Firstgroup plc Thanks First ScotRail Passengers and Employees

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On Wednesday 1 April operations at First ScotRail will transfer to a new franchise run by Abellio, with sleeper services to be operated by the newly created Caledonian Sleeper franchise, run by Serco.

Commenting, FirstGroup Chief Executive Tim O'Toole said:

"We are immensely proud to have operated Scotland's railways for the past 11 years, and to have delivered unmatched levels of service and quality. Since 2004, First ScotRail has invested more than £82 million in Scotland's railways, delivering increased frequencies, upgrades to trains and stations and increasing the number of passengers by 34%. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our passengers for their support and custom.

"We will be handing over Scotland's railways in a very strong position. Passenger numbers are at an all-time high, with more than 86 million passenger journeys being made in the last year, and satisfaction is at record levels of over 90% in the latest National Rail Passenger Survey - eight points higher than the national UK average, and six points higher than when we took over the franchise. Punctuality has also risen from 84% in 2004 to a record high of 95% today. Our achievements have been recognised by the industry as we have been awarded the title of Rail Operator of the Year three times in the last six years.

"Above all, I am most proud of the team, led by Steve Montgomery, and all of our employees at First ScotRail for achieving these goals. I would like to thank them for their commitment and dedication in delivering the highest standards of service for passengers.

"We are working hard with the new franchisees to ensure a smooth transition for everyone as they prepare to take on the responsibility of running Scotland's railways. We wish employees, partners and passengers of the new franchise every success for the future."

Ends

Notes to Editors
FirstGroup has operated the First ScotRail franchise since 2004 and during that time has:

- Provided more services and introduced new trains: Scotland now has its biggest ever timetable of 2,300 services each day, up by 300 since 2004. In addition 215 extra coaches have been introduced. This has helped to attract new passengers, with customer numbers rising to more than 86 million – an increase of 34% since 2004.
- Improved service quality: Punctuality and reliability scores reached a record high this year of 95.3% - up from 84% in 2004, and customer satisfaction is at its highest ever level at 90% - eight points higher than the UK average and six points higher than in 2004.
- Invested in Scotland's rail services: more than £82 million invested since 2004 including station improvements of £56m and improvements to rolling stock of £26.3m. More than 130 trains and 50 stations have been fitted with free Wi-Fi.
- Invested in our people to deliver performance and customer service: Employee numbers increased from 3,500 to 4,900 including nearly 300 more drivers. We achieved Investors in People Gold status, the largest UK Company to do so, and we launched a Modern Apprenticeship in Customer Service – the first of its kind in the rail industry.
- Awarded Rail Operator of the Year at the National Transport Awards on 2 October 2014 for the third time in six years.
- Forged effective partnerships: First ScotRail was one of the first train operating companies to sign an alliance agreement with Network Rail, resulting in savings including the delivery of the industry-leading Paisley Canal line electrification project within 6 months whilst reducing the costs from £28m to £12m.
- Delivered Scotland's successful year of events in 2014: First ScotRail carried more than 1.1 million people to the Commonwealth Games, and 50,000 to the Ryder Cup as well as Edinburgh Festivals and Bannockburn Live.

FirstGroup plc (LSE: FGP.L) is the leading transport operator in the UK and North America. With revenues of more than £6.7 billion in 2013/14 and around 110,000 employees, we transported around 2.5 billion passengers last year. Each of our five divisions is a leader in its field: First Student is the largest

provider of student transportation in North America with a fleet of around 49,000 yellow school buses, First Transit is one of the largest providers of outsourced transit management and contracting services in the US, while Greyhound is the only national operator of scheduled intercity coach services across North America. In the UK, FirstGroup is one of Britain's largest bus operators running a fleet of some 6,400 buses, and we are one of the largest operators of passenger rail services in the UK, carrying more than 330 million passengers last year, with experience of running all types of rail network.

In Scotland the Group is the country's largest bus operator and also runs First TransPennine Express services to Glasgow, Edinburgh and Lockerbie.

In recent weeks the Group has secured a contract to operate the Great Western franchise for up to four and a half years, and looks forward to continuing to work closely with the Department for Transport and Network Rail to deliver the £7.5bn Great Western Mainline modernisation programme through to 2019/2020. We have also signed an agreement to run the TransPennine Express franchise through to 1 April 2016, and look forward to submitting our bid for the new franchise later in the Spring.

Our vision is to provide solutions for an increasingly congested world... keeping people moving and communities prospering.

Company Contact:

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