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Britain's biggest-ever bus driver recruitment campaign expands to the North East as region's bus network continues to grow

Go North East, a part of The Go-Ahead Group, has expanded Britain's biggest-ever recruitment campaign for bus drivers to cover the North East in preparation for further growth in the region's public transport network.

The company plans to hire up to 200 drivers through its newly created Elite Bus Driver Academy. The successful applicants will operate routes in Gateshead, Durham and Tyne and Wear, earning upwards of £30,000.

Themed as 'Be an Elite Driver', the campaign uses fighter pilot-style uniforms and imagery, and makes existing drivers the star of the show. Images of [eight] drivers will be emblazoned across a fleet of buses – bringing to life the prestige of being a driver, and the great careers on offer.

Applicants will be urged to become 'the best of the best', to find the thing that will make them awesome and to brace themselves for a career with 'wheels...that you'll steer'. They will undertake an intensive six-week training program, open both to existing bus driver license holders and to those who have never sat behind the wheel of a bus before.

The operator has launched the campaign to support ambitious plans to transform buses in the region, which are being delivered in partnership with Nexus, Transport North East, Durham County Council, and Northumberland County Council. Millions of pounds of funding is being pumped into buses as part of the Government's Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The campaign is being backed by cheaper fares everywhere. People aged under 22 now pay just £1 per trip and the maximum anyone pays is £2. Buses on popular routes will also be more frequent meaning more drivers are needed.

Nigel Featham, Managing Director, Go North East, said: "This is a ground-breaking recruitment campaign to match the huge scale of change that we'll be helping to deliver in the North East's public transport. We've already had lots of interest in joining our Elite driver academy and we're expecting thousands of applications".

Bus driver jobs include 25 days' annual holiday, generous pensions and pay rates that quickly increase with experience. Go North East has tripled the size of its training team in anticipation of an influx of new recruits.

Huw Lewis, Customer Services Director at Nexus said: "Bus drivers play a vital role in helping people all over North East get to where they need to go. Nexus and its partners have ambitious plans for public transport and it's great to see this huge recruitment drive taking place, and the creation of hundreds of jobs for local people."

"There's no better time to get involved in transport, so I'd encourage anyone

who's thinking about becoming a bus driver to get on board.”

Apply to be an Elite bus driver at elitebusdriver.co.uk.

Notes to editors:

Go North East runs a network of bus routes across the North East region including Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham and surrounding areas.

The Go-Ahead Group is one of the UK's leading providers of public transport, enabling more than a billion passenger journeys each year on its bus and rail services. Go-Ahead places great importance on partnership, adopting a collaborative approach with governments, local communities and strategic partners; developing and operating services that create long-term value for all.

For more information about Go Ahead Group visit www.go-ahead.com.

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