



# Press Release

16 October 2018

## Virgin Trains marks 60 years of Blue Peter with train naming

- *Virgin Trains names one of its flagship Pendolinos 'Blue Peter'*
- *Former presenters travel onboard 'Blue Peter' en-route to birthday celebrations in Manchester*
- *'Blue Peter' will be seen the length and breadth of the west coast route*

Virgin Trains has named one of its flagship Pendolinos 'Blue Peter' to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of the world's longest running children's TV show.

Former presenters including Peter Purves, Konnie Huq, Janet Ellis, Richard Bacon and Liz Barker all jumped onboard 'Blue Peter' today ahead of the special diamond anniversary programme due to be screened on the CBBC channel and again this weekend on BBC2.

The train naming continues the show's longstanding association with the railway. A steam engine also bears the name 'Blue Peter' and has been a regular feature on the programme over the years.

"We've all grown up with Blue Peter," enthused Gaynor Stewart, General Manager for Virgin Trains in the North West. "We wanted to mark the milestone, especially now the programme is filmed in Manchester. And great to see the smiles on people's faces when they've spotted the nameplate. I am sure it has helped conjured up a lot of memories from the past 60 years."

Fans of the show, and train, will be able to look out for Pendolino 'Blue Peter' as it travels up and down the west coast route, clocking up around 350k miles each year on its visits to London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh and stations in between.

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### 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



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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.

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](#).

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