**STRICT EMBARGO: 23:00 on 2 October 2015**

**Virgin Trains introduce industry’s first ‘Automatic Delay Repay’ system**

* *At least 3.5 million customer journeys able to benefit1*
* *An estimated additional £2.8 million compensation expected to be paid in first year*
* *Money credited back to customer within 3 days*

Today Virgin Trains became the UK’s first train operator to introduce Automatic Delay Repay (ADR). The system calculates the money due to a customer in the event of a delay and automatically pays the compensation directly onto the card they used for purchase. The compensation is calculated under the existing Delay Repay scheme3.

ADR is available to Virgin Trains customers travelling on the West Coast Mainline who purchased their Advance tickets through [www.virgintrains.com](http://www.virgintrains.com) or the mobile app. Around 3.5 million customer journeys could benefit from the scheme*1*.

Many additional passengers could also benefit simply by purchasing their Advance tickets through the website, which guarantees the cheapest fares with no booking fees.

Virgin Trains expect this new system to result in an additional £2.8 million being paid to passengers in compensation within the next year, on top of the existing level of compensation2. This is because many people simply do not claim at the moment, and is based on current website use and levels of previous delays.

**Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin** commented,“Making it easier to get compensation when trains are delayed is a vital part of our plan for passengers. Today’s announcement is fantastic news for people travelling along the West Coast Mainline. Virgin Trains are making the most of modern technology to improve the service customers get. Our plan is to make sure passengers across the country benefit from schemes like this and we are encouraging other operators to roll out similar schemes nationwide.”

**Phil Whittingham, Managing Director, Virgin Trains on the West Coast** added, “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 automatically refund cash directly back onto customers’ payment cards should they be delayed by more than 30 minutes. This will be available to customers who book through our website or app, so the more people who book with us, the more we can help in this way. This is just one of a range of innovations we have planned for the coming year, all of which are aimed squarely at the most important person – the customer.”

ENDS

**Editor’s Notes**

**Restrictions**

ADR is initially only available:

* For journeys with Virgin Trains on the West Coast Mainline (we are looking at whether to introduce on Virgin Trains East Coast services as well).
* Against transactions processed through www.virgintrains.com or Virgin Trains app. Not available through Virgin Trains East Coast website or app. We do not have the payment details for people who book advance tickets through other providers so are unfortunately not able to include them in the scheme.
* Against Advance Ticket types where a specific train has been booked – which allows the system to know if it has been delayed or not. (A seat reservation is not enough – the ticket must be for a specific train.)
* Where we can be confident in the level of delay encountered. If you have a journey with multiple connections across different train operators you will not be eligible for ADR.

Delays for journeys not booked through the website/app, or for non-advance tickets, can still be claimed in the normal way.

**ADR in Numbers**

13.5m customer journeys able to benefit - this is the current number of journeys bought through [www.virgintrains.com](http://www.virgintrains.com) in a year.

2The amount paid in delay compensation is expected to rise by £2.8m in the next year as a result of ADR. £3.8m is expected to be paid out through ADR in total, but £1m of this represents claims that would have been made anyway.

**3Virgin Trains Delay Repay Scheme**

If your train is delayed or cancelled, or a delay or cancellation of a Virgin train causes a delay to your overall journey, you may be entitled to claim compensation. Our Delay Repay scheme means that if you hold a ticket for a single or return journey you can claim compensation for a delay of 30 minutes or more, irrespective of what caused the delay.

If you are delayed by;

30 – 59 minutes - We will pay you compensation to the value of 50% of the cost of your single ticket or 50% of the cost of the relevant portion\* of your return ticket.

60 – 119 minutes - We will pay you compensation to the value of 100% of the cost of your single ticket or 100% of the cost of the relevant portion\* of your return ticket.

120 minutes or longer - We will pay you compensation to the value of 100% of the cost of your single ticket or 100% of the cost of your return ticket (i.e. both portions not just one way).

\*by ‘relevant portion’ we mean either the outward or return portion of a return ticket, depending upon whether you were delayed on your outward or return journey

NB: Delay Repay does not consider delays that are affected by, compounded by or have a consequence that involves other train operating companies.

We do not normally accept claims in cases where trains are delayed if you were notified of the delay before you purchased your ticket and you still decide to travel. We will, however, consider each case on its own merits.

**About Virgin Trains**

Virgin Trains is the brand name of Virgin Rail Group (VRG), which is owned by Virgin Group (51%) and Stagecoach (49%). Virgin Trains has operated the West Coast passenger train franchise since 1997, serving key UK cities including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow. In June 2014 the Department for Transport (DfT) awarded VRG a new franchise until at least April 2017.

Virgin Trains is committed to delivering a high speed, high frequency service, offering shorter journey times, more comfortable travel and excellent customer service. We provide the most frequent long-distance rail service in Europe (London - Manchester and London – Birmingham, both every 20 minutes).

Since 1997, Virgin Trains has introduced over 70 new trains at a cost of £1.5 billion. The service carries more than 34.5 million passengers a year and Virgin Trains employs approximately 3,290 staff.

Virgin Trains customers consistently rate the company as one of the top long-distance rail franchise operators in the National Passenger Survey (NPS) commissioned by industry watchdog “Passenger Focus”.

Visit the Virgin Trains Media Room - [www.virgintrains.co.uk/mediaroom](http://www.virgintrains.co.uk/mediaroom) - for the latest news, images and videos. Subscribe [here](http://www.mynewsdesk.com/follow/47939) for regular news from Virgin Trains.

Press Office: 0845 000 3333. Company website: [www.virgintrains.co.uk](http://www.virgintrains.co.uk).