**Thursday 7 February**

**All Aboard! ‘The Rookies’ are rolling into stations this holiday**

* *Free half term activity days at stations along the West Coast route for train fans aged 5 to 11*
* *Get hands-on experience in the station, on the platform and onboard*
* *Events will run between 13th – 22nd February*

Keeping the children busy during the school holidays can be hard work, and a blow to the bank balance. This half term, Virgin Trains has just the ticket for parents searching for inspiration; ‘Rookies Academy’ is a series of free activity days taking place at 11 stations across the West Coast route over the school break.

This February, ditch the duck pond, turn off the tablet and give your little locomotive lovers the chance to see how the railway really works. ‘Rookies Academy’ activity days will offer children aged 5 to 11 a range of exciting experiences\*, including the chance to:

* Make a station announcement
* Learn how to dispatch trains from the platform
* Meet a train driver for a tour of the driver’s cab onboard a Virgin Train

Gary Campbell, Station Manager at Virgin Trains, said: “We know children love trains, and we see so much enthusiasm for the railway from children travelling through our stations. Every day we are asked lots of questions by young train fans who tell us how much they would like to work on the railway when they grow up, so we are excited to be offering our ‘Rookies’ some hands-on, real-life experience at stations along our West Coast route this half term. Make sure you pre-book your ticket to guarantee your place, as we unfortunately aren’t able to let ‘Rookies’ in without one!”

Book your place on the Virgin Trains website from 8th February: [www.virgintrains.co.uk/rookies](http://www.virgintrains.co.uk/rookies)

PLEASE NOTE PLACES ARE LIMITED. PRE-BOOKED TICKETS ONLY. NO WALK-UPS ON THE DAY.

ENDS

**Notes to Editors**

\*Activities will vary by station

Tickets are bookable on a first-come, first-served basis. Unfortunately, we cannot admit people without a ticket.

Number of places available varies by station.

In the event of disruption on the Virgin Trains network, ‘The Rookies’ activity days may be rescheduled. Ticket holders will be notified with as much advanced warning as possible.

For more information, visit: [www.virgintrains.co.uk/rookies](http://www.virgintrains.co.uk/rookies)

**About Virgin Trains**

Stagecoach and Virgin are working in partnership to operate the West Coast inter-city route under the Virgin Trains brand, revolutionising travel on one of the UK’s key rail arteries.

The network connects some of the nation’s most iconic destinations including Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester 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 ahead of other long-distance rail franchise operators in the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) commissioned by industry watchdog, Transport Focus.

Virgin Trains has a proud record of challenging the status quo - from introducing tilting Pendolino trains, to a pioneering automated delay repay scheme, introducing the industry-leading onboard entertainment streaming service, BEAM, and becoming the first franchised rail operator to offer m-Tickets for all ticket types.

Virgin Trains operated the East Coast route between March 1, 2015 and June 24, 2018. In that time, we invested £75m to create a more personalised travel experience, including over £40m in the existing fleet. Customers have benefitted 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 2015.

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 whilst enabling further investment and improvement, 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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