**Virgin Trains uniforms put to good use for the homeless**

* *Old Virgin Trains uniforms made into scarves and blankets*
* *Worn out clothing from over six years ago upcycled for good cause*
* *Items to be given to the homeless in the coming winter months*

Virgin Trains are to donate blankets, scarves and dog coats which have been made from old staff uniforms to homeless charities.

Garments which were originally coats, shell jackets, shirts, trousers and suits worn by Virgin Trains’ frontline have been given a new lease of life and will be distributed to those living on the streets in time for the winter months.

The upcycled clothes – many of which are in Virgin Train’s signature colour of red – were transformed by prisoners at HMP Northumberland at their onsite textile factory.

Items will either be distributed by Virgin Staff at London Euston, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly, Liverpool Lime Street and Glasgow Central or will go to local charities to give to the homeless.

Other items of clothing which could not be made into blankets have been used to make unbranded dog coats which will also be given out to those homeless people with four legged friends.

Some branded dog coats with the Virgin Trains logo will be given to staff in return for a donation -with the profits going to charity.

The remainder of the clothes – which are more than six years old - will be donated to charity or later recycled.

This initiative follows on from Virgin Trains recent partnership with Change Please Coffee, a social enterprise that empowers people who have experienced homelessness by training them to be baristas.

Change Please have used any profits generated from their contract with Virgin Trains to recruit more people who have experienced homelessness to be baristas. Both organisations are working together to develop successful trainees and offer them a chance to use their new skills in further or new employment with the train operator.

Jo Buckley, Community Manager at Virgin Trains: “We set ourselves the challenge to be creative and socially responsible with disposing of these old uniforms. It’s also a smart and socially responsible way to handle our waste.

“It’s so rewarding to see the repurposed uniform benefitting those who really need a little warmth and comfort during the winter months and we’re so proud to play a small part in helping the homeless alongside our work with our partners Change Please Coffee.”

**Notes for Editors**

More information about Change Please can be found here: <https://www.changeplease.org/>

**About Virgin Trains**

Stagecoach and Virgin are working in partnership to operate the West Coast inter-city route under the Virgin Trains brand, revolutionising travel on one of the UK’s key rail arteries.

The network connects some of the nation’s most iconic destinations including Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester 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 ahead of other long-distance rail franchise operators in the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) commissioned by industry watchdog, Transport Focus.

Virgin Trains has a proud record of challenging the status quo - from introducing tilting Pendolino trains, to a pioneering automated delay repay scheme, introducing the industry-leading onboard entertainment streaming service, BEAM, and becoming the first franchised rail operator to offer m-Tickets for all ticket types.

Working together, the partnership railway of the public and private sectors has published a long-term plan, called *In Partnership for Britain’s Prosperity,* to change and improve Britain’s railway. The plan will secure almost £85bn of additional economic benefits to the country whilst enabling further investment and improvement, and contains four commitments which will see rail companies: strengthen our economic contribution to the country; improve customers’ satisfaction; boost the communities we serve; and, create more and better jobs in rail. For more information go to [Britain Runs on Rail](http://www.britainrunsonrail.co.uk/?gclid=CjwKCAiAr_TQBRB5EiwAC_QCq9OA-y_Al1Voo4ZvYjMvSBs86kuvjZLD8MfFvnOUU9UeVZ1T5CObLRoCasIQAvD_BwE).

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