



Welcome to the Red Letter

Virgin sets customer satisfaction benchmark



Virgin Trains has achieved some of the highest overall customer satisfaction scores for long-distance franchised operators in the latest survey by rail watchdog Passenger Focus.

Virgin Trains has achieved some of the highest overall customer satisfaction scores for long-distance franchised operators in the latest survey by rail watchdog Passenger Focus.

The widely-respected National Rail Passenger Survey results saw Virgin scoring 90% on its west coast route and 91% on its east coast route. Virgin Trains has delivered consistently high scores on the west coast for a number of years and is now seeing the

best autumn result on its east coast route in three years.

Stations and On-board

The £50m investment in the refurbishment of the entire east coast fleet and enhancements in customer experience were reflected in a 10% rise in scores for the upkeep and repair of trains and an 8% increase in the comfort of train seats. Car parking facilities on the east coast also saw an 11% boost in customer satisfaction, reflecting the additional 1,000 car parking spaces that have been made available at managed stations along the route.

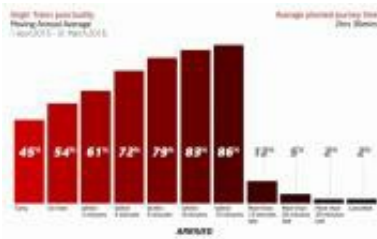
On west coast, the survey highlights major improvements station upkeep and facilities (+8%) and general facilities and services (+10%) and the responsiveness of station staff stayed strong (91%).

Speed, Frequency and Punctuality

Recent timetable enhancements on the east coast route, particularly at Leeds, York and Edinburgh, contributed to high scores for frequency (92%), speed (90%) and punctuality (89%). On the west coast, journey time remains a consistent strength (93%).

Your journeys

Virgin sees record punctuality on west coast



The punctuality of Virgin Trains' west coast services have reached a record high as a result of a combined effort between the rail operator and Network Rail to identify and resolve the cause of delays on the route.

The punctuality of Virgin Trains' west coast services have reached a record high as a result of a combined effort between the rail operator and Network Rail to identify and resolve the cause of delays on the route. 88.3% of trains arrived on time over the last twelve months, an improvement of eight percentage points since comparable records began just after privatisation, two decades ago.

Virgin Trains and Network Rail first started working together in this way in 2009, leading to a series of improvements being made on the west coast main line each year. However, in the last 18 months, the two companies have shifted their focus to the basics of railway operation and infrastructure maintenance and as a result the benefits of the working group have now been realised. These combined efforts have seen 100 days with a PPM of 90% or above in the past six months. That compares with 58 days in the same period two years ago. In addition, the last period has seen over 45% of trains arrive at their destinations early.

Areas of priority have included reducing overhead line and track defects, focussing on speed restrictions and addressing signal failures and cable theft. Monitoring equipment has also been installed onto Virgin Trains' trains to enable Network Rail to measure and test the infrastructure at speeds of up to 125mph identify defects before they become serious issues. Additional equipment installed on trains includes:

- -Unattended Overhead Line Monitoring System (UOMS)
- -Pantograph Cameras; a roof mounted camera that surveys the pantograph and overhead line throughout the trains operation
- -Bump Boxes; these are able to identify and record common track faults by measuring the shock and vibration characteristics generated in the carriage of the train
- -Improved carbon quality on pantographs; improves the reliability of service and reduces the need for regular maintenance

Network Rail Engineers regularly ride in the cab of Virgin Trains services to monitor ride quality and additional pantograph cameras, bump boxes along with night vision forward facing CCTV and axle box monitors are also expected to be installed over the next six months.

Peter Broadley, Commercial Operations Director for Virgin Trains on the west coast, said: "We're really pleased with the improvements that have been made by Network Rail and our own team over the past few years and the latest performance figures on the west coast are testament to how far we've come. We know there's still more to do though and we're certainly not resting on our laurels. With even more improvements in the pipeline, we're confident that we will continue to improve on punctuality and reliability whilst delivering the exceptional customer service that we are known for."

Our trains

East Coast fleet overhaul complete



We've completed a £40 million investment in our entire fleet of trains.

We've completed a £40 million investment in our entire fleet of trains.

To mark the completion, Mylene Klass surprised passengers at King's Cross with a live piano performance before joining customers on board.

The £40 million investment covers our entire fleet and includes nearly 25,000 new seats in both First and Standard Class, new carpets, and fittings throughout. Another £100 million of investment is forthcoming, focussing on stations and technology, and is part of giving our passengers the best possible experience when they travel with us.

Celebrating 20 years on west coast

We're delighted to celebrate 20 years of Virgin Trains on the West Coast.

We're delighted to celebrate 20 years of Virgin Trains on the West Coast.

On the 9th March we celebrated our 20th birthday on the West Coast route by hosting



a pop-up musical performance at Euston station, which saw choir Urban Voice Collective sing 'Ain't Nobody' by Chaka Khan. The celebrations have continued onboard with the introduction of five films onto BEAM which were released in 1997. These include Titanic, Men in Black and The Full Monty. Over the past 20 years we've revolutionised train travel with our innovations, from introducing the iconic Pendolino trains to the UK in 2004 to launching our Very High Frequency timetable in 2008, accelerated journeys between London and Glasgow to just 4hr, 32min.

MSPs respond to Virgin Trains' APD concerns



A Scottish Parliament committee has responded to concerns raised by Virgin Trains about proposed changes to airline departure taxes

A Scottish Parliament committee has responded to concerns raised by Virgin Trains about proposed changes to airline departure taxes. The Finance and Constitution Committee called on the Scottish Government to take these concerns into account when setting out detailed plans for the new Air Departure Tax (currently known as Air Passenger Duty) later this year. David Horne, Virgin Trains' Managing Director on the east coast route, gave evidence to the committee in February, stating that a third of the southbound rail market could be lost to air if APD rates are abolished on domestic routes where trains and planes compete. The committee has now published its Stage One report on the Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Bill. The report can be read in full here: <https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/FCC/2017/4/1/Stage-One-Report-on-the-Air-Departure-Tax--Scotland--Bill/5th%20Report,%202017.pdf>. In its report, the committee states: *Lastly, the impact of increased use of air travel within the UK upon rail travel and a potential conflict with public policy objectives seeking a modal shift from air to rail was also highlighted in evidence to the Committee. For example, David Horne of*

Virgin Trains stated—

We know that rail competes strongly with the aviation market and we know that initiatives that we have launched in the past year have been successful in attracting customers from airlines to rail, as well as in having boosted Scotland's connectivity.

We know that the market is competitive, which is why we are extremely concerned that a reduction in the tax that is paid by air passengers will result, on domestic routes, in a switch from rail to air, which will fundamentally undermine the investment in the rail routes between London and Scotland.

The Committee invites the Scottish Government to note the above evidence in finalising its proposals for the rates and bands.

The Scottish Government is due to set out its plans for the different rates and bands that will apply under the new ADT tax later this year.

Rail industry gives evidence on BTP/Police Scotland merger



Rail industry representatives have given evidence to a Scottish Parliament committee on plans to merge British Transport Police with Police Scotland.

Rail industry representatives have given evidence to a Scottish Parliament committee on plans to merge British Transport Police with Police Scotland. The parliament's Justice Committee heard from Andrew Cooper, Managing Director, CrossCountry; Neil Curtis, Head of Compliance, Direct Rail Services Limited; David Lister, Safety, Sustainability and Assurance Director, ScotRail Alliance; Graham

Meiklejohn, Regional Development Manager, TransPennine Express; and Darren Horley, Commercial and Operations Strategy Manager, Virgin Trains.

The panel raised a number of questions covering operational, contractual and financial issues. A video of the proceedings can be accessed here:

<http://www.scottishparliament.tv/Archive/Index/9c4b6f6b-9864-4ca3-86e4-7c3da7724e7b?Area=&categoryId=14ea7629-492d-4dbb-ba15-2cf51895c791&parentCategoryClicked=False&pageNumber=0&orderByField=PlayCount&queryOrder=ASC>.

Copyright © 2017 East Coast Main Line Company Ltd, subsidiary of the Virgin Rail Group Ltd. Registered in England No. 04659708.
Registered Office: Friars Bridge Court, 41-45 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NZ.

Newsletter Marketing Powered by Newsweaver