



# DRIVING SKILLS

## FIRST LONDON APPRENTICESHIP BUS DRIVERS

### Background

As a commitment to the LSEB (London Skills and Employment Board), the Mayor has promised to increase apprenticeship numbers across the capital. TfL has been given a target to create 850 apprentices per year as part of the Mayor's commitment to provide 1,000 apprenticeships across the GLA Group.

TfL and First London, part of the bus service and transport provider, First Group plc, both support training and skill enhancement for their respective workforces and have launched a pilot programme that will see all new bus drivers who enter the organisation in London become apprentices. By doing so, the individuals involved receive extra elements of training: on key literacy and numeracy skills and a national vocational qualification (NVQ) – a work-related, competence-based qualification, including clear performance criteria.

### Key themes

The apprenticeship programme is addressing an important need for First London and contributing more widely to developing the capability of London's workforce. First London estimate that they need some 300-400 drivers annually. Providing this training gives those new employees a solid start in developing the skills needed to deliver excellent customer service.

The programme seeks to enhance the skill levels of First Group employees and members of the London workforce. The programme's training is tailored to the needs of the individual. If more time is required on the key functional skills of literacy and numeracy, it is provided. >>



“This effort is not only about getting a pool of people with the right skills that we need as a business. It's about social skill enhancement too. Everyone who goes through it should come out with better basic skills, which will help them communicate better internally. It might give them the confidence to apply for jobs they thought were out of their reach. Doing this, they can take on bigger challenges in life.”

**Mat Chapman**  
First London



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Over and above the focus on individuals, an important aspect of the programme is the creation of a new framework for bus drivers' technical qualifications, which will result in the development and award of a new technical certificate, which will apply nationally. This development work is being undertaken in collaboration with 'Go Skills' the sector skills council (SSC) for passenger transport. This will help ensure the framework for the apprentice qualification is compliant with the needs of awarding bodies and the standards of the Learning and Skills Council.

### Outcomes

More than 60 drivers have begun the technical training since September 2009. The extra training requirements began for drivers in December 2009. First Group's aspirations are that the programme will raise the quality and performance of drivers who come through it, giving those involved not only better basic skills but also increasing their future opportunities in the workplace.

Evaluation processes have been put in place to measure the success of the programme and the benefits of additional training.

“Young apprentices are key to the future prosperity of London and it is essential that we continue to build a skilled workforce to maintain the competitiveness of our great city. That means companies in all sectors of our economy playing their part, by investing in young people who are keen to learn new skills and will add real value to any workforce.”

**Mayor Boris Johnson**



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