

Virgin Trains teddy tracker launches today



Virgin Trains comes to the rescue of missing teddies!

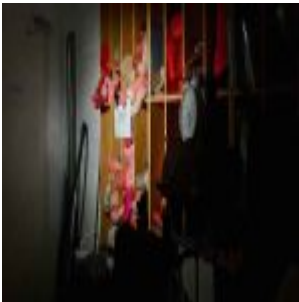
- **Today Virgin Trains becomes first travel operator to introduce a teddy tracker – available in Glasgow**
- **Virgin Trains pledges to return all lost toys left on board their trains**
- **Idea inspired by mother's plea to Richard Branson to find 7-year-old's missing teddy, Rufus**

Virgin Trains has come to the rescue of hundreds of families travelling during the summer holidays by being the first travel operator to introduce a novel teddy tracker to make sure kids don't lose their best friends by leaving them behind on a train.

The teddy tracker is inspired by the heart-warming story of 7-year-old Ted McCaffery from Stockton Heath, whose mother recently contacted Richard Branson on Twitter to help relocate his lost teddy Rufus. Footage from CCTV showed that he wasn't left on a Virgin Train after all, but was happily returned by a friendly neighbour some weeks after he was lost. The incident however left an indelible mark on Sir Richard, who was so moved by the desperate plea he received that he then tasked his staff to come up with a solution to help lost toys arrive home safe and sound in future.

Each year, the cries of hundreds of upset children across the country can be heard as they lose their teddies in transit. Toys account for over half of the items of lost property left on Virgin Trains annually. The lost property cupboard at

London Euston alone currently has 87 cuddly residents that are waiting to be reunited with their owners.



The special trackers, which are introduced today, can be personalised and tied around teddy's paw so he can be identified and, when handed over to Virgin Trains staff, his safe journey home can be arranged. So the great news is, even

if teddy is left behind on board a Virgin Train or at a station, he will be able to find his way home.

To help ensure the safe onward travel of lost teddies UK wide, Virgin Trains has also added extra manpower to its priority boarding team by recruiting 12 additional volunteers. The team will be on the lookout for passengers travelling over the summer holidays who need a bit of extra help, whether travelling with lots of luggage or young children, and will be on hand to help customers to find their seats, stow their luggage and settle in comfortably for their journey. The paid volunteers are a combination of Virgin Trains friends and family members and volunteers from Euston-based youth charity, New Horizons.

Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group said: "As anyone who has young children will know, losing a favourite toy can be heart-breaking, and we know it can often ruin a family day out. We were so touched by the message from Ted's mother that our staff have been working hard to come up with a solution. And that's when we had the idea of creating a tracker that you can tie onto your teddy.

"It's so simple but by promising to return any missing toys we really hope that it will help to ease any stress or anxiety that parents might have when taking a trip with their children and ensure every customer's journey is that little bit better over the summer holidays.

The Virgin Trains teddy tracker will be available UK-wide on all routes from today.

The Edinburgh Reporter has also had some really good interaction with [Teddy Bear Lost and Found](#) on Facebook which is worldwide.