**Embargoed Until Saturday 30th April 2016**

**Virgin Trains sets new standard for punctuality transparency**

* *First train operator to publish comprehensive punctuality data*
* *New customer-friendly charts show how likely your service is to be early, on time or late*
* *Punctuality data uses the ‘Right Time’ standard – far tougher than current industry practice*

Today Virgin Trains became the UK’s first train operator to publish up-to-date, comprehensive and clear punctuality data on its services. The data is presented in simple, easy to interpret charts which use the ‘Right Time’ measure – where a train is only classed as on time if it arrives within 59 seconds of its scheduled arrival.

This standard is particularly challenging for a long distance operator whose scheduled journeys can be in excess of four hours, and is much tougher than the current official industry measure where a train is classed as on-time if it arrives within 10 minutes for long distance journeys.

The figures show punctuality of overall services for both East and West Coast franchises, as well as by specific route. It also helps to provide context by stating the average journey time for that route. The information is updated every four weeks.

The objective of providing the data is to deliver punctuality information to customers in a clear and transparent way. The data shows:

* It is 3. 5 times more likely that a Virgin Trains service will arrive early than more than 10 minutes late.
* Almost three quarters of all Virgin Trains services arrived within 4 minutes of their planned arrival time.
* Only 2% of Virgin Trains services are cancelled

There is also a chart to show where responsibility for delays lies. The majority of delays to Virgin Trains’ services are caused by issues not in the control of Virgin Trains.

**Transport Focus Chief Executive Anthony Smith** commented: “Passengers will welcome this clarity about how punctual Virgin’s trains are.  Publishing information in this way gives a far richer understanding than the traditional percentage of trains that arrived within 10 minutes of the timetable.  Being honest about the quality of service passengers can expect is a key part of building trust between the railway and its customers.”

**Rail Minister Claire Perry** said:“I’ve been clear that the industry should do all it can to make sure rail passengers get where they need to go, on time and free from disruption. More people are travelling by train than ever before and this initiative by Virgin is an excellent way of ensuring passengers have the best possible information when planning their journey. We want to build a 21st century railway that provides better journeys for all, and improved information for customers is a vital part of that.”

**Graham Leech, Group Commercial Director at Virgin Trains** said: “We always want to be on the side of passengers. That’s why we’re sharing as much information as possible with them around the punctuality of our services. We never want passengers to suffer delays or disruption but things do go wrong sometimes and we want to make sure people have the best information possible to plan their journey. We’re proud of our record of customer service at Virgin Trains and are always looking for new ways to innovate for the benefit of customers. So we’re delighted to be the first train company to provide punctuality data in this way.”

ENDS

**Editor’s Notes**

Virgin Trains punctuality data:

For the west coast: <https://www.virgintrains.co.uk/about/punctuality>

For the east coast: <https://www.virgintrainseastcoast.com/about-us/our-performance-figures/>

Data is provided for each four weekly period (updated on the website 10 days later) and also for the moving annual average.

**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. This includes a major fleet revamp, smarter stations and exciting new routes. From May 2016, there will be 42 additional services (22,000 extra seats) per week between Edinburgh and London. 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.

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