectly captured the effort to which some people will go to avoid buying a ticket. Our conductors and revenue protection teams encounter these - as Phil would call - 'dodgy geezers' on a daily basis and their belief that they have the right to travel for free when those around them have paid is unacceptable.

"Northern is investing in the largest network of digital ticket infrastructure of any train operator in the country - making it easier than ever for customers to buy a ticket via our app, website or one of more than 600 ticket machines across the network. There is no excuse."

Mealey, whose latest work *Making A Murderer: The Musical* has just premiered at this year's Edinburgh Fringe to rave reviews, added: "I've spotted my fair share of 'dodgy geezers' on the train. Never thought I'd be writing a poem about them!"

*Photo credit: Northern*