

Northern trial that ensure fare-dodger defence falls flat with ticket inspectors

March 21, 2023



Northern has begun a trial with a company called BattPoint to provide power packs at stations for those travelling without their phone charger or power cable.

It comes as the train operator is urging customers using digital tickets on their services to ensure they always have sufficient battery power to present their ticket for inspection – or face a £100 penalty fare.

“I’ve got a ticket but my phone has died” is an increasingly popular excuse given by those unable to satisfy ticket checks.

Unable to distinguish between genuine customers caught ‘power short’ and those deliberately attempting to fare-evade, the train operator’s conductors and revenue officers have no option but to issue the national penalty fare, which has recently increased to £100.

However, in the last 12 months, Northern has installed more than 11,800 plugs and 17,200 USB sockets

on-board their trains – providing ample opportunity for customers to charge their devices.

In regards to the latest initiative with BattPoint, they cost 99p for the first ten minutes or £3.99 for the day and come with Micro USB, Type-c and iOS adapters – making them suitable for a range of devices including those by Apple and Samsung, as well as games consoles like Nintendo Switch.

The whole process is contactless and no app download is required. For more information, visit: <https://battpoint.co.uk>

Mark Powles, commercial and customer director at Northern, said: “Customers not only have a duty to buy a ticket before they board one of our trains – but also to be able to present it for inspection.

“We were fascinated by research from BattPoint which suggests 50% of smartphone and tablet users run out of battery at least once a day and 96% carrying no form of backup power with them.

“Through this trial – and the roll-out of out of nearly 30,000 plugs and USB sockets on our trains – we’re doing our bit to make sure no-one finds themselves ‘out of juice’ when they hear the words ‘tickets please’.”

Northern has invested in the largest network of digital ticket infrastructure of any train operator in the country, making it easier than ever to buy a ticket via their app, website or one of more than 600 ticket machines across the network.

Fare evaders are prosecuted under the provisions of the Regulation of Railways Act 1889 and the Railway Byelaws made pursuant to the Transport Act 2000.

Photo credit: Northern