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Tel: 07799 864404

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

Robert Samson  
Passenger Link Manager  
Transport Focus  
9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Rail House  
Store Street  
Manchester, M1 2RP

**30 July 2015**

Dear Robert,

**VIRGIN TRAINS FARES : RAILCARD CONCESSION : SEPTEMBER 2015**

This letter, sent on the usual 'in confidence' basis, is to give Transport Focus prior advice of a change we are planning to make to our customer offer from the September 2015 fares change date.

Virgin Trains is currently the only train company in Britain which offers easements that allow certain Railcard holders to purchase discounted off-peak tickets for travel on peak trains.

This has been the case for many years, although the easement has never been very heavily promoted as we were always conscious that a decision could be taken at any time to withdraw it.

While we recognise it may come as a disappointment to many, we have decided that we now wish to withdraw the easement, and bring ourselves back in line with the rest of the industry. As you are aware, RailCards are generally designed for use by leisure travellers who have the flexibility to travel during the off peak.

We will shortly be communicating our decision to customers ahead of the fares change due to be implemented at the start of September, in order that customers have a bit of notice about this change.

In the meantime, we welcome your views on this decision, and would be grateful if you could share these with us by no later than 14 August 2015.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Haggard", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Haggard  
Franchise Manager, Virgin Trains

----- Original message -----

From: "Hagyard, Chris" <[Chris.Hagyard@virgintrains.co.uk](mailto:Chris.Hagyard@virgintrains.co.uk)>  
Date: 18/08/2015 10:22 (GMT+00:00)  
To: Robert Samson <[Robert.Samson@transportfocus.org.uk](mailto:Robert.Samson@transportfocus.org.uk)>  
Cc:  
Subject: In Confidence : September 2015 Fares

Dear Robert

Thank you for your email of 12 August regarding our proposal to withdraw the RailCard easement.

We have noted your comments, but nevertheless are progressing the change from 6 September 2015, having considered the issues carefully including the response you have provided. This will then bring us back in line with other TOCs, none of whom offer this easement.

In practice, affected customers will have a number of options in deciding how to react to the change in the offer. The example you have shared with us is very much at the extreme end of this, and in practice customers not wishing to pay the discounted Anytime fare but still wishing to travel at peak times will generally have the option to mix and match Advance and Off Peak tickets to make their intended journeys. No doubt, many others will adjust their plans to travel at off peak times with no change to the fare they pay.

To reassure you in relation to your final comment, the Charity discount we offer remains unaffected . Registered Charities that are 10% or more voluntarily funded receive a 20% discount on all Virgin Trains Advance purchase tickets, and this does not change.

With best regards

Chris



**Chris Hagyard** *Franchise and Public Affairs Manager*  
Virgin Trains, 85 Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham, B5 4HA  
m: 07799 864404 e: [chris.hagyard@virgintrains.co.uk](mailto:chris.hagyard@virgintrains.co.uk)

Online MediaRoom: <http://mediaroom.virgintrains.co.uk>  
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**From:** Robert Samson [<mailto:Robert.Samson@transportfocus.org.uk>]  
**Sent:** 12 August 2015 19:01  
**To:** Hagyard, Chris  
**Subject:** RE: In Confidence : September 2015 Fares

Dear Chris

Thank you for your letter of 30 July, informing Transport Focus of your decision to withdraw the easement which allowed passengers to purchase discounted off-peak tickets for on peak trains.

You are correct in recognising that this will come as a disappointment to many passengers and we would ask you to reconsider the decision to withdraw this easement. The following

example for travel between London and Manchester clearly indicates the huge increase that some passengers may face in their cost of rail travel:

Anytime return at current fare: £217.15 (£329 @ 34% reduction)

To travel at the same time with a Railcard now: £53.85 i.e. **303%**

**increase**

To compound this issue further the latest National Rail Passenger Survey results for Virgin Trains showed value for money for the price of the ticket at 59% overall satisfaction but for those passengers who used a railcard the figure was 76% overall satisfaction. The satisfaction levels are likely to suffer with this easement.

We note that your letter is headed 'railcard concessions' but we would seek reassurance that this easement will not affect charities.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

**Robert Samson**

**Passenger Manager**

Transport Focus ([Manchester office](#))

The independent transport user watchdog

e [robert.samson@transportfocus.org.uk](mailto:robert.samson@transportfocus.org.uk) *Please note this address has changed.*

m 07719 656469

w [www.transportfocus.org.uk](http://www.transportfocus.org.uk)

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**From:** Hagyard, Chris [<mailto:Chris.Hagyard@virgintrains.co.uk>]

**Sent:** 30 July 2015 11:35

**To:** Robert Samson <[Robert.Samson@transportfocus.org.uk](mailto:Robert.Samson@transportfocus.org.uk)>

**Subject:** In Confidence : September 2015 Fares

Dear Robert

Thank you for your time on the phone earlier

As discussed, please see the letter attached regarding the RailCard easement, which I am sending to you in confidence.

We look forward to hearing your views

With best wishes

Chris



**Chris Hagyard** *Franchise and Public Affairs Manager*  
Virgin Trains, 85 Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham, B5 4HA  
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Thank you

[Postmaster@virgintrains.co.uk](mailto:Postmaster@virgintrains.co.uk)

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