**Embargoed until** **00:01 19 March 2018**

**More easy ways with Seatfrog to upgrade to First Class luxury on Virgin Trains East Coast**

* *Exciting new features from Seatfrog – groups\* can bid and upgrade together from one device*
* *Third Party Bookings – Virgin Trains East Coast bookings made through third parties\*\* like The Trainline can now be added to Seatfrog*
* *Upgrade Now – new 'buy it now' feature lets you upgrade to First Class instantly if the price is right*

**19 March 2018** – Train travellers now have more ways to upgrade to First Class on Virgin Trains’ east coast services with the launch of exciting new features from Seatfrog. The app, which emerged last year as a brand-new disruptor to the travel industry, has today revealed a host of benefits including being able to upgrade as a group\*, to make customers’ journeys even better.

Having launched exclusively on Virgin Trains’ east coast services last year in a world-first for rail passengers, Seatfrog has revolutionised train travel by opening up First Class to a wider audience, allowing travellers to bid on empty seats in First Class from as little as £5.

As of March 19 2018, customers will see the following updates to the app:

**Group Bidding** means travellers can bid for multiple upgrades on their Seatfrog app and travel in the luxury of Virgin Trains East Coast First Class together. Whether it’s a journey with colleagues to that all-important business meeting, or a special weekend away with friends, once bidding is open, travellers simply select the number of seats they would like to upgrade and follow the usual steps: set the maximum price they would like to pay and submit their bid.

**Email Forwarding** allows travellers who have booked their Virgin Trains East Coast ticket through a third party, like The Trainline\*, to add their trip to Seatfrog and start bidding to enjoy the perks of First Class, so there’s no excuse not to try for an upgrade. All that passengers need to do is register with Seatfrog and forward their original booking confirmation email to [trips@seatfrog.com](mailto:trips@seatfrog.com).

**Upgrade Now:** For passengers who feel the price is right then, there’s no need to risk missing out. Travellers can upgrade instantly with Seatfrog’s brand new ‘upgrade now’ feature meaning there’s no hanging around. ‘Upgrade now’ becomes available up to two days before the trip and can be used for multiple upgrades if there are enough seats available.

Suzanne Donnelly, Commercial Director at Virgin Trains on the east coast, said: “We have a strong record of innovating for the benefit of our customers and, since partnering with Seatfrog last year to launch the global-first app exclusively to our passengers, we’ve been delighted with customers’ feedback. This exciting new development from Seatfrog means there are now even more affordable ways for passengers to enjoy the comfort and luxury of our First Class offer, which includes complimentary food and drink from a menu curated by James Martin, reclining leather seats, additional legroom, mood lighting, free Wi-Fi and Beam, our onboard entertainment service with movies, box sets, magazines and more. Customers can also enjoy First Class lounges with free Wi-Fi, relaxation areas and refreshments in selected stations.”

Seatfrog is available for download now from the App Store for both iOS and Android devices. Travellers simply enter their journey details before placing their bid at the touch of a button. What’s more, passengers never pay more than the value of the upgrade and there are no hidden fees. For more information on Seatfrog go to [virgintrainseastcoast.com/upgrades](http://www.virgintrainseastcoast.com/upgrades)

**ENDS**

N**otes to Editors**

For further information on Virgin Trains, please contact [virgintrainsEC@kaper.com](mailto:virgintrainsEC@kaper.com)

For Seatfrog press images or interview requests please contact [seatfrog@hopeandglorypr.com](mailto:seatfrog@hopeandglorypr.com)

\*The new group bidding feature is available for groups of up to nine people travelling together. Larger groups should continue to make their bookings via the Virgin Trains East Coast Contact Centre at <https://www.virgintrainseastcoast.com/customer-service/contact-us/make-a-group-booking/>

\*\*Full list of supported third parties include:

* Trainline (web and app) - <https://www.thetrainline.com/>
* Virgin Trains West Coast (web and app) - <https://www.virgintrains.co.uk/>
* Virgin Trains East Coast (web and app) - <https://www.virgintrainseastcoast.com/>
* Southern Railway (web and app) - <https://www.southernrailway.com>
* Transpennine (web and app) - <https://www.tpexpress.co.uk/>
* Red Spotted Hanky (web) - <http://www.redspottedhanky.com/>
* Cross Country (web) - <https://www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk/>

**Group Bidding**

**If I am bidding on multiple seats are they guaranteed to be available?**

Yes, unless someone outbids you in the auction and we’ll notify you if this happens.

**How do you calculate the total price?**

When you select more than one upgrade, your bid amount will be multiplied by the number of upgrades you’ve chosen to bid on.

**How do I get all the tickets?**

If you win multiple seats, all your upgrade barcodes will be loaded into your Seatfrog app and you will be sent copies to your registered email address.

**How do I get to my seat?**

You must sit in the seat numbers provided on each upgrade barcode and show each upgrade barcode along with your original tickets for each member of your party to the train manager.

**About Seatfrog**

Seatfrog is a travel technology company transforming the future of rail and airline upgrades. Seatfrog helps rail providers and airlines unlock new ancillary revenue opportunities right up to the departure gate by creating a seamless upgrade experience for passengers on mobile.

It is the world’s most comprehensive automation of the upgrade process and the first mobile focused platform that allows passengers to transparently bid for an upgrade in real time, pay and receive a new boarding pass direct to their mobile right up until the time of departure.

For more information, visit [seatfrog.com](http://seatfrog.com/) or find us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/SeatFrog/) or [Twitter](https://twitter.com/Seatfrog).

**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 over £40m in our existing fleet, including £21m refurbishing interiors and £16m towards improving the engines of our trains. Customers can now benefit from 48 additional services between Edinburgh and London every week, and an extra 22 Saturday services between Leeds and London – a total of 1.74 million additional seats since May 2015. 2018 will see the introduction of completely new Azuma trains being built in the UK by Hitachi.

Visit the Virgin Trains Media Room - [virgintrains.co.uk/about/media-room](http://mediaroom.virgintrains.co.uk/) - for the latest news, images and videos. Subscribe [here](http://www.mynewsdesk.com/follow/47939) for regular news from Virgin Trains.

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