**7September 2015**

**More Seats for Virgin Trains Pendolino Fleet**

*5,500 extra Standard Class seats a day*

Virgin Trains has completed its programme to deliver an extra 5,500 standard class seats a day across the West Coast Mainline following an investment of £7.2m. Over the last 5 months, 21 nine-car Pendolino trains have had one of their 1st class carriages converted to standard class (creating a net increase of 2,100 seats). The trains also received a major interior refresh and a deep clean as part of the work.

The project, which took place at Alstom’s depot in Oxley, Wolverhampton, saw the creation of 32 new jobs and benefitted local businesses in the supply chain to the tune of £1m.

Phil Whittingham, Managing Director at Virgin Trains, commented, “Our main focus is always our customers and their needs. We have seen demand for our services increase significantly, with more than 34 million journeys made on our trains last year, something that we are very proud of. Converting these First Class carriages to Standard allows us to respond to requests from passengers for more seats on our busiest routes. We’ve also given our Pendolinos a well deserved refresh and customers are already seeing the benefits.”

As part of a wider fleet upgrade project, each of the nine-car Pendolinos also received a major interior refresh and a deep clean when the conversion took place. The work was the result of feedback from Net Promoter Score data1, Virgin Trains employees, extensive customer research and collaborative discussions between Alstom and Virgin Trains. It aims to ensure that the Pendolino fleet delivers on passengers’ expectations of the Virgin Trains brand.

Now that all of the nine-car trains have been upgraded, the remaining 35 eleven-car Pendolinos will also undergo the major interior refresh and a deep clean with the full Pendolino fleet completed by mid-2016.

**ENDS**

**Editor’s Notes**

**1 Net Promoter Score**

Net Promoter Score is based on data collected from more than 500 customers a day and we use the information they provide to measure ourselves against the companies with the best customer experience. The data is rich and detailed, allowing us to drill down into exactly what our passengers want.

**Virgin Trains Fleet Information**

Trains operated a day (Monday – Thursday) 305

Train miles a year 23.7 million

Passengers a year 34.5 million

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Pendolinos** | **Super Voyagers** |
| Built by | Alstom | Bombardier |
| Size of fleet | 56 | 20 |
| Maximum speed | 125mph | 125mph |
| Power | Electricity (overhead) | Diesel |
| Coaches per train | 9 (21 trains) or 11 ( 35 trains) | 5 |
| Coaches in operational fleet | 574 | 100 |
| Seats per train – Standard | **9 car trains:***Before conversion* *294 + 2 wheelchair spaces*After conversion370 *+ 2 wheelchair spaces***11 car trains:**444 + 2 wheelchair spaces | 5 car trains:230 + 1 wheelchair space |
| Seats per train – First class | **9 car trains:***Before conversion* *145 + 1 wheelchair space*After conversion99 *+ 1 wheelchair space***11 car trains:**145 + 1 wheelchair space | 5 car trains:26 + 1 wheelchair space |

**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. To receive new content, as it is published, go to [**Follow Virgin Train**](http://www.mynewsdesk.com/follow/47939)**s** and click on ‘Create account’.

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