

Social Media Policy



Our Social Media Policy:

About Us:

At Northern we strive to provide the highest level of customer service. We recognise that social media has become a vital communication's channel. Many of our customers now find it is the easiest and most convenient way to communicate with us. We encourage our customers wholeheartedly to sign up to our Social Media feeds and use them to post comments or to initiate conversations with us.

This policy outlines our approach towards social media and how we use it to ensure you are kept informed and your needs are met. We use Facebook and Twitter to engage with our customers, to provide information and updates on journeys and services and help you to stay on track with the very latest news. We are also on Instagram and YouTube if you're looking for hidden gems in the north of England or travel inspiration around our network

We have a small but dedicated in house social media team: ^LM, ^VR, ^TW and ^JB. During busy times, members of our communications team may also assist with responses. Our Northern Offers page is managed by our marketing team. We are available to help with comments, queries and suggestions you may have on both Facebook and Twitter. Below we outline our policies for Twitter and Facebook. We review these policies as part of an ongoing process, so please check this page periodically to make sure you are aware of any changes.

What our social media team offers

- Live travel information, including, but not limited to, updates regarding significant incidents that may affect your journey on our network.
- Updates of any additional services/stops we may operate due to large events happening on our network.
- We'll provide information on offers, competitions, destination guides, company updates, quizzes and news on what's going on around the Northern network
- We will broadcast information about projects and special events that are happening at stations, to keep you informed
- News and information related to transport and travel across our network and the wider national network, safety messages, videos on YouTube, links to more information and transport-related online tools
- You can also follow @NRE_Northern which is managed by National Rail Enquiries. It provides rail travel news and advice about our services 24/7.
- Due to the number of services we operate, we are unable to broadcast information on all individual train delays. We aim to provide information on significant service disruption and line blockages that require alternative transport arrangements

Our comment policy

We encourage honest, polite and respectful conversations via our social media channels.

We are even happy to chat and help with non-Northern related subjects within reason! However please be mindful that during times of disruption, the provision of customer information to those affected takes priority.

We aim to respond to all tweets and Facebook messages within 30 minutes of receipt during the hours our account is staffed – between 6am and 10pm.

We understand that you can get frustrated when things go wrong. However, we are human beings behind our Social Media profiles, so we do ask that you don't write or post anything discriminatory, racist, offensive, abusive, obscene inflammatory or unlawful.

We also ask that you don't spam ourselves or others - or deliberately disrupt a conversation. We won't tolerate this type of engagement, and the majority of our followers don't want to read inappropriate comments.

We will respond to:

- Clear questions about our current routes/timetables
- Clear questions regarding service alterations
- General enquiries

- Reports about our trains/stations (faults, cleanliness, heating etc.)

We will not respond to

- Vague/general statements
- Insults
- Repetitive aggression
- Inappropriate comments
- Repetitive questioning by an individual once the original question has been replied to
- An account which is believed to belong to a person using multiple accounts to reiterate a message
- Hoax reports relating to your personal safety or the safety of others.
- Open advocacy of fare evasion. We take fare evasion seriously and will report any person who encourages it.

- We won't respond to comments that break these rules or include swearing. Any users that are found to break these rules may be blocked from contacting us and reported to the relevant social media channel. The social media team is here because we want to help you, we just ask that our team is treated with respect.

- Management of our follower base is entirely at the discretion of Northern. If an account is blocked or muted we cannot discuss the reasons for this over social media. The account holder will need to contact the Customer Experience Centre if they would like any further clarity in the decision.

While acted upon and responded to, complaints via social media are not officially logged. If you would like to make a formal complaint please contact our Customer Experience Centre on 0800 200 6060 or complaints@northernrailway.co.uk

The social media team does not work within the Customer Experience Centre and has no access or authorisation to process refunds or authorise delay repay applications. We are unable to provide updates on cases being handled by our Customer Experience Centre, register formal complaints or discuss private matters over social media. However, where possible, we will help to progress a customer service case.

Some questions will require us to consult other departments, if this occurs we will let you know, but it will take us longer to provide a full response, so please bear with us.

When we are uncertain about a particular issue, we may link in contact third parties who may be able to provide you with more information e.g. British Transport Police or Network Rail.

If you need a detailed response or explanation that can't easily be addressed on social media, or if your enquiry doesn't relate to train running information or general issues, we may need to direct you somewhere else. Please don't be offended by this, we just want to make sure you get an appropriate response to your enquiry.

Although we aim to answer every question individually, during times of major service disruption we may need to go into our own 'disruption mode'. This means that instead of responding to individual tweets, we will focus on tweeting out the latest updates for everyone's benefit - a much more efficient way of keeping you and others fully informed.

Please be assured that if we are unable to assist you on Facebook or Twitter, we'll always direct you to the right place to get more information and support.

We also ask that you

- Aim to be fair, truthful and accurate
- Be respectful of other people's opinions
- Avoid talking about open court cases or police investigations

- Don't use copyrighted material without the owner's permission
- Don't use our social media platforms for self-promotion or commercial gain
- Please do not publish pictures of our staff, their names or their contact details on social media. If you would like to make a formal complaint about a member of staff, you can do so via our Customer Experience Centre.

@Replies, Twitter direct messages, Facebook wall posts and Facebook inbox messages.

We receive a high volume of comments and questions each day and unfortunately can't always respond to all of these, therefore we focus on responses which can bring the most significant practical benefit to our customers.

As well as providing service and business information, we like to hear about and share good news. Social media is also about having fun and we appreciate the wit and humour of our followers.

We welcome positive and negative feedback, suggestions for new ideas and general discussion from all our Twitter and Facebook followers and will join the conversation where we can contribute something useful. Comments from people who choose not to follow or like our pages are also welcome.

To report a crime on the railway, contact the British Transport Police on 0800 40 50 40

All comments are read and any feedback/suggestions is passed on to the relevant parties once received.

We may ask you to send us a Direct Message (DM) if sensitive information is required from you. You are also free to DM us should your profile allow you to do so.

Twitter is an informal channel so any issues that cannot be solved by us on our social media profiles or any complaints that we/you feel needs a formal response should be forwarded to our customer experience team. If you require contact details, see here:
<https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/help/contact>

Following:

If you follow @NorthernAssist, we will not automatically follow you back. We do not send friend requests on Facebook. Please bear in mind that this is not down to us being impolite or disrespectful. If we do follow you on Twitter, it does not imply endorsement or recommendation of any kind.

Retweets:

We encourage you to retweet any updates, marketing posts or competition links we may post, provided that you do not change the meaning or misrepresent us. We will retweet content from our partners and subsidiary organisations, and consider any requests to retweet content from others based on relevance and propriety. We reserve the

right not to satisfy such requests at our discretion. Being retweeted by us does not imply endorsement of any kind.

Availability:

Our Facebook and Twitter pages are monitored between 6am and 10pm, seven days a week, excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day when we are closed. Our social media platforms may occasionally be unavailable and we accept no responsibility for lack of service due to Twitter downtime.

Thanks,

The Social Media Team



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