

**DO YOU ENJOY DRIVING? – AND LIKE PEOPLE?**

**ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW CAREER?**

**then join our COACH OR BUS DRIVER TEAM**



**Learn a new vocation – Pay as little as £97 in up front training costs. Then earn around £30,000 per year and receive a £1,000 bonus for completing your training!**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for your interest in joining our coach and bus driver teams. If you are new to the public transport industry and are thinking of a change in career, then you will of course have many questions concerning the practicalities of acquiring a vocational licence and becoming a qualified Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) driver. You will also be interested in the benefits in the job and your longer-term prospects as a driver in our industry.

In this leaflet we can provide answers to these questions in order to help you and to encourage you to take up PCV driving as a professional career.

## **So what does the job entail?**

Coach and bus driving is a professional vocation and is probably the most challenging driving job there is! This is because you will be transporting different people and different age groups from 4-year-olds to 90-year-olds to different places every day – and the customers, be they bus or coach passengers will expect you to know where you are going. And you'll be expected to provide excellent customer service at all times too!

## **What is the difference between bus and coach driving?**

### **Coach Driving**

A coach is designed for longer distance travel; therefore, the seats are more comfortable, the legroom is better and a coach will generally have air-conditioning, plus additional items like a toilet and hot drinks machine on board.

For the driver, the hours are very varied and are set by the requirements of the customers. Of course, every hire and every day are often very different. The coach industry of course is also subject to seasonal demand with all coach operators being much busier in the summer than the winter. Coach operation is a 24/7 business, 365 days of the year according to customer requirements and there are strict drivers' hours regulations in force, which are designed to ensure safety for all road users and which protect drivers from being overworked and becoming over-tired, especially at peak and busy times.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, working at Johnsons means that your passengers and the type of work will vary greatly every day. One day you could be transporting a party of school children to a Zoo, the next day it could be the local W.I. or National Trust Group going to visit some gardens or perhaps a stately home, and then the next day you could be transporting top level business executives to a conference! Also of course, once you are more experienced you could be doing holiday touring work in this country or overseas.



One of the many benefits of being a coach driver are that the work, as highlighted above is so varied and that you are more or less "your own boss" while you are out on the road. Your own efforts to please your passengers will create tremendous job satisfaction and you get the best view of all the scenery!

Finally, we operate a top-quality fleet of coaches which are a joy to drive once you have got the hang of them!

### **Bus Driving**

Buses are designed for and operate on short journeys, usually in towns and cities, where passengers board and disembark at pre-set bus stops according to their own needs.

For the driver, the hours of work are set and consistent for the weeks and months ahead. A 'rota' is usually in place which sets out which drivers are driving which route and at what



times. Therefore, bus drivers have more stable and set hours and they drive regular, set routes that are operated by the company. Johnsons operate routes in Birmingham, Coventry, Warwick, Leamington Spa, Kenilworth and Stratford upon Avon.

## **OUR COACH AND BUS DRIVER TRAINING SCHEME.**

We have our own in-house driver training scheme and over the years we have been very successful in taking on competent car and van drivers of any age and providing all the training and support needed for them to qualify as a PCV driver. These drivers then often go on to have long and rewarding careers with us and in the wider coach and bus industry.

### **1. How long does it take to pass a PCV test?**

Your test comprises of two classroom theory tests and a practical driving test. Most trainees pass their test within 20 hours of in-vehicle tuition and you'll also be expected to study the requirements for the theory tests in your own time.

### **2. What qualifications and skills do I need to join the training scheme?**

#### ***Age limits***

- a) Firstly, you do need to be 21 years of age as a minimum, although there is a "young drivers" PCV Scheme, which allows you to train as a driver at the age of 18 or over. This scheme does have restrictions on the type of work you can undertake between the age of 18 and 21 and further details can be provided upon request. Furthermore, if you are already, or when you reach the age of 45 during your career as a PCV driver, you will need to undertake and pass a full PCV medical every 5 years until the age of 65 and then every year from then on.

#### ***Driving licence requirements***

- b) Ideally you need a clean driving licence for cars (category B). Convictions for road traffic offences are taken into account when the Traffic Commissioners 'consider' granting your PCV licence (Passenger Carrying Vehicle licence) once you have successfully passed your test.

#### ***Health requirements***

- c) You must be in generally good health to undertake coach and bus driving work. Prior to being accepted onto our PCV driver training course, you will be required to pass a full PCV medical examination. This can be carried out by specific organisations at a cost of approx. £60. Or you can take the examination through your own doctor; however, the cost of this is higher. This cost must be met by yourself and we can provide further information on this if required.

- d) Driving a single or double deck coach or bus with passengers on board is obviously a very responsible job and like any job it can be tiring at times. Therefore, good health is essential.

### 3. What makes a good PCV driver?

It is important right from the start that you view coach or bus driving as a professional career and the ideal driver, due to the varying nature of the work, be it on buses or coaches, possesses the following:

- a cheerful and friendly personality.
- a positive and enthusiastic attitude to work.
- a desire to please and help customers.
- good communication skills, both talking and listening!
- good general geographical knowledge
- high quality driving skills, with a strong awareness of hazard perception and a total commitment to safe driving.



You'll see in Appendix B, our document detailing 'Driver Training Standards'. This document provides a detailed account of the standards you will be required to reach.

### 4. What are the 'up-front' costs of the training?

Indeed, you need to know in advance what you will have to pay out, before we take you on as a Trainee Driver. There is no great outlay, here's the upfront costs;

- PCV medical test – between £60 and £150 depending on where you go. See section 2C above and 'stage 4' below.
  - Multiple-Choice Theory test - £26.00
  - The Hazard Perception test - £11.00
- Total 'up-front' costs      Between £97 and £187.**

5. **What are the stages to becoming a fully qualified PCV driver?**

We are a long-established, award-winning coach operator and we enjoy an excellent reputation for quality, service and safety. Therefore, we do take training very seriously. Consequently, we have devised six clear steps or “stages” for the successful completion of the training course.

**They are as follows:**

**Stage 1** This is where you are now. After reading this leaflet you will need to complete the application form and return it to us. We will consider your application and may ask you for further clarification on any aspect of it.

**Stage 2** We will interview successful candidates, either in person here at our offices, or electronically by Zoom or Teams. The interview will include a geography and map test, a highway code test, a minibus (Ford Transit) driving assessment, as well as the formal interview itself.

**Stage 3** At this stage, successful candidates will be offered a “try-out day”. This is your opportunity to experience first-hand what it is like to be a coach or bus driver. You can choose which of coach or bus work you’d like to try. We will put you in the care of one of our experienced drivers for a day or half day, travelling with him or her on a real live coach hire or bus service. On completion we’ll ask for your feedback on your experience and ensure you fully understand the nature and details of the job.

**Stage 4** At this stage, provided that you are happy to proceed, and that we are happy to continue with your appointment application, you will be issued with a PCV medical form and a provisional PCV licence Category D entitlement application form. You will need to complete both forms and send them off to the relevant authorities. Should you fail your PCV medical then your place on a training course place will be automatically terminated. The cost of your PCV medical is detailed above. Your provisional licence does not incur a fee. Furthermore, at this stage you will need to pay for, complete and pass the classroom Multiple-Choice Theory test and the Hazard Perception tests. The costs of these are £26.00 and £11.00 respectively and our Training Team will support and advise you throughout. Therefore, you have ‘up front’ costs, before commencement of employment and training, totalling £97.00 approx. depending on the cost of your medical.

**Stage 5.** Successful candidates will be offered a place on our driver training scheme and you’ll be asked to read and sign our ‘training contract’ which provides among other things details of the fees that we impose if you should decide to terminate your involvement in a training course at any time, or choose not to stay with us after passing your PCV test. Please see Appendix A for a copy of this.

Also at this stage, you will be required to complete an Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) application. This is completed electronically on-line and again our Training Team will guide you with this. (Please note that the Enhanced DBS check is required for all our drivers, as your work will require you to be in contact with young people and vulnerable adults). Your Enhanced DBS costs us £58.00 but this included by within your training contract.

**Stage 6.** You will commence your training as a PCV driver, under the full instruction of our Training Team. You will also, of course, at this stage join the company and our payroll! Congratulations and welcome to the team!

You will be issued with a driver's uniform. This is provided free of charge but should be returned immediately to us if at any time you choose to leave our employment or if your training and employment is terminated. You will also be issued with a training log which will detail of all the various elements of both your 'in-vehicle' and 'in-classroom' training. The 'in classroom' training includes your CPC modules 2 and 4. These modules cost £26 and £55 respectively and again, they are included within your training contract. A CPC is a drivers 'Certificate of Professional Competence' and these modules are required in order for you to attain your CPC and therefore obtain your Drivers Qualification Card (DQC), which in turn entitles you to carry passengers, once you have passed your PCV test.

There will also be regular appraisals of your performance and progress and you must pass each appraisal before continuing to the next elements of the course. Please note that we reserve the right at any time to terminate your training and employment if we believe that your performance and progress is unsatisfactory. In this instance, your training contract will be terminated and you will be released from our employment at no cost to yourself. This stage culminates in you successfully passing your PCV test.

**Stage 7.** This is the final stage and the start of your period as a 'Newly Qualified Driver' (NQD). Following you passing your PCV test and becoming 'operational', You will remain at NQD status for your driving work until our Training Team deem that are ready to be released from training. This may take between 6 and 12 months, depending on your own speed of understanding and development. Furthermore, during this time, although you are now a qualified coach driver, you will remain under the authority of our Training Team. This is due to the fact that your first year is quite a steep learning curve which must be carefully managed with additional support, help, mentoring and advice. Without a doubt, your first experience of driving a coach or bus with up to 53 passengers sat behind you will be a memorable one indeed!



6. **'In work' training and development.**

- a) During this time, if you have chosen coach driving, you will also receive mentoring experiences; for example, travelling on longer hires as a second driver, with an experienced driver to help you learn the ropes. If you have chosen bus driving your specific training will be on routes, ticket machines and timetables.
- b) For both coach and bus trainees there will also be further in-classroom training which will include subjects like drivers' hours, customer care, first aid and disability awareness. Finally, during your time as a NQD there will once again be performance and progress appraisals which you will be expected to pass.
- c) This stage and the whole training course culminate in you "passing out" as a fully qualified and trained coach or bus driver, which will be up to 12 months after passing your PCV test. Your training and training log will then be complete.



7. **What can you expect to earn as a coach or bus driver?**

- a) An important question of course! Therefore, your earnings will start with our training rate and once you have passed your test you will then be employed at the same hourly rates and same terms of employment as the rest of our coach or bus driver team.

**The rates for our coach drivers are as follows:**

| <b>RATES OF PAY</b>    | <b>STANDARD HOURLY RATE</b> | <b>UN-SOCIAL HOURLY RATE</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Training Rate          | £10.00                      | £12.50                       |
| NQD Rate               | £11.00                      | £13.50                       |
| Full coach driver rate | £11.00                      | £13.50                       |

- b) Your hours of work are not fixed and will vary depending on the work you are allocated and also the time of year; this is because coach operations are busier in summer than winter. However, most importantly you are guaranteed to be paid for a minimum of 170 hours per month. Our coach drivers usually work 6 days on and 2 days off, or 5 days on and 3 days off.
- c) The above 'standard rate' is paid for working between 06.00hrs and 18.00hrs Monday to Friday.

- d) The 'un-social rate' is paid for hours worked between 18.00 hrs each weekday and 06.00hrs the following morning; and from 18.00hrs on Friday, all weekend until 06.00hrs Monday morning. Bank holidays also qualify for unsociable hour rates.

***Additional Benefits for coach drivers.***

- e) After 5 years' service we do include you in our company group personal pension plan and provide a contribution of £25 per month into your pension. This is in addition to the contributions that we both make into your National Workplace Pension Scheme.
- f) You are entitled to 28 days paid holiday per year. This includes bank holidays. Please note that we do discourage holidays being taken in June, July, and September, as these are by far our busiest months.
- g) The industry does still have a tradition of tipping. The amount of these gratuities is entirely down to your own performance and on how well you have cared for your customers. All tips should be declared annually to HMRC. (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)
- h) At attractions, garden centres, visitor centres, motorway services and other refreshment outlets you do often receive either free food and drinks and/or a 'commission' for bringing your passengers to their establishment. Again, these benefits should be declared annually to HMRC.



**i)Therefore, as a trainee, you'll be generally working a 5-day week, Monday to Friday and you'll be paid a minimum of 170 hours per month. Therefore, your initial earnings are guaranteed to be at least approximately £1700 per month, £20,400 in a year. However, you can work extra hours to enhance your income by helping with our non-PCV door to door holiday services – just ask for more details on this.**

**j)Once you pass your PCV test and become an NQD, you'll be immediately on the full rates of pay as detailed above and your daily duties will be similar to the rest of our coach driving team. Our coach drivers work generally creates a split between standard hours and unsocial hours of approximately 60/40. Therefore, your minimum**



earnings, based on this and our guarantee of 170 hours per month, will be £2,040 per month, £24,480 in a year.

k) However, our coach drivers' actual average monthly hours are generally approximately 210 hours per month. Therefore, you can earn approximately £2,520 per month, £30,240 per year. Plus, all the benefits listed above.

The rates of pay for our bus drivers is as follows:

| RATES OF PAY         | STANDARD HOURLY RATE |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Training Rate        | £10.00               |
| Full bus driver rate | £10.25               |

l) Your hours of work are mostly fixed and will be set by the shift you are allocated to. The hourly rate is the same for all hours of the day and most shifts start no earlier than 06.00hrs and most are completed by 19.00hrs. Our bus drivers work 5 days out of 7 on a rolling week. We operate very few bus services on a Sunday, so most bus drivers are on rest on Sundays.

***Additional Benefits for bus drivers.***

m) After 5 years' service we do include you in our company group personal pension plan and provide a contribution of £25 per month into your pension. This is in addition to the contributions that we both make into your National Workplace Pension Scheme.

n) **You are entitled to 28 days paid holiday per year. This includes bank holidays.**

o) **Therefore, as a trainee, you'll be generally working a 5-day week, Monday to Friday and you'll be a full-time employee, on the training rate detailed above. Therefore, your initial earnings will be at least approximately £1600 per month, £19,200 in a year. However, you may also be able to work extra hours to enhance your income by helping with our non-PCV door to door holiday services – just ask for more details on this.**

p) **Once you pass your PCV test and become an NQD, you'll be immediately on the full rates of pay as detailed above and your daily duties will be similar to the rest of our bus driving team. Therefore, your minimum earnings, based on this will be approximately £2,040 per month, £24,480 in a year**

q) **However, our bus drivers average weekly hours is generally between 50 and 60 hours per week, depending on personal**

circumstances. Therefore, you can earn up to approximately £2,665 per month, £31,980 per year. Plus, all the benefits listed above.

**8) What are the conditions of employment and uniform allowance?**

a) Yes of course we do have detailed Conditions of Employment which are too numerous to list here. They are not onerous and are simply based on our commitment to excellent customer service and commitment to continuous improvement. You are welcome to inspect them during any stage of your training with us, so please just ask. Furthermore, upon commencement of Stage 6, you will receive an induction course, which includes a detailed look at conditions of employment and policies and procedures.

b) With regard to uniforms, as soon as you become a paid trainee at stage 6, we will provide you with your full uniform which we expect you to wear at all times when driving.



**9) Once I am accepted for training, what are the conditions of the scheme?**

a) The training contract provides details of your responsibilities during your training with us and a copy of it is provided at Appendix A of this document. The most important item to bring to your attention is the fact that driver training is labour intensive and therefore expensive. We want you to stay for the long-term, however, we do need to claw-back some of our costs if you should decide at any time to leave us during the first 2 years of employment.

b) To enable you to understand the costs involved in your training, you will most likely require up to 20 hours practical tuition @ £60 per hour; and your practical driving test will currently cost £115 plus 2 or 3 hours vehicle hire @ £60 per hour. On this point, to ensure that your time and our resources are not wasted, we will review your progress after 10 hours of 'in-vehicle' training. Should our Training Team reach the conclusion that you will not reach the standard required, your training contract will be terminated and you will be released from our employment at no cost to yourself.

c) Due to the high cost of this training, you will also appreciate that you do therefore have a 'training liability' to Johnsons for your training, which is the sum of £2,000 maximum. The final liability sum may be less than this if you have learnt and passed quickly; our Training Team will confirm the final figure once you pass your PCV test. This liability remains in force for a full 2 years from the commencement of your employment which is at the

beginning of Stage 6. This liability is reduced by 25% after your first six months of successful employment and it continues to reduce by 25% at the end of each successful six-month period. Therefore, for example, if your final liability was £2,000 and you chose to leave us after 19 months from the commencement of your training with us, you would be required to pay us back just 25% of your liability, which is £500. At the end of these two years, you are of course free from any liability or fees for your training.

**d) Most importantly, at the end of this 2-year period you will be awarded with your £1,000 bonus award for successfully completing your training, your NQD term and your 2 years of training liability.**

e) I should also add here that within your training contract with us, we will pay for up to three PCV tests. After that, we will review the situation with you. If you then decide that you would like to continue in the trainee programme, and we are happy for you to continue too, then you, will be responsible for meeting the cost of all further tests and further lessons, at the above quoted rates.

f) In the unlikely event that you will have got this far and still not passed your test and we decide that we are unwilling to continue with your training, then we will terminate your contract and release you from our employment at no cost to you.

g) We do of course hope that your career as a coach or bus driver will be a long, successful and enjoyable one and of course, as mentioned previously, your long-term prospects are in your own hands. The better you are with your passengers, your vehicle and with your commitment to increasing your knowledge and experience (for coach drivers, both in this country and abroad), the more successful you will be.

## **CONCLUSION**

So, there you have it, an introduction to a career as a coach or bus driver. Yes, the job can be demanding at times, but every day you will meet new people, go to new places, and take in many new sights and experiences.

We hope you will choose Johnsons as your employer; we have been established since 1909 and are very much a friendly family company. The company is still very much an independent family run business and Peter and John Johnson are still very much “hands-on” Directors. We take great pride in providing excellent customer service, and it is very much for this reason that we are now one of the Midlands largest and most successful coach and bus operators. This success is highlighted by the fact that we have won many industry awards over the years

Should you have any questions at all with regard to the above information, then please just call one of the contacts on the list below. Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet and thank you for your interest in Johnsons.



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## ***Travel with Johnsons – Travel with Friends***

(The above information is correct at Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021)

