



Welcome!

One year on since the direct award

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Our customer satisfaction score

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To give us an even deeper understanding of where we do well and where we can improve, we have also focussed on our own Customer Advocacy survey. This is fed back to us online by customers who have booked with us and travelled with us, giving us a wealth of information about specific issues and enabling us to take action more quickly and in the most effective way.

HomingPin - an operator first!



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We have launched a trial of an innovative new service, HomingPin, to help deal with lost property. Our trial marks the first time in the world that a railway operator has adopted the lost property recovery system to reunite people with their belongings.

Up to 1,000 of our customers will take part in the trial, with each receiving a unique PIN code to register on the secure website HomingPIN.com, together with a phone number and email address which are never shared. Customers receive a luggage loop, key ring and a set of labels - each with their unique code printed on - which can

be attached to their possessions. If a lost item is found by one of our people or a member of the public, they simply enter the PIN on the website, which is matched back to the owner. The owner then gets a text or email to arrange the collection of the item from the finder.

It follows our Teddy Tracker initiative which was introduced last year to ensure lost toys are returned to their rightful owners.

Pendolino Coach G Conversion



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The project to convert a First Class carriage to a Standard Class carriage on the 21 9-coach Pendolinos we operate is fully under way with the first batch of reconfigured sets now in use, and further sets being converted at a rate of one per week.

When the full program is complete in September 2015, we will have an extra 2,100 seats per day on our route, and a better balance between the provision of First Class to Standard seating particularly in the off-peak.

Wi-Fi



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All of our 56 Pendolinos and 20 Voyagers are now fitted with enhanced Wi-Fi. This has led to a significant improvement to the speed of connections. Wi-Fi remains free in First Class and chargeable in Standard Class. Our clear ambition is to make Wi-Fi free and fast for all passengers but that requires substantial investment in trackside infrastructure to supply the bandwidth needed, and we are in discussions with interested parties.

We will shortly be installing Wi-Fi across our 17 managed stations and some areas within Network Rail managed stations on the route for access by all passengers free of charge. Euston and Preston are due to be ready in June, and several others by July

Update: station improvements



Our plans for improvements to our stations are progressing well...

- In the second half of this year, we will be replacing self service ticket machines with new models as well as adding additional machines at our principal stations along our route. The new models will be more reliable, dispense notes within the change given, and have a magnetic flap to ensure collection of tickets is done when all have been fully dispensed.
- We have ordered automatic ticket gates to be installed at a number of our stations plus some key Network Rail stations which we use such as Euston, Manchester and Birmingham New Street. The full list of stations at which they will be installed is yet to be finalised but Crewe and stations along the Stoke -Manchester and Birmingham - Rugby corridors are being prioritised. This will help to ensure all passengers are treated fairly over ticketing.
- We are finalising details of schemes to improve concourse and ticket retailing facilities for customers at Coventry, Stafford, Crewe, Stoke-on-Trent and Preston. It is anticipated that works will start around mid 2015 and be complete by March 2016.
- In March we undertook a heavy clean at five of the stations we manage, namely Carlisle, Lancaster, Warrington Bank Quay, Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton.
- We have now commenced a £2.3m renewals programme for waiting areas and toilet areas at a number of our managed stations.

OnBoard catering improvements



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We have also gone live with a new coffee supplier "Aroma by the Nero Roasting Coffee". Aroma is the new coffee brand created by Café Nero which will be exclusive to Virgin Trains for six months. There are other exciting changes to the product range, covering toasties, sandwiches and snacks, plus hot and cold drinks.

North Wales timetable improvements



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The May timetable saw the introduction of an additional through service from London Euston to Holyhead on weekday mornings, with the extension of the 08.10 London Euston to Bangor service now running through to Holyhead. This service then forms the 12.43 Holyhead to Euston which is a new direct service to connect with ferries from Ireland. These improvements have been brought in as a direct result of consultation with stakeholders along the route.

Virgin Trains in the Community



It's been a great few months for our CSR team - we launched our 'ResponsibilityTrain' with Business in the Community (BITC) and have recently been shortlisted for the first ever Sustainable Development award at the National Rail Awards.

"The Responsibility Train"

In May, we launched our 'Responsibility Train' in association with BITC. The train, which can be seen along our route this year, celebrates all the CSR work we have achieved over the course of the franchise and signifies our ambitions to do even more! To mark the launch, we involved stakeholders from big business, charity and government, in an onboard roundtable discussion about what best practice looks like when it comes to involvement in the community. Our Managing Director and ten community champions also took part in the discussion.

Award shortlist

We are pleased to have been shortlisted for the first ever Sustainable Development Award at this year's National Rail Awards in September. This is a great endorsement for the CSR team who have worked hard to make us trailblazers in this area.

Ongoing Community Engagement

We continue to put time and energy into supporting the Virgin StartUp initiative, designed to help entrepreneurs, and is a key aspect of our work with BITC.

We are particularly keen to engage with microbusinesses that can provide us with local products for sale on our services, and we have already had some successes in this area such as with local milk suppliers and the manufacturers of the popular Tilting Ale.

We have also enthusiastically developed the Pop-Up Shop idea at our stations and regularly hold events to support and showcase these small businesses' products.

We recognise our importance as an employer, and have successfully applied to become an Apprenticeship Trailblazer, taking on young people across our business. We are also committed to supporting former offenders to get back into work, and at the same time benefiting from the talents they offer.

Going forward, our work with the local communities will be supported by Community Champions who have been selected for each of the areas we serve across our business.

People news



Graham Leech, currently Executive Director Commercial, has now taken on the new position of Group Commercial Director.

Graham Leech, currently Executive Director Commercial, has now taken on the new position of Group Commercial Director. Graham has led the Commercial team since 2004 and has played an important part in the rapid growth of the Virgin Trains business.

In his new role, Graham will oversee commercial strategy on both West Coast and East Coast, as well as leading co-operation between the two franchises. Graham will report to our own MD, Phil Whittingham, and also David Horne, Phil's counterpart at East Coast.

Our own Executive team will be strengthened by two new appointments. Firstly, Andy Sparkes, who led the successful East Coast bid, is joining us as Business Development Director. Andy will be heading up our bid for the next West Coast franchise, to secure our long-term future. Secondly, Richard Scott, who leads our internal and external communications will now report directly to Phil Whittingham as Executive Director, Corporate Affairs.

