**VIRGIN TRAINS CHAMPIONS LOCAL SUPPLIERS IN NEW FIRST CLASS MENU**

Virgin Trains has unveiled a new menu for First Class which features regionally sourced food from suppliers and producers on its West Coast route. Available Monday to Friday on all services on the route, the new menu reflects the company's commitment to local sourcing and responds to customers' desires for greater choice.

Sausages from Cumbrian farms and Lancastrian butchers are joined by cheeses from a small farm in Nantwich and delicious border biscuits from Glasgow. Plans are also afoot for a partnership with a local chocolatier to create a unique after-dinner chocolate. The produce takes centre-stage in dishes such as Cumberland sausage with mash and peas, bistro-style meat and cheese platters, and after-dinner cheese and biscuits. Other exciting new dishes include an Asian style salad, aubergine tagliatelle, eggs benedict, and fresh fruit salad with yoghurt and honey.

Amanda Smit, Head of Catering at Virgin Trains, said: "This move builds on our recent introduction of regionally sourced fresh milk on all our trains, to support local British dairy farmers. Virgin Trains prides itself on making sure our customers get the very best, and adding local ingredients from suppliers on our West Coast route to our new First Class menu is one of the ways we are achieving this."

The new menu, which has already received positive feedback from Virgin Trains' customers and employees following a trial earlier this year, is available in First Class now.

ENDS

**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 32 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”.

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