



Welcome to the Red Letter

A message from David



Welcome to our latest Virgin Trains stakeholder e-zine.

Welcome to our latest Virgin Trains stakeholder e-zine. We've continued our roll-out of customer service improvements, with our new Customer Solutions Centre opening in Newcastle, bringing our customer service department back in house and to the East Coast. It's also great to see the things we're doing getting recognition, with our James Martin menu recently winning a rail catering award. We're also looking ahead to the launch of our Azuma trains, beginning the search for our new drivers. It's excellent that so many people have applied for this fantastic opportunity, and their training will take a year before the Azuma enters service in 2018. It was great to welcome so many stakeholders to our latest summit in York, and I look forward to all of your feedback on the initiatives we're continuing to roll out!

Our latest stakeholder summit

We were delighted to host our latest bi-annual stakeholder summit in York.

We were delighted to host our latest bi-annual stakeholder summit in York, bringing together stakeholders from across the East Coast to discuss our plans for our franchise. David Horne updated attendees on what we've been up to over the past six



months, including our refurbished fleet, new menu by James Martin and BEAM, our on-board complimentary entertainment service.

Our Major Projects Director, Tim Hedley-Jones, provided an update on our Azuma trains, due to arrive on the East Coast from 2018, as well as the new simulators we'll be getting to train new drivers over the next two years. Matt Short, our Head of Government Partnership Working, presented on our Customers and Communities Improvement Fund, which allows customers and stakeholders to submit ideas for projects they want to see along the East Coast as part of a £3m fund available across VTEC's franchise.

We were joined by Darren Baxter from IPPR North, a dedicated think tank for the north of England, who shared their vision on the future of the Northern Powerhouse, including their proposals for a northern transport strategy. We'll be hosting our next stakeholder summit in 2017 so look out for an invitation in the New Year, or do contact us if you would like to be invited.

Driver recruitment for our Azuma trains



We've started the largest single recruitment programme for drivers on the East Coast since the 1980s.

We've started the largest single recruitment programme for drivers on the East Coast since the 1980s. This initiative coincides with the launch of our new fleet of Azuma trains that are set to enter service in 2018. The Azuma, built in the UK by Hitachi at Newton Aycliffe on the east coast, will be amongst the advanced trains on the UK's rail network, and Virgin Trains needs 78 drivers to operate our 65-strong fleet.

Recruitment is beginning now to allow for a year-long training and development programme to enable new recruits to become qualified trainee drivers. They will take

part in a range of training methods, including track safety, emergency situations and driving our state of the art simulator to familiarise themselves with the cab. We've received a huge amount of interest in this fantastic opportunity, with over 15,000 people applying by the time applications closed on 14 October.

Why fly when you can take the train?



We're offering flyers between Edinburgh and London discounted travel to encourage more people to take the train between England and Scotland.

We're offering flyers between Edinburgh and London discounted travel to encourage more people to take the train between England and Scotland. Our offer gives intercity travellers the opportunity to swap the inconvenience of air travel for the ease of train travel, arriving in the centre of London and Edinburgh. With 42 additional services a week and 22,000 additional seats a week, there's more opportunities to enjoy free on-

board WiFi, our free movie and TV streaming service BEAM, as well as our new menu. Customers who have recently booked a flight can exchange details of the booking for a discount code. With Standard Class tickets down to £15 each way, and First Class at £30 each way, there's never been a better time to travel between the English and Scottish capitals.

Bringing customer service jobs to Newcastle



We've opened our new Customer Solutions Centre in Newcastle

In September we opened our new Customer Solutions Centre in Newcastle, designed to provide consistently high customer service by bringing roles in-house. The centre is based at Virgin Money's headquarters in Gosforth, and will handle a range of customer inquiries. This will create up to 85 new jobs in the city and was opened by the leader of Newcastle City Council, Nick Forbes.

Our award-winning new menu



Our new menu designed by James Martin took home an award at the International Rail Catering Group awards.

Our new menu, designed by chef James Martin, took home the coveted 'Most Innovative Caterer' award in the Onboard Retail Category at the annual International Rail Catering Group awards. The new menu includes dishes such as lemon and herb roasted chicken in First Class, and a range of new items in Standard Class including items sourced from local businesses along the East Coast route. We're delighted that the menu is getting the recognition it deserves, and developing the menu with James Martin has been part of our £140m commitment to delivering an improved service on

our route.

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