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**New fares save Virgin Trains customers £7.1m a year**

* ***Virgin Trains makes cheaper advance tickets and seat reservations available on the day of travel***

Virgin Trains on the east coast has today announced that customers will be able to take advantage of cheaper advance ticket prices and seat reservations on the day of travel. Based on the number of walk-up fares currently bought by customers, Virgin Trains has calculated that the changes could save customers £7.1m a year\*.

Previously, advance fares have only been available to purchase up to 23:59 the day before travel. However, Virgin Trains customers travelling on the east coast route can now make savings of up to 43% on some routes compared to the cost of the walk-up fare (Anytime or Off-Peak single/return) by purchasing an advance ticket on the day, subject to availability\*\*.

These fares can be bought through all retail channels including the Virgin Trains website, ticket machines and at station travel centres on the day of travel, and where they are able to take advantage of an advance fare, customers will also be able to reserve a seat when buying their ticket.

Examples of savings include:

* An advance fare bought on the day for travel between Edinburgh and London could cost £69, saving customers 50% on the price of an off-peak single (£137);
* Customers travelling between Peterborough and London could save £1.5m a year;
* Those travelling between Leeds and London could pay £52 for a one-way ticket on the day, less than half the price of an off-peak single (£105.20).

Virgin Trains has been leading the way in tackling fare complexity and ensuring a better deal for customers. The train operator confirmed earlier this year that is participating in a in a single-leg pricing trial with the Government which will consider alternative ways to guarantee customers simpler fares.

Suzanne Donnelly, Commercial Director at Virgin Trains on the East Coast said: “This is great news for many thousands of customers who will be able to take advantage of big savings on the day of travel. Virgin Trains has always positioned itself on the side of customers and we have a strong record of innovating for the benefit of rail passengers.

“Customers who can buy tickets well in advance will continue to benefit from the very cheapest fares, with booking now available six months ahead. However, we know that’s not possible for everyone on every journey which is why customers can now purchase advance fares on the day of travel and save money as well as reserve a seat. With more of our cheapest fares available on the day of travel, we’re providing customers with a more affordable and relaxing alternative to road or air travel and we’re proud to be leading the way with changes that will ensure customers get the best value for money.”

**Notes to editors:**

\*Calculation is based on the number of journeys made in the last year for which customers bought a walk-up ticket. Calculation takes account of whether walk-up customers bought single or return tickets. Based on this, assuming all customers bought an advance purchase ticket on the day instead of a walk-up fare, the savings achieved over a year could total £7.1m. Fares are subject to availability.

\*\*Fares are subject to availability and available on trains departing after 10am between Inverness <> London, Perth <> London, Aberdeen <> London, Dundee <> London, Kirkcaldy <> London, Edinburgh <> London, Leeds <> London, Doncaster <> London, Grantham <> London, Peterborough <> London, and Lincoln <> London. Tickets will be available to purchase up to two hours before the train leaves its origin station. This availability is taken into account in the above calculation.

**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. We have already invested £21m to completely revamp our existing fleet and customers can now benefit from 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.

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