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Hello there,

Can I please take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Stephanie Reynolds and I am the British Transport Police Neighbourhood Policing Team Sergeant at York.

Some of you will already have met the team but for those of you who haven't I'd like to tell you a little bit about us.

Our team was set up in January 2009 and consists of 4 Police Community Support Officers (usually 6), 2 Police Constables and 1 Sergeant. We are based at York BTP office but cover a large part of the East Coast Mainline from Berwick Upon Tweed down to Grantham.

The team is split into 3 parts, North Area which covers Berwick Upon Tweed, Alnmouth, Morpeth, Newcastle, Chester le Street, Durham and Darlington. The Central Area which covers Northallerton, Thirsk and York and the South Area which covers Doncaster, Retford, Newark and Grantham.

The idea behind Neighbourhood Policing is to have dedicated teams who are more visible and more in tune with the needs of the community. This means, instead of being directed by our own policing priorities, we listen to the community and work together to solve the problems of the community.

How does it work? The whole process has been formalised into a Neighbourhood Policing Strategy and the whole country must follow the same guidelines (albeit, it is slightly different for BTP and its community).

You will hear the term PACT mentioned quite regularly by us, this means Police And Community Together.

Some time ago I tasked officers to go out into our community and identify people who can represent their area of the community and that's why I've written this letter. Representatives come from the railway industry, some from retail, others from passenger focus groups and of course the public. We have also contacted other policing partners which will ensure a joint effort involving the local police too.

We can help with 'quality of life' type issues within your working or travelling environment, things like anti social behaviour at stations or on trains, any problem where a police presence might help. We can help with people at stations who are prolific shop lifters or beggars. If it causes you a problem then you should bring it to our attention and we can discuss whether police action is necessary or how we can help.

How do I get involved? Anyone can attend our meeting every 8 weeks at either Newcastle, York or Doncaster (this is called a PACT Group Meeting). This is your chance to bring any community issues or problems to the table. We get the chance to discuss things there and then and can maybe offer immediate solutions. It's not all about meetings – sometimes we'll be able to solve problems in a short period of time (with your help). On other occasions some of you might raise issues which need a more concerted effort in order to fix long term problems within the area. If that is the case the facts will be presented to the PACT Panel. I have to stress – be prepared to join in! It's not all about the police fixing things, don't be surprised if you leave the meeting with a task as you may be the most suitable person to help.

The PACT Panel also meets every 8 weeks where volunteers from the Train Operating Companies, passenger focus, railway chaplains, salvation army, local police and anyone else who can represent the whole area come along. We have already had a number of meetings since we began and all who attend have contributed positively to the PACT Panel process. Together with the inspector in charge of our team we'll take high priority issues to the PACT Panel where we will make a joint decision about what to do next.

Problems at this level will require a 'Problem Solving Plan' again, this formalises the process and you don't have to worry about it. It just means that the problem is recorded in writing and requires a regular update both at the PACT Group Meetings and also the PACT Panel. Regular updates will also be published on the internet.

**PACT meetings are public meetings** and I would encourage your attendance at the next PACT meeting, even if it's to come along to find out if you can contribute to the PACT process or not. At the end of the day, it's your opportunity to be part of the problem solving process – the police don't have all the answers but hopefully together we can make a difference.

This really is a unique opportunity for us to do something positive. It won't take up too much of your time and I know it will be worth while. I would urge you to come along to the next meeting and look forward to seeing you there.

Kind Regards

*Stephanie Reynolds*  
Police Sergeant