**Embargoed: Thursday 18 February**

**Virgin Trains scores highly in *Which?* Annual Train Survey**

Virgin Trains has today been rated by customers as the top long distance franchised operator in the UK.

 A survey of nearly 7,000 rail passengers scored both Virgin Trains franchises either four or five stars for availability of seating, cleanliness of carriages, overall condition of the train, train reliability, train frequency and punctuality.

 Patrick McCall, Chairman of Virgin Trains said:

"We're delighted by these results. The two Virgin Trains franchises have been recognised as the top two long distance franchised operators – that’s a testament to our strategy of putting customers at the heart of everything we do. We'll continue to build on these results with all the exciting initiatives we have this year.  We have pioneered Automatic Delay Repay on the West Coast and we are rolling out a £40 million revamp of our trains on the East Coast as well as introducing additional services between Edinburgh and London."

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 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. Subscribe [here](http://www.mynewsdesk.com/follow/47939) for regular news from Virgin Trains.

Press Office: 0845 000 3333. Company website: [www.virgintrains.co.uk](http://www.virgintrains.co.uk).

**About Virgin Trains East Coast**

Virgin Trains East Coast is the brand name of InterCity Railways Ltd (ICR), which is owned by Stagecoach Group (90%) and Virgin Group (10%). Virgin Trains East Coast began operating services on the East Coast Main Line on 1 March 2015, serving key UK cities including London, Peterborough, Doncaster, Leeds, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness. In November 2014 the Department for Transport awarded ICR a new franchise until at least 31 March 2023.

Virgin Trains East Coast is committed to delivering a high speed, high quality service with new services, faster and more frequent journeys, more comfortable travel and excellent customer service. More than £140m is to be invested in delivering improved service and a more personalised travel experience for customers.

Visit the Virgin Trains East Coast Media Centre at: <http://www.virgintrainseastcoast.com/media-centre> for the latest news and images.

Contact the Virgin Trains Press Office: press.desk@virgintrains.co.uk or call us on 0845 000 3333.