



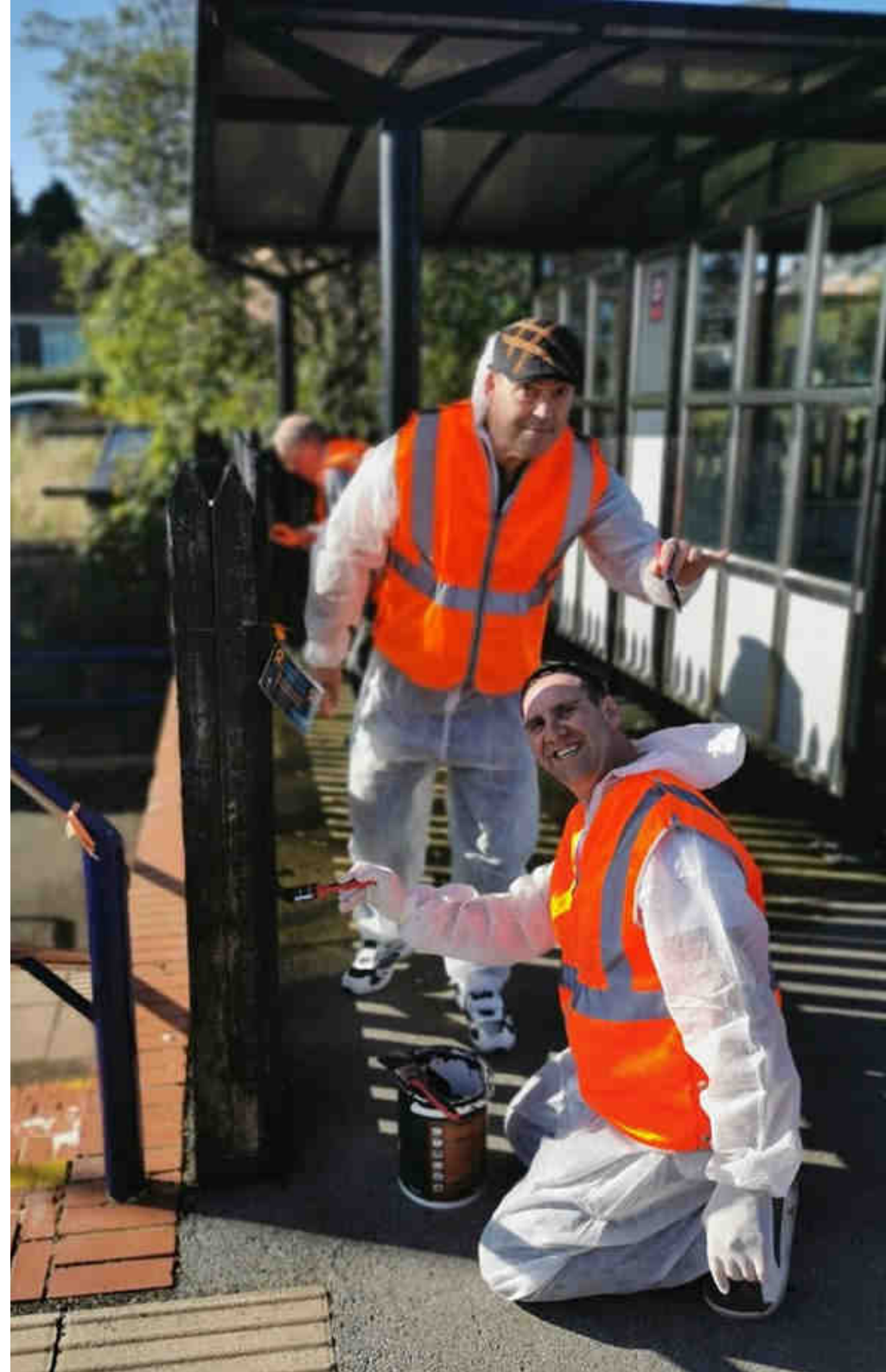
# NORTHERN

## Station Adoption - A Guide for Volunteers

# Introduction

**Welcome to our Station Adoption Guide, it contains everything you need to know about station adoption at Northern.**

Since its introduction, our Station Adoption scheme has gone from strength to strength, welcoming new groups and volunteers and making a bigger impact than we ever anticipated. This is all thanks to volunteer groups across the network who work tirelessly to make station environments more welcoming, build stronger links with local communities and create a sense of ownership and inclusion with their work.



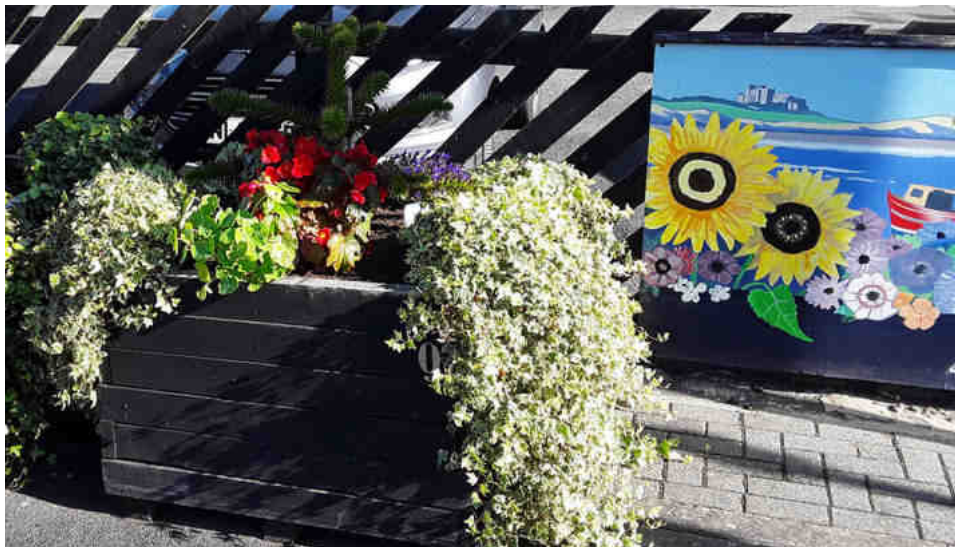
## What is station adoption?

Northern currently manage 479 stations ranging from major city and town centre stations to rural and coastal stations.

While we look after these stations we also welcome groups who want to 'adopt' their local station to make it a more welcoming place for customer and help to make it the heart of their community.

Community volunteers are vital to help us deliver a safe and welcoming environment for our customers. Groups are key to promoting social inclusion and sustainable travel, champion local improvements and bringing stations back to life. Research clearly shows having local communities involved and active at their local station reduces anti social behaviour and helps bring the station into the heart of the community it serves.

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 wish to create partnerships with local schools, youth groups and local charities to help recruit new members.



It might be people living near the station 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 and repair arrangements. However, we do encourage groups to use the fault reporting procedure, so our Facilities Management Team can attend to the issue.

### 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

## Three important points to consider for new Station Adoption Groups:

1. the group is based close to the station they are adopting
2. the group is really committed to station adoption and is representative of the communities they serve
3. the group is inclusive, encouraging new membership and links with other community groups/partnerships to support a sustainable future



## Recruiting the groups

We encourage adoption at every one of our stations, in some cases groups will be set up specifically for adoption or you might be an existing community group wanting to strengthen links.

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 encourage them to work with station adoption groups on their route and to support the establishment of new groups. On lines where there is no CRP we still actively encourage station adoption.





## How adopters can help us

We encourage new uses for stations and station adopters can help identify possible opportunities and play an active role in making them happen. The objective is to get the station to be an active part of the community.

Some adopters may wish to concentrate on gardening however, station adoption is increasingly much more than this. More and more stations are being used for:

- Growing vegetables, fruits and herbs, promoting access to nutritious and locally grown food
- Supporting bio-diversity by creating bug hotels and bird boxes
- Creating artwork to enhance surroundings
- Hosting activities that support inclusion and help tackle loneliness and isolation

These are just a number of ways groups are working to make the station a community focus

We ask adopters to produce a simple annual plan to include activities or projects for the coming year. In addition, we also look for annual feedback to show what the group have achieved over the previous year. Details of any additional support and volunteer hours will be included in the plan to enable us to measure the true value of community rail. A project closing report form will also be available to capture details of projects which have been funded.

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 guide.

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 encourage station adopters to 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.

Our station adopters should report faults to our faults helpdesk. We will feedback on faults to a nominated contact in the group.

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.



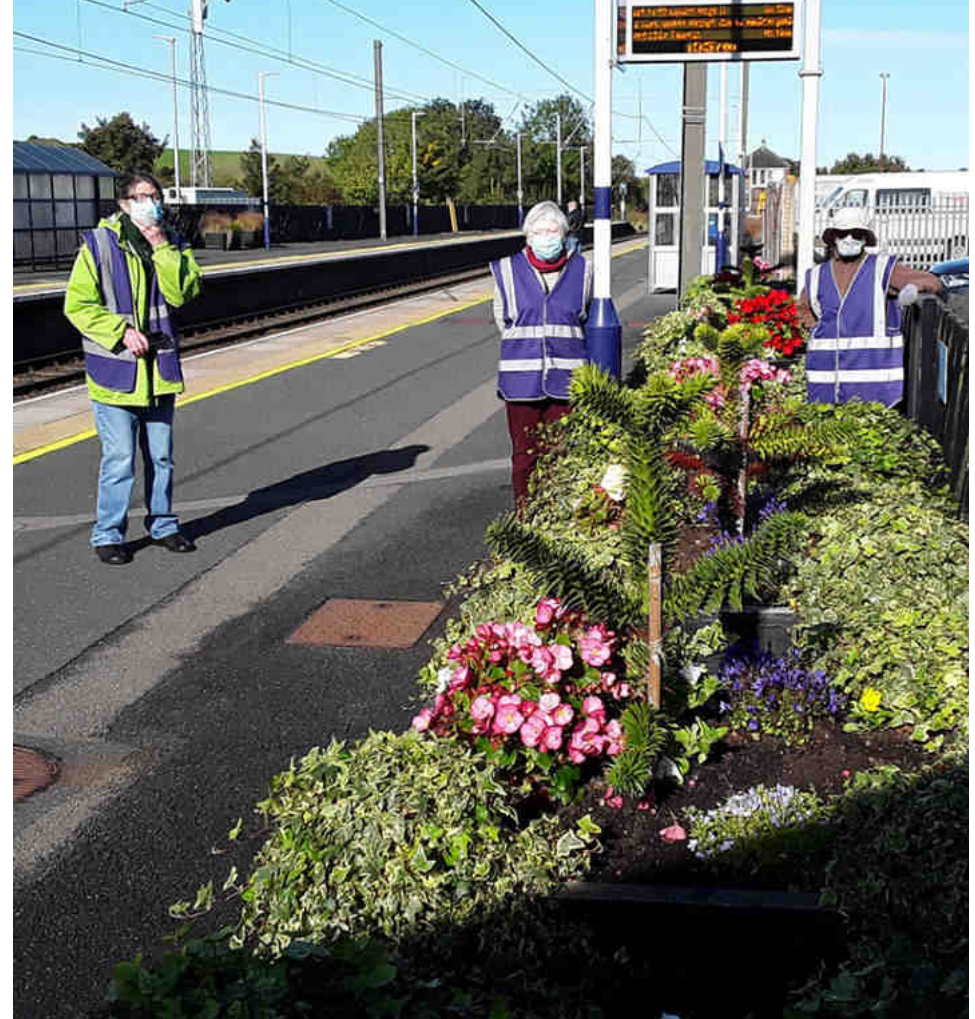


## Friends of stations/station adopters Code of Conduct



This Code of Conduct has been developed by Community Rail Network (CRN). We require all Station Adopters to comply with it.

- Appropriate permission must be obtained from the train operator (and/or Network Rail where relevant) before undertaking any work at a station, and you must only work in areas where you have been given permission to do so (you will be provided with a map which identifies areas which you are able to work)
- Comply with all terms and conditions for station groups specified by your train operator (and/or Network Rail where relevant), including:
  - signing in and out at the station, logging every visit;
  - wearing specified high-vis gear and using suitable tools and equipment;
  - never interfering with railway equipment;
  - reporting any incidents using the specified procedures;
  - ensuring no volunteers/group members ever work under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
  - ensuring no volunteers/group members go on the track or lineside under any circumstances.
- Never put yourself or anyone else in a situation that poses personal risk;
- Ensure that no member of the group acts in a manner that may bring your group or the community rail movement into disrepute;
- Any issues regarding the train operator or Network Rail must be raised directly and handled internally within the rail industry;
- Ensure your group is open to everyone regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, or religious belief, and operates in line with the Equal Opportunities Act;
- All group members and volunteers should adhere to the inclusive, positive behaviours set out in the Women in Community Rail code of conduct;
- Use and draw on the guidelines in Community Rail Network's station adoption guide.



### Community Rail Network Membership

Community Rail Network is the national federation of voluntary station groups. You do not have to be a member of Community Rail Network to be involved with station adoption, however, by joining Community Rail Network 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 [communityrail.org.uk](https://communityrail.org.uk)



## 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 and Community Rail Network employees are not able to give advice on insurance over and above the fact that it's a good idea.

Before taking out any insurance policy for community rail activity, always speak to an independent broker or qualified professional to seek appropriate advice.

For more information, see Community Rail Network's guide to insurance at [communityrail.org.uk/resources-ideas/reports-resources-tools/](https://communityrail.org.uk/resources-ideas/reports-resources-tools/)

## 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.

As a Station Adoption group you have access to funding to carry out projects at your adopted station, we do however encourage you to seek match funding where possible.

Depending on the size of your group, we will provide a number of Northern passes to help with travel to Northern events.





## Easy ways you can help us

We encourage volunteers to submit feedback that will help make our railway even more safe, comfortable and attractive.

Feedback could be about maintenance, cleanliness, presentation, buying tickets, customer information or safety and security:

- you can email us at [enquiries@northernrailway.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@northernrailway.co.uk)
- you can call us 24/7 (on days when trains are running) 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 11 41 41**
- 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](http://www.btp.police.uk)

You can report faults on train or at a station via the following methods:

- email - [faults@northernrailway.co.uk](mailto:faults@northernrailway.co.uk)
- Northern App - [fault reporting](#)
- [northernrailway.co.uk/train-or-station-fault](http://northernrailway.co.uk/train-or-station-fault)





