



## Azuma debuts in Scotland on East Coast test run



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The inaugural run was made as part of a testing programme by manufacturer Hitachi, in preparation for the roll out of our 65-strong fleet on the East Coast next year.

The Azuma is set to be one of the most advanced passenger trains on the UK rail network, bringing down journey times between the two capitals to just four hours and boosting capacity out of King's Cross by 28% at peak times. The Azuma tested travelled over the Royal Bridge in Berwick-upon-Tweed up to Dunbar, before returning south to Doncaster. The entire fleet will undergo a rigorous testing programme ahead of entering passenger service.

## Winning market share against the airlines between Scotland and London

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New figures reveal an 18% year-on-year growth in Virgin Trains passengers travelling between Glasgow/Edinburgh and London in June 2017. This means that Virgin Trains



now holds a 33% share of the air/rail market on the UK's busiest domestic air routes, beating a previous record set in 2014. Our aim is to win a 50% market share by 2023. The figures coincide with a report released by sustainable charity Transform Scotland, which finds that whilst overall air and rail travel between Scotland's Central Belt and London is increasing, carbon emissions are falling as more people choose to take the train. The report can be found here: <http://transformscotland.org.uk/>

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## New body-neutral uniform by Wayne Hemmingway launched

Stylish look rolled out on east coast and west coast routes



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To create the new, stylish "body-neutral" range, Virgin Trains involved its frontline staff as part of the re-design to get their expert opinion, from an extensive employee-wide survey on their favourite designs, to trialling initial versions on the job.

The Virgin Trains uniform offers up to six combinations (six for women and four for men) on the west coast route, and up to ten combinations (ten for women and five for men) on the east coast route.

When Virgin Trains decided to introduce a new body-neutral uniform for their staff, it wasn't just the humans they were thinking of. Proving it fits all sizes, a new uniform has been created for dedicated train fan, Jake the Dog.

Over nine years, Jake has been a regular sight at Virgin Trains stations and has become part of the Virgin Trains family; joining the station staff and delighting customers to welcome trains into the platform with lots of lively wags and barks. As a reward for his devoted service, aside from his favourite doggy snacks, the design team set out to make Jake his own bespoke dog-friendly uniform, carefully measuring him from furry head to trainspotting tail to create a fetching look that would suit his unique personality and shape.

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## Launching Seatfrog to allow our east coast passengers to upgrade



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We're launching Seatfrog on the east coast route, a brand new app that allows customers to bid to upgrade their seats from Standard to First Class. This is a world first in the rail industry, made possible by our Innovation team.

Customers will need to download the app and enter their booking reference, where a couple of hours before they travel they'll be offered the opportunity to bid for an upgrade to First Class if there are seats available on their service.

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## Book onto our next east coast stakeholder summit



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This will be an opportunity to hear about our Innovation Fund, and how we've been using this to develop innovations new to UK rail to improve the customer experience.

Representatives from the Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities (ECMA) and Hitachi Rail Europe will also present on the campaign for securing investment in the ECML and Azuma construction at Hitachi's factory in Newton Aycliffe.

To book your place or for any queries, please contact Sophie Mew at [sophie.mew@virgintrains.co.uk](mailto:sophie.mew@virgintrains.co.uk).

