

Nexus embarks on its biggest ever Metro driver training school

September 10, 2020



The Tyne and Wear Metro is to embark on its biggest ever driver training school after recruitment was halted earlier this year due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Nexus, the public body which owns and manages Metro, is taking on 30 new drivers during September and October – the largest single school since Metro began operations in 1980.

Training across the UK rail industry had been unable to take place during lockdown because national assessment centres that could put candidates through the required aptitude tests had to be closed.

Metro Operations Director, Chris Carson, said: “This is the biggest ever intake of trainee drivers in Metro’s 40 years of operations.

“We’re really looking forward to getting this up and running after the major setback that lockdown created for our training programme.

“We need to train more drivers and we have been unable to do that for six months. This has had a knock-

on effect for our customers, with trains sometimes being cancelled as a result even though we do all we can to avoid this.

“When these latest driver schools are completed by next spring we will be back to where we need to be in terms of train crew numbers.

“Our new trainees have had a long wait to get started, which can’t have been easy for them. I wish them well as they start the process of learning how to drive a Metro train on the network, which is part of everyday life for so many people in our region.”

The trainee Metro drivers – originally recruited last year but waiting since then for the opportunity to start their school – will undertake a six-month period of training and will be ready to go into service in March and April 2021.

A group of 16 trainees had been due to start in May, meaning that they would have been ready to start driving by November, but that was postponed due to lockdown.

The cancellation of that driver school meant that the Metro traincrew establishment is forecast to be 10% below requirements in December 2020 and 13% below requirements in January 2021.

Nexus doubled its annual driver trainee intake in September 2019 from 24 to 48. This allowed for six training schools to run per year.

This new training programme was being fulfilled up until the UK was locked down due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Photo credit: Nexus

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