



## Business news

### Booking tickets through Amazon Alexa



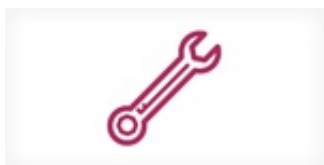
*We're the first travel company in the world to sell tickets through Amazon Alexa.*

We're the first travel company in the world to sell tickets through Amazon Alexa.

Customers can now book advance single Virgin Trains tickets using just their voice through Alexa-enabled Amazon devices. The new functionality uses Amazon Pay and follows the introduction of the Virgin Trains skill, which allows customers to enquire about our services using Alexa. The skill is part of a host of digital innovation projects

to increase customer satisfaction before, during and after their journeys.

### August and September engineering works



*Over three weekends in August and September there will be no trains to, or from London Euston whilst Network Rail carries out vital improvement work at Wembley as part of Britain's Railway Upgrade Plan. This will also have an impact on other West Coast main line services across the route.*

On the following weekends, there will be no trains to, or from London Euston whilst Network Rail carries out vital improvement work at Wembley as part of Britain's Railway Upgrade Plan. This will also have an impact on other West Coast main line services across the route.

- 18-19 August
- 25-27 August
- 1-2 September

During these weekends, our services will terminate at either Milton Keynes or Rugby and we strongly advise customers not to travel with us to or from Euston on these dates.

We realise this will be an inconvenience, but we are working closely with industry colleagues to communicate these closures with people as soon as possible.

For those passengers who need to complete their journey with us, we will have ticket acceptance in place with other routes and a rail replacement service between Rugby and Kettering to connect into East Midlands Trains services. More information can be found at [nationalrail.co.uk/westcoast](http://nationalrail.co.uk/westcoast) or [virgintrains.co.uk/spanner](http://virgintrains.co.uk/spanner).

For those able to travel the day before, off peak tickets will be available after midday on the Friday.

## Supporting the Release Scotland partnership



*We've played a leading role in bringing together businesses, charities and government agencies working in Scotland to help people with convictions develop their potential in the workplace and contribute to a successful, growing economy.*

We've played a leading role in bringing together businesses, charities and government agencies working in Scotland to help people with convictions develop their potential in the workplace and contribute to a successful, growing economy.

The new partnership, **Release Scotland**, was recently launched in the Scottish Parliament, with cross-party support from MSPs, and seeks to provide a one-stop shop for employers in Scotland seeking advice and help with recruiting ex-offenders.

We believe in hiring the best people, no matter what their background, and have been actively recruiting from within prisons since 2013. No one has to declare a criminal conviction on our forms, giving applicants a second chance and a fresh start to get back into work.

If you would like to learn more about our ex-offender recruitment programme, please click here:

<https://www.virgintrains.co.uk/newstart>

## Launching new Blackpool - London services



*We recently launched our first electric services to Blackpool, delivering an extra 35 direct services per week to the destination and others along the West Coast route.*

We recently launched our first electric services to Blackpool, delivering an extra 35 direct services per week to the destination and others along the West Coast route.

The launch saw one of our Pendolinos named the 'Blackpool Belle' which was suggested by readers of the Blackpool Gazette. The launch of the new services, which will create an additional 16,400 seats a week, will strengthen connections to the capital, as well as providing a direct service between Birmingham and Blackpool for the first time in 15 years.

This follows Network Rail's work to electrify the line between Preston and Blackpool and lengthen platforms at Blackpool North to allow longer trains at the station.

### Notes

The 05.30 Blackpool North - London Euston and 16.33 return will continue to serve Kirkham and Wesham and Poulton-le-Fylde. Unless stated otherwise, all services call at Rugby, Warrington Bank Quay, Wigan North Western and Preston.

Weekdays:

- 06.46 London Euston - Blackpool North
- 08.53 London Euston - Blackpool North
- 10.36 London Euston - Blackpool North
- 10.53 Blackpool North - London Euston

- 13.02 Blackpool North – London Euston
- 15.00 Blackpool North – London Euston

Saturdays:

- 07.21 Birmingham New Street – Blackpool North calling at Wolverhampton, Stafford, Crewe, Warrington Bank Quay, Wigan North Western and Preston
- 08.53 London Euston – Blackpool North
- 10.36 London Euston – Blackpool North
- 10.53 Blackpool North – London Euston
- 13.02 Blackpool North – London Euston
- 15.54 Blackpool North – London Euston

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## Unveiling our summer of Pride



*In May we launched our first Pride train at Birmingham New Street station, marking the start of Pride celebrations across our route.*

In May we launched our first Pride train at Birmingham New Street station, marking the start of Pride celebrations across our route.

The #ridewithpride train boldly displays the Pride colours and highlights our passion for celebrating diversity. It will also carry customers to Pride events across the West Coast route. The train made its first journey to Birmingham Pride at the end of May,

transporting customers and our people to the celebrations, with a party atmosphere on board for everyone involved. Our staff then made their way over to the Pride parade that passes by our Victoria Square head office.

The train also recently made its way to Edinburgh to celebrate their Pride weekend and can also be seen at Pride events over the summer, including Glasgow Pride on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

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## Buzzing to support Manchester's Bee in the City



*We've been announced as the Presenting Partner for this year's Bee in the City in Manchester.*

We've been announced as the Presenting Partner for this year's Bee in the City in Manchester.

The nine-week long event will see over 80 individually designed bees go on display across Manchester, taking people on a journey through the city between July and September. Visitors will be able to follow the free trail, looking out for the two Virgin Trains bees with help from the Bee in the City app.

Following the trail, the bees will be auctioned in October, with money going to various local charitable causes via the 'We Love MCR' charity.

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## Community Rail Lancashire



*Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) works with Virgin Trains at Preston station, inspiring students and young people to experience rail travel.*

Community Rail Lancashire works with Virgin Trains at Preston station, enabling students and young people to experience rail travel.

Students from schools across the region come to the station with CRL staff to learn about rail, safety, responsible and confident use, and to enable the passengers and employees of the future! CRL also works closely in partnership with the British Transport Police, who input across all these programmes. Lancaster University students spent the day at Preston, doing a fantastic job promoting Community Rail Lancashire's work, for their 'Community Rail in the City' event. For more information, visit: <https://downtheline.org.uk>

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## North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership

*We are pleased to announce that North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership has commenced its activities along the line of Hooton to Warrington and covers stations from Hooton to Helsby and from Chester to Warrington Bank Quay.*

We are pleased to announce that North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership has commenced its activities along the line of Hooton to Warrington, covering stations from Hooton to Helsby and from Chester to Warrington Bank Quay. Our vision is to encourage community engagement, economic development, education, connectivity and inclusivity. To make the journey on the rail network fun and engaging to all who use it for business, tourism, pleasure and leisure.

We look forward to hearing from you if you have any ideas, suggestions or enquires. To contact our Community Rail Officer please email on [communityrail@chester.ac.uk](mailto:communityrail@chester.ac.uk)