**Tuesday 3 April 2018**

**Virgin Trains Station Announcer swaps West Coast for Wrestling ring in Gold Coast**

* *Professional wrestler and Virgin Trains employee, Philip Roberts, heads to the 2018 Commonwealth Games as part of England’s Wrestling Team*

A Virgin Trains Station Announcer based at Preston is switching his microphone for the wrestling ring at the 2018 Commonwealth Games for the next two weeks.

Philip Roberts, 28, has flown to the Gold Coast in Australia with the England Wrestling team. This year is the third Commonwealth Games Philip has attended as part of his Wrestling career - he previously competed at Glasgow in 2014 and Delhi in 2010. Philip’s role this year is to help his team mates prepare for their matches, however he may be required to step in and compete.

Philip, who has worked at Preston station since 2015, started competing at the age of seven and in 2016 he won Gold at the English Senior Wrestling Championships in 2016.

When he is not making announcements at Preston Station or competing in the wrestling ring, Philip is a children’s coach at Aspull Warriors Wrestling Club in Wigan - where he himself has been training since it opened in 2015.

Philip, who is from Westhoughton, said: “I feel incredibly lucky to be able to have the opportunity to fit my love and commitment for Wrestling around a job I enjoy at Virgin Trains. Sometimes it’s a challenge but when I get the chance to be involved in competitions it makes it all worthwhile. I’m really excited to be at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games as part of England’s Wrestling Team. I would like to thank my colleagues at Preston for their continued support and hope I do them proud.”

Shirley Ross, Virgin Trains Station Manager at Preston, said: “Philip has an enormous passion for Wrestling and here at Virgin Trains the team are always interested to hear what he’s been up to. We’re really proud that he is at the Gold Coast, as part of England’s Wrestling Team. We’ve been excited to follow his journey to the 2018 Commonwealth Games and we’ll be cheering the team on all the way.”

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**About Virgin Trains**

Stagecoach and Virgin are working in partnership to operate the East Coast and West Coast inter-city routes under the Virgin Trains brand. Together, they are on track to revolutionise rail travel across the UK.

The combined network connects some of the nation’s most iconic destinations including Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, York and London.

Virgin Trains is committed to delivering a high speed, high frequency service, offering shorter journey times, more comfortable travel and excellent customer service. Customers consistently rate Virgin Trains as one of the top long-distance rail franchise operators in the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) commissioned by industry watchdog, Transport Focus.

On the East Coast route, £140m is being invested to create a more personalised travel experience. We have already invested over £40m in our existing fleet, including £21m refurbishing interiors and £16m towards improving the engines of our trains. Customers can now benefit from 48 additional services between Edinburgh and London every week, and an extra 22 Saturday services between Leeds and London – a total of 1.74 million additional seats since May 2016. 2018 will see the introduction of completely new Azuma trains being built in the UK by Hitachi.

The West Coast route has a proud record of challenging the status quo - from introducing tilting Pendolino trains, to a pioneering automated delay repay scheme and becoming the first franchised rail operator to offer m-Tickets for all ticket types.

Working together, the partnership railway of the public and private sectors has published a long-term plan, called In Partnership for Britain’s Prosperity, to change and improve Britain’s railway. The plan will secure almost £85bn of additional economic benefits to the country and contains four commitments which will see rail companies: strengthen our economic contribution to the country; improve customers’ satisfaction; boost the communities we serve; and, create more and better jobs in rail. For more information go to [Britain Runs on Rail](http://www.britainrunsonrail.co.uk/?gclid=CjwKCAiAr_TQBRB5EiwAC_QCq9OA-y_Al1Voo4ZvYjMvSBs86kuvjZLD8MfFvnOUU9UeVZ1T5CObLRoCasIQAvD_BwE).

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