

Who's a good boy? Meet Whistle the Dog, Northern's newest recruit

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Many people have trouble getting their pooch to fetch or roll over, but Northern have set their newest recruit, Whistle, a set of rather more important tasks!

The newest member of the Northern team, introduced this half term, has been challenged to encourage more people to travel by rail, to spread important educational and safety messages and to promote multiple future careers in the rail industry.

Northern has been running an internal colleague competition to design a new recognisable and approachable character to act as an icon for the largest rail operator in the north.

After months of fierce drawing and sketching, Whistle the Dog has been selected by Northern's customer panel as the rail operator's brand-new mascot.

Sheffield-based train driver Andrew Lupton and his daughter Penny came up with Whistle and their creation proved extremely popular, with a total of 722 votes. Their initial sketch has been turned into a digital cartoon supporting colleagues, customers and communities as they go do their thing.



Penny Lupton, and her winning design

Penny Lupton from Eccleshall Primary said: “My Dad is always telling me about the railway and trains. He loves his job but has told me about lots of other things you can do on the railway, not just driving.

“He has also told me about how dangerous it can be, and I don’t want anyone to get hurt.

“I had so much fun coming up with Whistle, he is really cute, and I was so excited to win the competition and see him become a real character.”

Whistle will be getting to work this week and will feature on promotional children’s tickets that will be given out on trains and at stations. The fun-based ticket features a QR code that directs young rail users to a dedicated page on Northern’s website, [available here](#).

The page features information about Whistle the Dog and staying safe on the railway, as well as fun children’s activities such as colouring sheets and spot the difference. He’ll also be getting out and about in the future, promoting train travel and helping to keep customers and railway neighbours safe and sound.

Northern recently visited Ecclesall Primary School in Sheffield to say thank you to Penny and showcase to the school her mascot creation.

Penny helped to explain Whistle the Dog’s background to the children, as well as sharing key safety

messages, some dos and don'ts when travelling – including Whistle the Dog's pet peeve of feet on seats.

During the visit, Penny and her school friends were given some Whistle the Dog branded colouring sheets, pencils, rulers and erasers, and Penny also received a framed copy of her original drawing next to the final digital version.