



Press Release

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Investment in bodycams by Virgin Trains sees staff assaults drop by more than half

- *Virgin trains purchase 275 cameras for frontline*
- *British Transport Police will have direct access to the footage*
- *People feel safer at work while wearing bodycams and nearly 90% would recommend wearing one to a colleague*
- *Industry-wide study reveals physical assaults against those wearing bodycams fell by almost half (47%)*

Virgin Trains has become the first UK train operator to provide body worn cameras to cover all its frontline people, resulting in assaults on staff falling by more than half.

Following a pilot scheme, Virgin Trains rolled out 275 cameras across the entire network.

Since this was completed in February 2018, assaults on Virgin Trains staff have reduced month by month, from 20 in March 2018 to 6 in September.

Results from a survey revealed that more than 80% of staff felt safer at work while wearing bodycams and nearly 90% would recommend them to colleagues.

In another first for the rail industry, Virgin Trains has given the British Transport Police direct access to footage from the cameras, if needed, thanks to a state-of-the-art cloud-based system that allows them to view the footage when the cameras are docked – speeding up investigations and possible prosecutions.

The introduction of bodycams on Virgin Trains has already led to one conviction so far, where a man pleaded guilty in June to a public order offence following an incident in April this year on a train in Wolverhampton.

Research across the rail industry showed that when rail employees at station barriers wore bodycams as part of a trial last year, physical assaults against those wearing the technology fell by almost half (47%) and assaults against all employees fell by 26%.

This trial was commissioned as part of the rail industry's commitment to continually improve security and was conducted by the University of Cambridge with five train operators, including Virgin Trains, the British Transport Police (BTP) and the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), which represents the rail industry.



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Work is now underway between rail companies and the BTP to develop a joint rollout of the technology across the country.

Lewis Komodromou, a Revenue Protection Team Leader for Virgin Trains, was assaulted by a passenger who had an invalid ticket at Euston station.

Lewis was shoved, subjected to verbal abuse and threatened. Other colleagues intervened, and the man was arrested.

The 26-year-old suffered a shoulder injury in the assault.

He said: "I was extremely shocked after the ordeal. I hadn't really been in that type of situation before so I didn't know how to react. Luckily my Virgin Trains colleagues were there to make sure I was okay."

He said that the rollout has addressed the safety concerns of his team.

"My colleagues have said they feel much safer wearing the bodycams and they have more confidence in situations which could escalate. The response has been really positive," he said. "Since the bodycams have been introduced it has stopped lots of situations that could otherwise get out of hand. The bodycams have also been great for passing on evidence needed for the BTP."

Chief Inspector Lorna McEwan, of The British Transport Police, said: "The introduction of body worn cameras is an important step along the road in helping to ensure the safety of rail staff and passengers alike.

"Being assaulted or verbally abused simply for doing your job is completely unacceptable. No one should ever have to feel unsafe – especially when they are at work – and these cameras will help provide us with vital evidence should the inexcusable happen.

"We will continue to actively work with all rail companies to tackle this issue head on."

Paul Plummer, chief executive of the RDG, said:

"We're proud of Britain's railway having such a strong safety record but as an industry we are always looking at ways we can make it even safer. One assault against a rail worker is one too many. Our research shows that body cameras can make a difference -- cutting assaults on staff by almost half. We're now working together as an industry to develop plans to roll out this technology nation-wide."

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Since March 2018 when the roll-out completed, physical assaults have dropped. In March there were 20 physical assaults across the Virgin Trains network with six recorded in September.
2. The BTP recorded 6,960 incidents of assault against rail staff in 2015-2016 of which 27% (1,879) were physical assaults and with many incidences estimated to have gone unreported. Over the twelve months to end of May this year, train operating companies notified RDG of 1435 incidents of physical assault against staff.
3. Rail companies are committed to continually improving the safety and security of the railway as part of their joint plan to change and improve. Last year rail staff at stations across the country trialled body worn cameras and this was overseen by the University of Cambridge. The trial took place at 33 stations, which have 1,572 employees across 127 barriers, and was the first time that body worn cameras had been used by an organisation not involved in policing. The results of this research showed that physical assaults against rail staff fell drastically (by 47%). The train companies that participated were Virgin Trains, Govia Thameslink Railway, Merseyrail, Northern Rail, and Southeastern.

For more information contact the RDG Press Office on 0207 841 8020.

4. The make and model of the cameras purchased in Virgin Trains rollout are the Pinnacle Response PR6 BWV

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.



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Virgin Trains operated the East Coast route between March 1, 2015 and June 24, 2018. In that time, we invested £75m to create a more personalised travel experience, including over £40m in the existing fleet. Customers have benefitted 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.

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](#).

Visit the Virgin Trains Media Room - virgintrains.co.uk/about/media-room - for the latest news, images and videos. Subscribe [here](#) for regular news from Virgin Trains.

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