**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2017**

**Birmingham-born Natasha takes over as General Manager on key Virgin Trains’ route**

* *From station to General Manager in 15 years as Virgin Trains promotes from within*
* *Former Customer Services Assistant ‘proud to be taking on role’*
* *Key route handles more than 11 million journeys per year*

A former Customer Services Assistant at Birmingham New Street has risen through the ranks to become General Manager of one of the busiest routes on the Virgin Trains’ network.

Birmingham-born Natasha Grice has been appointed General Manager, EBW Route (Euston-Birmingham-Wolverhampton), which manages more than 11 million journeys per year.

Natasha, age 41, started her career with Virgin Atlantic working as a flight attendant. She moved to Virgin Trains in March 2002 working as a Customer Services Assistant at Birmingham New Street.

Working as part of the front-line team meeting customers every day, Natasha described the position as ‘a great way to get under the skin of the railway’.

The mother of two then moved into a number of other roles as Duty Manager in Customer Relations, Station Manager – New Street and On Board Manager – Wolverhampton before a role of leading the delivery of Virgin’s Olympic 2012 customer experience offer.

Natasha then made the move to the Marketing Team where she led on the development of Virgin’s brand values as Head of Brand and then the company’s Talent Academy.

Natasha said: “I’m incredibly proud to be taking on the role of General Manager for EBW. I couldn’t be more excited. The route is unrecognisable from the one we inherited back in 1997. The challenge is how we can build on that, working even harder to improve our customers’ experience whilst also looking forward to the opportunity to building for the next franchise.”

Virgin Trains has its UK headquarters in Birmingham and employs more than 1,000 people in a variety of roles at New Street, Wolverhampton, Birmingham International, Coventry and Rugby railway stations.

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**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.

The West Coast route has a proud record of challenging the status quo - from introducing tilting Pendolino trains, to a pioneering automated delay repay scheme and becoming the first franchised rail operator to offer m-Tickets for all ticket types.

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