

November update

PARTNERS IN
COMMUNITY
SAFETY



This is the monthly newsletter from the industry's Community Safety Support Unit, funded on a two-year trial basis from the RSSB-managed research and development programme.

The CSSU works under the wider community safety banner in support of the industry's efforts to tackle railway crime, level crossing safety, personal security and fatalities management.

The unit can also provide support if required to industry partners interacting with the victims of railway accidents.

If you have items for the newsletter please email the CSSU team at suenelsoncssu@aol.com by the 21st of the month to ensure inclusion in the following month's newsletter.

☛ New home for BTP

The national headquarters of the British Transport Police has moved. The force has leased a seven floor office block known as Camden Point on the corner of Camden Road and Camden High Street in London to house more than 300 staff. The building is about a third bigger than the previous HQ in Tavistock Place and as well as the senior officer team will house the force's Major Crime Unit, the Force Intelligence Bureau and administrative functions such as finance and human resources. The new address is: 25 Camden Road, London NW1 9LN.

☛ Safety accreditation scheme launch

Staff from train operator South Eastern Trains are to be the first in the railway industry to be



accredited as part of a new complementary policing scheme to assist the work of police officers.

Under the Railway Safety Accreditation Scheme (RSAS) selected staff are being given limited policing powers to help them address certain issues on the spot without the involvement of the police.

The scheme will be officially launched on November 10th at London's Victoria Station where South Eastern Trains will publicly be granted formal accreditation status by British Transport Police's Chief Constable, Ian Johnston. Transport Minister Dr Stephen Ladyman has been invited to attend the event which will also be attended by Michael Holden, Managing Director of South Eastern Trains, and Paul Nicholas, Assistant Chief Constable of the BTP.

The RSAS will bring more people into the wider "policing family". Based on similar Home Office community safety accreditation schemes, it allows organisations and its employees involved in railway safety and security to be accredited by the police. Under the scheme accredited people are given limited powers aimed at providing

a better quality of life for the railway community. Community safety accreditation schemes were introduced under the Police Reform Act 2002 enabling chief constables to accredit employees of organisations who contribute towards community safety. Those accredited by the BTP can exercise a range of powers, for example, issue penalty notices for trespassing on the railway or behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress; request names and addresses of people acting in an anti-social manner, and confiscate cigarettes and alcohol from young people. They have no powers of detention.

All "Accredited Persons" will carry out an identification card setting out the powers the individual is trained and accredited to use. As part of their uniform they will wear the "Railway Safety Scheme Accredited" badge (pictured) as a visible sign to the public that they are dealing with an individual who has been properly vetted and trained. To be accredited, individuals and organisations have to satisfy strict criteria, including positive vetting, training, accountability, employee standards and approved complaints procedures. For further information contact South Eastern Trains security manager David Scott at david.scott@setrains.co.uk or Inspector Jeffrey Boothe of the BTP's complementary policing unit at jeffrey.boothe@btp.pnn.police.uk

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☛ 'Rail rage' man fined

A Northern Ireland man who spat and swore at porter in a 'rail rage' has been fined a total of £350. Colin Meeke of County Down threw a temper tantrum at Belfast's Central Station after being told he could not smoke on board a train.

His behaviour resulted in him being prosecuted for six separate offences by Northern Ireland Railways (NIR).

☛ Zero tolerance to verbal assault

Northern Rail is vigorously applying a policy of zero tolerance on verbal abuse and anti-social behaviour towards its staff. In the past nine months the company has prosecuted 44 passengers for verbal abuse offences towards staff, with all offenders convicted and receiving fines and costs averaging £300.

A further ten cases are currently being prepared for prosecution.

The company operates a prosecution unit which deals with, among other offences, instances of verbal assaults suffered by staff on trains, stations and company premises, using up to 25 different courts throughout the Northern network to deal with offenders.

The unit has established a robust procedure ensuring that incidents are recorded and receive the appropriate attention. From data collected the unit will identify areas of concern relating to anti-social behaviour for appropriate management use and relevant external agencies.

Part of the data identifies offences committed by line of route, providing a key tool for frontline, safety and security management.

For further information contact Phil Cook, Northern Rail's Prosecution Unit Manager at phil.cook@northernrail.org

☛ Airport security for main line stations?

Plans for airport style security scanners at railway stations with armed police observing passengers are being drawn up to stop terrorist attacks on the rail network, say reports.

Ministers are expected to announce a trial of the scheme at London Paddington in the next few weeks, it is claimed. If successful, body scanners and x-ray machines could be installed at other mainline stations. The trial follows work by the Department for Transport's security arm Transec and is thought it will cover the Heathrow Express line to allow officials to monitor how much disruption it would cause. There are said to be concerns about the practicality of such a scheme in relation to the impact on delays. But if successful the scheme could be extended to Gatwick Express followed by London's King's Cross and Euston stations.

☛ Tube fare dodgers could face £50 fines

Dodging a bus or Tube fare could soon mean a £50 fine, up from the current £20, according to Transport for London. TfL is considering putting a private bill through Parliament to boost its existing powers to combat ticket fraud. The plan comes a few months after the penalty fare was increased from £10 in line with train operating companies. Fare dodging on the Tube costs TfL about £70 million each year which could be spent on improving the network, say officials.

☛ Boy killed by train 'looking for mobile 'phone'

A 15 year old school boy killed when he was struck by a train may have been trying to retrieve a mobile

phone dropped on the tracks by a friend. The youngster was said to have been standing with a group of teenagers on a bridge above the East Coast Main Line at Hadley Wood, Hertfordshire, when a girl dropped her phone onto the tracks 30 feet below.

The boy is said to have scaled a fence and jumped onto the track where he was killed by a King's Cross to Peterborough train. The boy's death brings to six the number of children under the age of 16 to be killed on the railway this year.

☛ Tackling level crossing behaviour Down Under

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) is playing a leading role in the development of a national plan tackling behaviour at level crossings.

The ARA brought together stakeholders from road and rail safety organisations, the rail industry, governments and research organisations to discuss the development of a National Railway Level Crossing Behavioural Plan. A draft plan has now been submitted to the Standing Committee on Transport whose members include the heads of the Australian federal, state and New Zealand transport departments and road authorities.

The plan details mechanisms for road and rail stakeholders to co-operate in the national development and delivery of programmes aimed at modifying road user behaviour to improve level crossing safety. A primary function of the plan is to foster partnerships between industry and government, road and rail stakeholders. For more information contact Steve Davies, Manager Special Projects for the ARA at sdavies@ara.net.au

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☛ Industry presenter workshops

Competency guidelines for industry community safety presenters have now been distributed to businesses across the industry. The guidelines have been developed to help provide a consistent approach to the skills and competencies required by those giving railway safety messages to audiences in schools and local communities. The work began earlier this year and was managed as an RSSB research and development project with input from the CSSU. Representatives from Network Rail, train operators and the BTP have been consulted about the content of the scheme. The guidelines feature a toolkit that industry organisations can use so the scheme requirements fit with their own HR processes.

Now two information workshops are being planned - one in the north and one in the south - to show how organisations can use the guidelines in the workplace. The workshops will be geared to those wishing to introduce community presenters in their organisations and will emphasise the need to co-ordinate their approach with the work of existing presenters. For further information contact suenelsoncssu@aol.com who also has copies of the guidelines in booklet and CD format.

PS - Sincere apologies on behalf of the Post Office to the handful of companies faced with a postal charge on receipt of the guidelines. Post Office officials admit they wrongly quoted the cost of postage to the distributors, and were unable to alert all delivery areas in time.

☛ Stiffer sentence imposed

A Huddersfield man on rail graffiti charges ended up in prison after

submitting a false character reference. Craig James Longworth appeared at Bradford Crown Court where his original sentence for graffiti to a train at Ilkley, West Yorkshire, for which he received a 120 hours community punishment order and £120 costs was revoked. He was sentenced to nine months for the original crime of criminal damage plus six months to run consecutively for perverting the course of justice. A written reference that said Longworth was "a young man of great promise" was found to be a forgery, written by a friend.

☛ Robin Hood hold-up

A man boarded a train and threatened the train crew with a bow and arrow in Los Angeles, California. The Union Pacific locomotive was stopped at a red signal when the man entered the rear door, aimed the bow and arrow at the crew and ordered them off his train. The crew left the loco, shut off the emergency fuel switch and turned the brake valve so the train could not be moved and called the police. The police ordered the man off the loco but when he pointed the bow and arrow at them too, they shot him. The man was treated in hospital for gunshot wounds and then booked by police.

The train crew were unhurt but the locomotive sustained several hits by gun fire.

☛ Pilot of youth peer court system

Young people in Hull will sit in judgement over their peers from early next year in a peer court system initiated by schools. The court is being set up by Hull's local education authority with help

from the Center for Court Innovation, an American think-tank that specialises in youth justice issues.

Under the scheme young people will decide how their peers who have pleaded guilty to low level offences such as anti-social behaviour can out things right.

The sessions, which will take place in school settings, will be overseen by a senior person such as magistrate, probation officer or teacher. They will encourage the young person to explain what motivated them to offend and there will be a strong restorative justice theme to their decision-making. The Center for Court Innovation will provide the young people with training for their duties from the end of November.

The initiative creates the potential for young people themselves to reinforce railway safety messages with any of their peers who may have been caught trespassing or offending on the railway, and as such would be powerful tool in the railway community safety armoury.

The idea was inspired by the Red Hook centre in Brooklyn, New York, which was visited in October by a group of head teachers, young people and Hull council's education portfolio holder, Peter Clark. The initiative will be evaluated by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) to see if the scheme can be developed into similar projects elsewhere. For more information go to www.courtinnovation.org or www.ippr.org.uk

☛ Keep in touch...

If you want to be added to this e-newsletter's mailing list send your details to suenelsoncssu@aol.com