

SAFER TRANSPORT NORTHUMBRIA PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY



The end of the line for unwanted behaviour - working together to enhance safety across Northumbria's transport network

Date: August 2026

Foreword

Every day, people rely on our transport network to get to work, access education, visit family and friends, and enjoy everything Northumbria has to offer. Whether travelling by day or night, for business or pleasure, everyone deserves to feel safe and confident.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I know that safety is not measured solely by crime statistics. It is also about how safe people feel. A transport network can only truly succeed when passengers and staff feel secure, supported and able to travel without fear of crime, anti-social behaviour or harassment.

That is why delivering safer transport is an important part of my Police and Crime Plan and our commitment to Safer Streets and Stronger Communities. Well-connected communities are stronger communities, and ensuring those connections are safe requires a collective effort. No single organisation can achieve this alone.

This Safer Transport Northumbria Strategy brings together policing, transport operators, local authorities, the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority and a range of partners with a shared ambition. That is to maintain a safe, welcoming and trusted transport network across Northumbria. Since the Safer Transport Partnership was established in 2021 through Safer Streets funding secured through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, innovative initiatives such as the Trojan Metro and the End of the Line campaign have shown the impact that partnership working can have, contributing to a steady reduction in incidents across the network.

This strategy builds on that strong foundation. It reflects our shared commitment to tackling challenges together, reducing crime and disorder, increasing passenger confidence, and creating an environment where everyone feels safe when travelling. Just as importantly, we are committed to measuring our progress, learning from success and continually enhancing our approach.

By working together, we can make our transport network safer, stronger and more welcoming for all.

Susan Dungworth
Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria



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1 / INTRODUCTION

Who we are and what we do

The Safer Transport Northumbria Partnership (STNP) is chaired by the Northumbria Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (NOPCC) and brings together strategic representatives to maintain a safe, welcoming and trusted transport network for everyone across Northumbria. The partners are:

- Northumbria Police
- British Transport Police (BTP)
- Stagecoach
- Transport providers – Stagecoach, Arriva, Northern Rail, Go North East
- Nexus
- North East Mayoral Strategic Authority (North East MSA)
- Local authorities – Northumberland County Council, Newcastle upon Tyne City Council, North Tyneside Council, Sunderland City Council, South Tyneside Council, Gateshead Council

STNP works across Northumbria's public transport network to prevent crime, tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB), and build public confidence. The regional transport network incorporates rail, Metro, ferry and bus services, including the entire transport infrastructure such as bus stops, stations and interchanges. Through strong partnerships, intelligence-led action, designing out crime whilst designing in safety, and community engagement we are creating a transport network where people feel safe and protected when travelling.

While the individual agencies have distinct roles and responsibilities, the challenges affecting transport safety are complex and cross-cutting. A co-ordinated, multi-agency approach is therefore essential, with key stakeholders working together to deliver consistent, region-wide improvements.

Each of the partners have their own plans and priorities centred around improving the staff and customer experience, making public transport across Northumbria safer as well as making transport more affordable and accessible. The priorities of all the partners have been carefully considered when developing this partnership strategy.

This document sets out how we turn our mission, vision, and aims into daily action over the next two years. It serves as a guide for our team, partners, and stakeholders ensuring a shared commitment to making every journey safer.

¹ Local Authority representatives from Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside attend the partnership on behalf of all six LAs





What we are working towards

Public transport in Northumbria is essential to connect people to employment, education, healthcare, friends and family, and of course our renowned and vibrant north-east leisure and tourism industries.

Ensuring our public transport is safe, accessible, and trusted is fundamental to the STNP, but things like crime (including Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) crime types), ASB, public perceptions and accessibility concerns can impact on how safe and confident people are to use it.

The Northumbria public transport network is very well used with Nexus Metros covering over 3.1 million miles and having almost 32.3 million passenger journeys in a year (April 24 - March 25). Stagecoach buses cover more than 13.5 million miles every year with around 39 million passenger journeys.

The number of incidents reported in a year between April 25 and March 26 to Northumbria Police was 1,020. ASB is the most prevalent type of incident reported.

The collaborative approach through the STNP has seen incidents on transport steadily decrease, especially ASB incidents reported to Northumbria Police which have reduced by almost 10% since 2021. There have been some fluctuations in that data over time where we have seen seasonal or incident related spikes in reports which does indicate that there remains work to do to. However, since 2021 we have seen fewer fluctuations.

That said we recognise that there is still work to do further enhance safety and feelings of safety on public transport. The STNP believes that safety and trust are built through action, our approach is centred on the needs and experiences of our passengers, local communities and transport staff that's why hearing their lived experience has been vital.

27738

VEHICLE
2.96

BISHOP

NO
E-scooter
Electric scooters must not be
on board or stored on this vehicle

**FIRE EXTINGUISHER
IN CAB**

**Welcome
aboard**

*If you need any help,
please speak to
your driver.*

From local consultations in recent years with our communities and public transport users we know that:

Public transport can be an area where some residents feel less confident, particularly at night.

Metro was most commonly mentioned, followed by buses, while the ferry was highlighted far less frequently. Residents also identified that perceptions of safety can vary by location, with some bus routes, interchanges and stops being places where confidence is lower.

A visible and skilled presence is crucial in supporting and reassuring passengers.

Ensuring transport staff are easily identifiable and accessible where they are needed most, and that they are confident and capable in identifying incidents, intervening early and handling challenging incidents and behaviour is essential.

- We believe that continuous professional development and training are needed to raise awareness and equip all frontline staff with the right tools, powers and support so they can safely respond to incidents efficiently and effectively.

Not everyone will have the same experience of transport safety, particularly women and girls, and other marginalised or vulnerable groups who may feel more unsafe – especially at night.

- We believe that a more inclusive, accessible, and community-centred approach, incorporating collaboration between agencies and communities is key to ensuring a joined-up, effective response to safety concerns.

Perception and data around crime and safety don't always align. In Northumbria the majority of journeys on our public transport are safe. But where ASB and crime do occur it can undermine passenger confidence.

The top anti-social behaviours that people reported witnessing or experiencing on public transport were litter/rubbish, vaping, excessive noise, and other behaviours such as street harassment and sexual touching which we as community safety professionals would categorise as VAWG crime types. Throughout the NOPCC programmes of work on transport safety it was found that street harassment and other intimidatory VAWG type behaviour was often categorised by the public as ASB.

We know that under-reporting of incidents on transport is an issue and incomplete or inaccurate information shared on social media can fuel negative perceptions and make people feel unsafe.

- To overcome this, we believe that strong communication plans providing transparency and reassurance alongside clear, improved reporting mechanisms, visible responses to incidents and promotion of actions taken are needed.

A coordinated, data/intelligence-led approach is essential to identify emerging trends, issues and hotspots.

- Using shared data and insights and careful co-ordination and planning arrangements to deploy resources where they are needed most will help prevent and reduce crime, VAWG and ASB, while improving safety and public confidence.

The appearance, design and management of the transport environment plays a key role in deterring crime and shaping perceptions of safety for passengers and staff.

- We believe that an ongoing programme of infrastructure improvements is needed applying designing out crime principles, which may include CCTV, lighting, controlled access and visibility improvements (including clear sight lines, avoiding hidden or enclosed spaces and real time information) across the transport network.

By addressing these key issues, the STNP through this strategy is working to **improve public safety, reduce crime and disorder, and enhance passenger confidence and comfort across the whole transport network in Northumbria.**

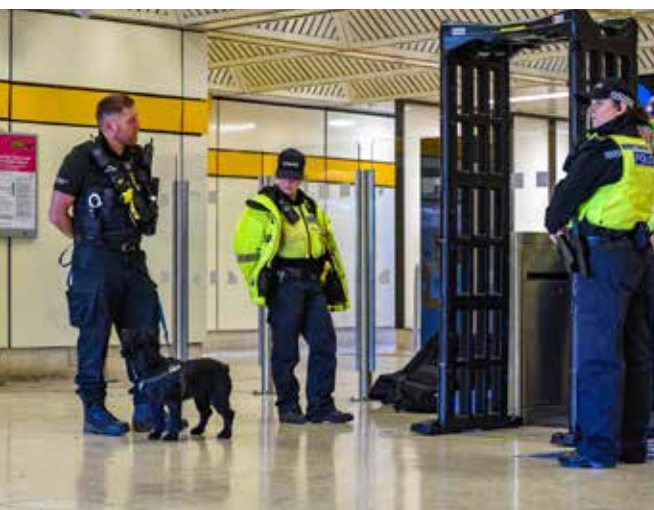
² The UK government defines street harassment—often officially categorized as Public Sexual Harassment—as any unwelcome and unwanted behaviour directed at a person in a public space (such as a street, park, or public transport) because of that person's sex. Examples of this include unwanted touching, cat-calling, following, staring, leering and non-contact sexual offences such as exposure.

2 / CORE PRINCIPLES

This strategy has been developed based on the following five core principles to make travel safer:

1. **Collaboration** – this is not a single agency issue therefore a multi-agency response is needed, where key stakeholders work together to tackle issues collaboratively. Region-wide consistency and service improvements that enhance the passenger experience and environmental and capital works that design out crime and fear of crime will also address perceptions of safety.
2. **Co-ordination** – partnership data, insights and intelligence should be used tactically to target resources where they are needed most, intervening early and ideally stopping issues before they start.
3. **Capable guardians** – People make people feel safer. A visible, skilled and responsive presence across the transport network is key to deterring issues, providing reassurance, and ensuring passengers and staff feel safe and supported.
4. **Communication and perceptions** – co-ordinated public communication and engagement helps enhance awareness of the STNP and key issues such as VAWG, challenge misconceptions about transport safety and improve public confidence.
5. **Contact and consequences** – simple, clear and consistent reporting mechanisms with timely and proportionate responses are critical, as is ensuring support for victims alongside targeting offenders who pose the greatest harm, using intelligence-led criminal and civil enforcement to disrupt repeat, high-impact, and organised crime and offenders.

By working strategically, we will promote secure, reliable, and accessible transport for all users across organisational and geographical boundaries, creating a transport system that feels safer for everyone.



3 / VISION, MISSION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Our vision:

Improve public safety, reduce crime and disorder, and enhance passenger confidence and comfort across the whole transport network in Northumbria.

Our mission:

The STNP brings together key partners to coordinate strategic action that promotes secure, reliable, and accessible transport for all users across organisational and geographical boundaries, particularly for women, girls and other marginalised or vulnerable groups. Guided by our principles we will make every journey feel safe and welcoming.

Aims and objectives:

Using the core principles we are focused on five key aims, with associated objectives over the next two years:

1. Collaboration - Have an agreed multi-agency response, where key stakeholders work collaboratively to tackle issues impacting public transport, ensuring strategic drive and oversight through the STNP.

- Develop a STNP meeting structure with agreed Terms of Reference (ToR), response strategy and delivery plan
- Design out crime and fear of crime through environmental and capital work programmes
- Address behavioural changes through collaborative campaigns

2. Co-ordination - Enable effective information sharing to identify common issues and trends that will improve careful coordinated deployment of resources, joint operations, and enforcement activities.

- Develop and implement an information/data sharing agreements to allow lawful and secure cross-agency intelligence sharing between agencies
- Target resources where they are needed most across public transport networks using data, intelligence, and insights.
- Explore diversionary activity resources and restorative interventions for young people at risk of engaging in ASB

3. Capable guardians - Ensure a visible and reassuring presence on the transport network, with staff who are trained and equipped to deal with the most common issues.

- Provide identifiable uniformed presence on public transport
- Promote active bystander interventions and empower passengers and staff to take action where they feel safe to do so
- Continuous professional development and training to raise awareness and equip public facing staff with the right tools, powers and support so they can safely respond to incidents efficiently and effectively

4. Communication and perceptions - Have a robust communications strategy ensuring the public are consulted and informed about transport safety key messages and the breadth of work to improve transport safety.

- Improve safety and perception of safety for passengers and staff which includes key stakeholders in the immediate vicinity of the transport hubs/interchanges (e.g. retailers in the interchanges)
- Publicise STNP's work and progress using clear, consistent and accessible communications
- Raise awareness of key issues such as violence against women and girls, marginalised groups and vulnerable transport users

5. Contact and consequences - Clear reporting channels for transport incidents with consistent, timely responses, support for victims and robust proportionate enforcement action against those responsible.

- Ensure all relevant agencies have consistent and well promoted reporting and escalation mechanisms for transport safety incidents
- Improve the passenger experience through minimum operational standards that improve comfort, accessibility, and safety
- Improve the response to key issues such as ASB, serious violence and violence against women and girls (VAWG), marginalised groups and vulnerable transport users, taking robust enforcement when appropriate

4 / DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY

The STNP will provide the strategic oversight and drive across transport providers, Nexus, police, local authorities and North East Mayoral Strategic Authority, and the voluntary and community sector. The Partnership will enable development and alignment of systems that will enable data-sharing, improve responses and promote better engagement and communications.

Promoting STNP's vision, mission, principles and progress

By enhancing public awareness of who the STNP is and what it does, will help us address the many misconceptions about transport safety and improve public confidence.

We will ensure our messaging is clear, consistent and accessible, delivering the 'Safer Transport Northumbria' message across all media channels for all audiences. We'll engage with a range of organisations such as schools, community groups, and workplaces to raise awareness and promote safer travel behaviours. We'll run targeted and, where possible, localised safer travel campaigns to highlight initiatives, prevention tactics, and enforcement efforts.

The increased visibility of uniformed staff will strengthen passenger reassurance and confidence, as will regular reporting on crime reduction, enforcement actions, and safety improvements. We will carry out engagement and consultations with staff and passengers to ensure their views are taken on board, acted upon where appropriate and explanations provided if not possible.

Encouraging responsible and pro-social behaviour on transport

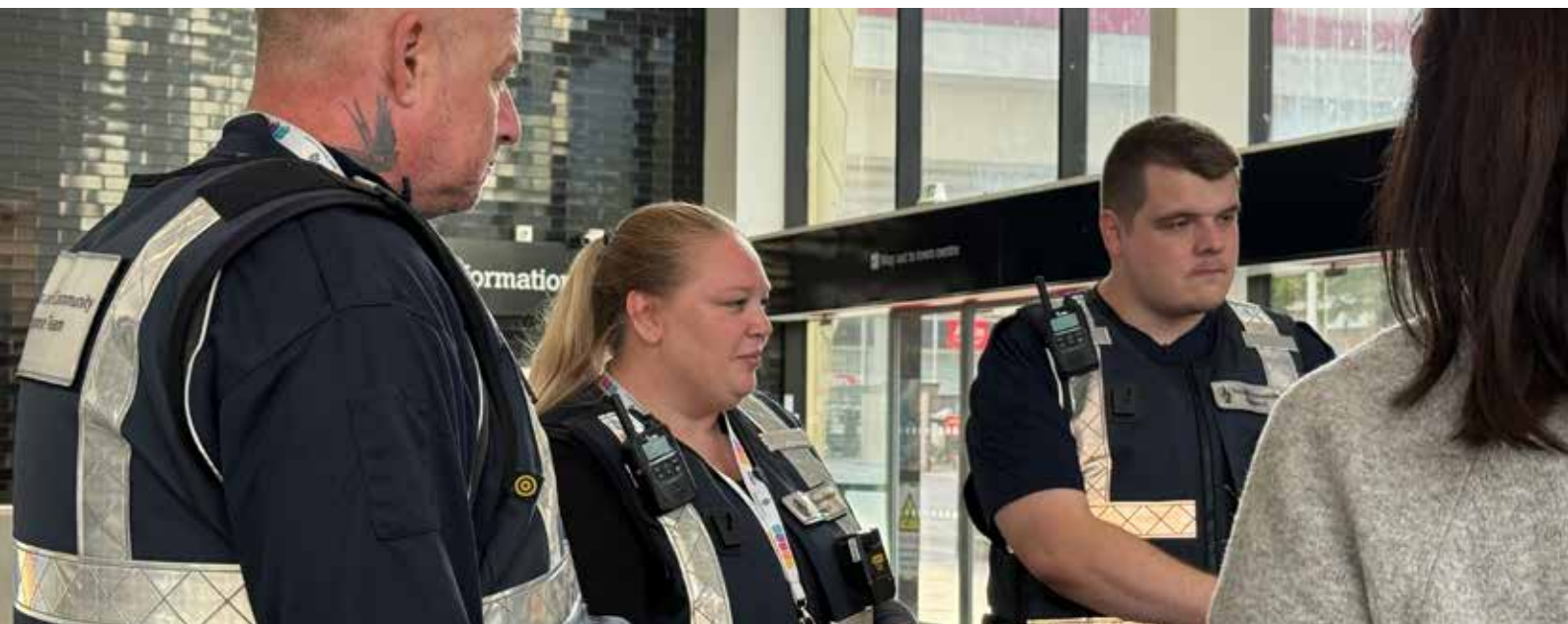
Engagement and enforcement activity will encourage more pro-social behaviours and improve passenger confidence in reporting concerns easily and anonymously. We'll promote active bystander interventions and empower passengers and staff to take action where they feel safe to do so.

Creating safer environments for vulnerable groups

We will ensure everything we do is inclusive and accessible for all passengers, particularly women and girls, and vulnerable or marginalised groups. We'll be clear that gender-based abuse, hate crime, and harassment across the transport network is not acceptable. We will ensure staff are trained to recognise and respond appropriately to vulnerable passengers in a trauma-informed way.

Robust and proportionate action against those causing issues

Increased intelligence-led deployments of resources will identify and deter those responsible for crime and ASB. We'll also seek to improve response times and incident reporting mechanisms which will be widely promoted. We will use our Safer Transport Tactical Co-ordination Groups to collate and analyse data to predict and address emerging issues around the priority behaviour types of ASB, VAWG and serious violence on transport. We'll work with partners to explore diversionary activities and restorative interventions for people at risk of engaging in unacceptable behaviour.





5 / MEASURING SUCCESS

Our impact will be tracked through:

- Crime and ASB rates – measured by police and transport data.
- Increased passenger confidence – monitored through engagement events, customer surveys and feedback loops
- Monitoring response times – evaluating how quickly incidents are addressed (all partners).
- Benchmarking Northumbria against other regions using industry data and information (Nexus and Northern Rail)
- Bespoke analysis and insight support around emerging trends (BTP)

6 / GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

Progress and performance against this strategy will be monitored and reported to the STNP Strategic Group, with an identified lead taking ownership of each principle and feeding into the Safer Transport Northumbria Strategic Group.

The group is a non-statutory, strategic partnership who meets quarterly

The group, through its members, reports into:

- Community Safety Partnerships
- Northumbria Police strategic boards (as appropriate)
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and associated boards.
- Local Authorities
- Regional Transport Authority (North East MSA)
- Passenger Transport Executive (Nexus)

The Safer Transport Northumbria Tactical Co-ordination Group, a multi-agency tactical transport safety group, meets fortnightly to deliver and monitor operational actions, reporting back to the strategic group.

An annual review report will summarise key achievements, challenges, and future priorities.

7 / COMMUNITY CALL TO ACTION

Everyone has a role to play in creating a safer transport network. Whether you're a passenger, transport worker, or community leader, your actions help make a difference.

Here's some ways you can get involved:

1. Report an issue. See what's up and interrupt. Report incidents through the various channels on page 10.
2. Partner with us. We welcome collaboration with community groups and local businesses.
3. Spread awareness. Share safety messages and initiatives to support safer journeys for all.

Together, we can ensure Northumbria remains connected, confident, and safe.

8 / REPORTING INCIDENTS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Incidents on public transport can be reported using the following methods:



- **Northumbria Police:**

- Call 999 in emergency situations like these:
 - there is an immediate danger to life
 - someone is using violence or is threatening to be violent
 - a crime is happening right now, like a theft
- For all other matters call 101 or
- Report Online: Report | Northumbria Police



- **British Transport Police:**

- Call 999 in emergency situations like these:
 - there is an immediate danger to life
 - someone is using violence or is threatening to be violent
 - a crime is happening right now, like a theft
- Call 0800 40 50 40 or text 61016 for non-emergency enquiries.
- Report Online: Contact us | British Transport Police



- **Nexus:**

- Speak to a member of Nexus staff or security
- For non-emergency incidents on Metro contact Metro Control:
 - Tel 0191 203 3666 or
 - Text/WhatsApp 07345 222 710



- **Stagecoach:**

- To the bus driver
- Call 0345 241 8000 (8am – 6pm Monday to Friday, and 9am – 5pm Saturday and Sunday)
- Online form



- **Go North East:**

- To the bus driver
- Call 0191 420 5050 (9am – 5pm Monday to Friday.)
- Live Chat
- Online form
- Social Media: Facebook, X (9am – 5pm Monday to Friday)



- **Arriva:**

- To the bus driver
- Call Customer Services - 0344 8004411 (8am – 5pm Monday to Friday)
- Online form
- Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok





**SAFER TRANSPORT
NORTHUMBRIA**