

Quality Line

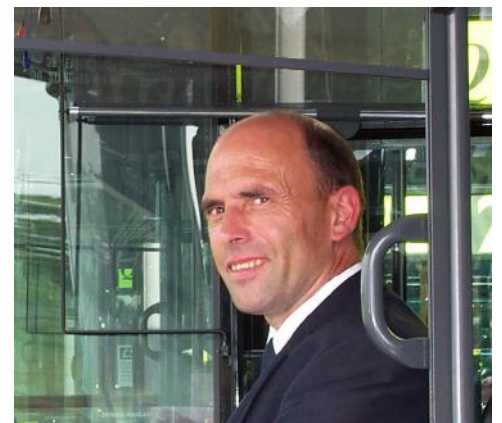
Part of Epsom Coaches Group



Drive a bus with us



**The complete guide to a
career with Quality Line**



Welcome to

Quality Line



A message from Steve Whiteway, Commercial Director

Thank you for your interest in our Company. Whether you already have a PCV licence, or are looking for a complete change of direction in your career, I hope you will enjoy reading about Quality Line, what we can offer the professional PCV driver and those who wish to train to that level.

Public transport is very much the watchword at the moment, with the government emphasising the changes necessary to reduce congestion and improve the environment. At Quality Line, we are well positioned to take advantage of these changes. Quality Line as part of the long established Epsom Coaches Group has been an enormous success, bringing unheard of standards of professionalism to the bus industry.

Our driving staff are the single most important ingredient in providing the standard of service the public are increasingly demanding. As a Company, our motivation to improve the working conditions for drivers is the No 1 priority, I make sure of that because I was a driver myself! By having professional drivers working in good conditions, we know that our staff are in the best position to look after the travelling public. I am confident that our driving staff have the best working conditions in the industry, with modern premises, modern buses and most importantly an excellent pay and benefits package, unique in the bus industry.

This publication is designed to give you an insight into our operation and how we work. We demand a high standard and old fashioned courtesy. In return, you can expect to be treated as an individual, have the respect of everyone who works with you and the travelling public.

I do hope you will consider joining us, I can promise a unique and friendly working atmosphere, where people really matter. Whatever you decide, I thank you for your interest in Quality Line.

Best wishes.



Introduction



Epsom Coaches Group

Quality Line is the bus operating division of Epsom Coaches Group, founded by the present Managing Director's Grandfather in 1920. Still very much a family business, the group now employ over 260 staff and operate almost 100 buses, coaches and support vehicles for a wide range of clients. The Company have long enjoyed a reputation of excellence which is jealously guarded and its staff are by far the most important asset, a fact that ensures those who work with the Company enjoy the best working conditions in the European passenger transport industry.

Quality Line

We developed our bus business from small beginnings in 1986 and right from the start set the standard for bus operation, with innovation and high quality the watchword. Today, Quality Line operate bus services on behalf of London Buses in the south London and Surrey areas, as well as services for Surrey County Council in and around Epsom. In all we now operate a bus fleet of around 60 vehicles, with an average age of just 3.5 years (the industry average is over 8 years) and employ 160 bus drivers.



24 Hour Service

Our fleet of buses together with support vehicles, has a formidable presence in the South East and beyond. Presentation is of great importance and our vehicle fleet is without doubt the cleanest in the area and is meticulously maintained by our 24 hour team of engineers. We also operate our own body repair facility, responsible for the maintenance of vehicle appearance.



Our staff - the key to our success

Our key to success over almost 90 years of business is our staff. Around 60% are trained from car licence level by our dedicated, friendly training team. Driving staff enjoy a unique role within a Company that despite expansion, has always enjoyed a relaxed and convivial working atmosphere. The driving staff in particular, have a vital role to perform. Most of the management team have previously driven buses, still retain their PCV licences and drive in service from time to time.

The Smarter Bus Company

We pride ourselves on the attention to detail and presentation that few other companies manage. Our staff are our most valuable asset with a considerable influence on the future direction of our business. For that reason many of our staff have enjoyed the long term benefits of an excellent working relationship. The opportunities for career development within the Company have presented themselves to most of our management team in the past and we hope to recognise and develop talented people to drive the business forward in the future.



Working with us



Driving

Driving a bus is a skilful job and one that demands the respect of the travelling public, whose safety is after all, the driver's total responsibility. Here at Quality Line, we don't take that respect lightly and go to great lengths to ensure our drivers are at the very top of their profession. Smartly turned out in uniform and driving in demanding conditions in a safe and smooth manner will come as second nature. Whether you have years of experience or are a beginner, our training and support will give you confidence to deliver the best service in the business.

Uniforms

We firmly believe that smartness is vital to portray the right image. For this reason, a full uniform is provided and a strict dress code enforced. The Quality Line uniform currently comprises.

- Navy fleece or blazer
- 2 pairs grey/black trousers
- V Neck sweater
- Quality Line navy tie.
- 5 white shirts
- Quality Line epaulettes
- Waterproof jacket



We not only supply your uniform,, but we also clean it for you with daily collection and delivery of those items that require dry-cleaning.



Sick pay

Hopefully you won't need it, but our sick pay scheme is designed to help those who are genuinely ill. After 3 months service, pay is generally made up to basic weekly level to supplement statutory sick pay. Payment will be made at the management's discretion normally for up to three months.

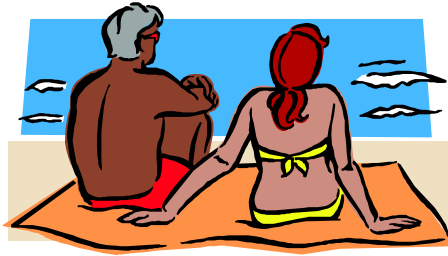
Pension Scheme

We operate a Stakeholder pension scheme available to all staff after 3 months service. This scheme is administered by the Friends Provident Group. In return for a minimum contribution of 3% of gross pay, the Company contribute a further 2%. Of course, additional contributions can be made by the employee up to the statutory levels. In addition we take care of all the administration and the contributions are automatic through payroll.





More about us and you



Holidays

We all need them and with Quality Line you will be able afford to take them with holiday pay at and above average earnings, so relax and enjoy yourself.

On starting you will be entitled to 20 days in your first full year, with 22 after 5 years and 25 after 10 years service. In addition, public holidays are paid, even if you don't work and if you do you can expect double or triple rates and still claim your public holiday payment.

Holidays are allocated by necessity on a rota as we never close, that said, we are often able to assist with a flexible approach.

Other Benefits

This is a long list, but you can expect:-

- Free travel on London Buses and Underground including the DLR, for you and a nominee after a qualifying period.



- Free travel on all local Quality Line services
- Concessions on a wide range of travel options, including coach and limo hire
- Discounted holidays through our travel division, Epsom Holidays.

- Free Gym and Swim membership for you and a nominee to the Epsom Rainbow Leisure Centre. Yes that's right, you can keep fit totally free of charge, with as many gym or swim visits as you wish. What does your leisure centre membership cost at present?



- Car purchase scheme, interested in a new car, need advice or finance then we can help.



- A wide range of advice and practical assistance is available to our staff through our 'Open Door' policy.
- An active and lively social club, with events for the whole family heavily subsidised by the Company
- Van and car loans available, interest free bicycle loans.

The "Inns and Outs" Club

Our social club and all run by the staff for their enjoyment. You name it, we've done it and the transport is never a problem! Recent events have included:-

- Daytrip to France
- Theatre Trip
- Dog racing at Wimbledon Stadium
- Christmas Party
- Children's pantomime
- Legoland
- Thorpe Park
- Gunwharf Keys shopping

All members of staff and their families are automatically members of the social club. Regular newsletters keep you up to date and events are heavily subsidised. Membership costs just £1 per month for the whole family...

Welfare



As a family business, we are concerned to ensure that the welfare of our staff is taken care of. This includes not only statutory maternity leave but also paid paternity leave for fathers. In addition, paid compassionate leave is offered where necessary.

Far more than just time off, we care about our staff and the management team are available to assist with problems of any kind, in confidence.

Training

In addition to initial driver training where required, Quality Line have a policy of ongoing training and assessment: This includes:-

- **An annual driving assessment**
- **Training courses for disability awareness and customer care**
- **Commitment to the BTEC qualification for bus driving in London**
- **Vehicle care and inspection**
- **Advanced driving tuition**
- **Safe driver awards**



Driver Training

Quality Line operate their own driving school, which has trained from car licence level around 60% of the present overall driving force of almost 160 personnel. The training divisions success rate is high and they have a dedicated 10.3 metre vehicle fitted with an automatic gearbox. Our qualified driving instructors working under our Training Manager teach not only to pass the test but to be a smooth and considerate driver.

Training programme from car licence:

Stage 1

Interview and driving assessment in a car.

An assessment is carried out in a car to evaluate that the necessary skills are evident before applying for the provisional PCV licence:

Stage 2

Medical

We arrange and pay for this with our Company Doctor.

Stage 3

Apply for provisional PCV licence.

The cost of this is payable by the applicant. We hold the necessary forms and will send the application off on your behalf.

Assuming the DVLC accept your application, the provisional licence will normally arrive at your home address within 3 weeks. Usually sooner. On receipt of your licence, contact Quality Line to advise.

Training



Stage 4

PSV Driving Assessment



Your chance to drive a full size bus or coach. Under supervision, your ability will be assessed in a drive designed to test your ability and don't worry, we know you will be nervous. We don't expect perfection! Assuming the drive and interview is satisfactory you will be offered either a 5 or 10 day course with a Department of Transport practical driving test at the end. Usually on the second day you will sit your theory test. The results will be known the same day.

Stage 5

The Driver Training Course

A date will be given for the commencement of the driving course following the successful completion of the PSV driving assessment.

The course will be intensive from 5 to 10 days. A theory test will need to be taken, usually on the second day of the course. Instruction in the theory aspect will be given on the first day. Literature for home study will be given to each candidate in plenty of time for the theory test.

Normally training takes place between 08.00 and 16.30 Monday to Friday with rest at the weekends. However, where extra coaching is required, additional time may be necessary.

Stage 6

The PCV Driving Test

At the end of the course the PCV driving practical test will be undertaken. This consists of a 75 minute test involving manoeuvring in a closed off area and assessment on the road by a Department of Transport Examiner.

Note: We will only put you forward for the test if in the instructors opinion you have a realistic chance of passing. Extra tuition may be offered and a re-test opportunity if the instructor considers it desirable.

Stage 7

After the Test

You've passed, well done. At this stage you are ready for vehicle type, customer care and disability training. Route training and dealing with the bus ticket machine are also aspects covered during the first 7 days or so after passing your test. During this time, you will be introduced to the key personnel and made familiar with the health and safety requirements both on the premises and whilst on the road. We will also need to have you measured for uniform which will be ready for you in a few days. On that note, we do ask that you dress smartly whilst training, with a shirt and tie.

Training



In summary, these are the initial items covered in the post test training and would also apply to those already in possession of a PCV licence.

- **Introduction to personnel, health & safety familiarisation and uniform measurement. This will include issue of staff handbook, health and safety policy and tuition accordingly**
- **Vehicle familiarisation and procedures**
- **Ticket machine procedures and route training**
- **BTEC training and driving assessment**

During your career with Quality Line further training will be ongoing.

Free Training

Driver training provided is entirely free. However, in common with other bus operators (one of the few things we do have in common) we ask you to sign a contract that in the event of your leaving our employ within two years, the cost of training will be repayable. At present, this is £1,500 and will be payable by return or through deduction from wages. Naturally, we hope that you will wish to stay with us far longer than two years and reap the benefits that only experience can bring. **You are also paid whilst training.**

Hours of work

Operation of buses suggests anti-social hours, as naturally the public wish to travel from A to B at a time to suit them. However, we aim to minimise the impact on our staff's lives by operating a roster system that ensures each person unless they choose to do otherwise, varies their hours of work. At present our rotas range through these times:

Earliest start	04:50
Latest start	17:25
Earliest finish	12:33
Latest finish	01:25



These duties include the rest time and remember that there are many of those within each duty, as the longer the duty the longer the rest time. **ALL REST TIME IS PAID AT THE FULL HOURLY RATE**

Duties average at present around 8.9 hours per day (including breaks).

Weekend Working

Many of our services operate at weekends and public holidays and in the bus business these are normal working days. However, our rota pattern allows for everyone to have weekend days off on a regular basis. Many of our staff prefer to have week days off and this can work well with partners and for childcare.

Public holidays

On Good Fridays we operate Saturday services. Additional payments apply when working on all public holidays which normally operate as Sunday services. These are mostly covered by volunteers and are paid at up to 3 x applicable hourly rates, plus the option of a day in lieu.

Our Fleet - The best in Europe

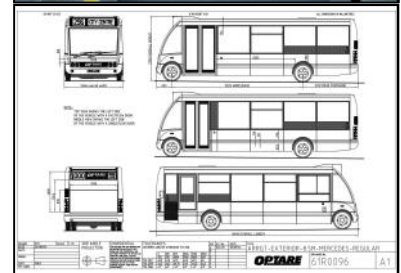
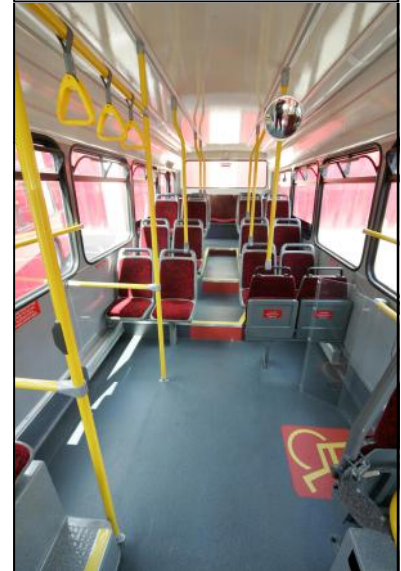


As one of our driving team, we give you the right tools for the job with every possible comfort for the longest journeys, those of the driver! We have pioneered the provision of drivers air-conditioning for instance, with every one of our buses equipped with this feature, a unique advantage, especially on a hot day. We don't stop there, extras such as electric destination blinds and even heated driving seats all help to make our drivers life more comfortable. Couple this with standard driving aids such as reversing monitors and radar and you get the picture.

It isn't just driver comfort, as our passengers are also made very welcome and protected by a state of the art CCTV system, which is there for the driver as well. Of course, a happy passenger also makes the drivers job so much easier.

Standard features on all our super low floor buses include:

- **Drivers air-conditioning**
- **Top of the range drivers seat (some heated)**
- **8 to 12 camera digital CCTV systems**
- **Reversing monitors and radar**
- **Automatic transmission**
- **Air suspension with kneeling facility**
- **Low floor easy access**
- **Air suspension**
- **Wheelchair ramps**
- **Individual passenger seating**
- **Low bridge warning system (double deckers)**



Looking after the Fleet



Its all very well having a modern fleet, but it needs to be looked after, that's where Epsom Fleetcare our in house maintenance team come in. Working round the clock, they ensure the buses are maintained to the highest standard, working from the state of the art Fleetcare centre in Epsom. We are fully equipped to deal with all aspects of the servicing, repair and cleaning of the fleet and enjoy top five status in the London bus league table for the presentation of our buses and the standards to which they are maintained.

Even our support vehicles are a cut above others, with a fleet of air-conditioned Toyota Yaris cars to whisk you to and from your bus once on the road



“We enjoy top five status in the London bus league table for the presentation of our buses”



Employment with **Quality Line**



Whether you join us with a PCV driving licence and years of experience or have recently qualified you will find that working for Quality Line is different. Its different because we have a close rapport with our staff. Its different because we know that a contented staff means a better service for the travelling public. Its different because we treat each person as an individual. What can you expect if you work with us? Here are some commonly asked questions:-

Is there a probationary period ?

We normally employ everyone on a three month probationary period. This may be extended if we are not sure of someone's suitability, but generally we find most people settle into working with us very quickly.

What is the minimum pay I can expect?

Average weekly duties are based on 5 days working with 2 days rest. Often there will be the opportunity for overtime, which can substantially enhance your earnings. You are guaranteed in any case a minimum of 8 hours pay per day and 40 hours a week if full time. The average hours paid each week at present is 48 (including break times) and remember they are all paid at the relevant hourly rate. There are no reductions for spread-overs or breaks.

Our average earnings are always near the top of the median average earnings across London for bus drivers

This based on the average of all drivers over a full operating week.

Earnings as high as **£715+** per week gross are currently being paid to those wishing to work additional hours.

Who will I be responsible to?

In the end we are all responsible to the travelling public. They pay our wages. Internally, we have a team of managers who provide round the clock coverage to ensure there is always someone to answer the driving staffs queries and provide assistance. They in turn, report to the Bus Services Manager and his staff.

Is the “paperwork” difficult?

No, provided you can do basic arithmetic for giving change, the paperwork and even the counting of your takings is done for you by machine. In any case, up to 90% of passengers on our services use passes, which makes life even easier. Full training is given and you won't be let loose until you are happy.

How will I learn all those different routes?

You won't need too. Each person is taught part of the network with an experienced instructor to help direct and familiarise you. Learning routes can be accomplished in a surprisingly short space of time. It is our policy to allocate drivers to a particular route to develop a rapport with the passengers using it. Some of our staff also act as standbys to cover for absence and holidays on any route.

What are the age limits?

To hold a PCV licence you must be a minimum of 18 years of age. This entitles you to drive a bus on a scheduled route up to 50km in length or a PSV without passengers (including coaches). In accordance with the Age Discrimination legislation there is no upper age limit, but you must be able to pass the PVC medical tests.



Is an Automatic PCV licence acceptable?

Yes, most certainly, all our buses have automatic transmission.

How are drivers represented and how do you communicate?

In a word very effectively, with a group of elected driver representatives (6 at present) on a committee which meets formally (we meet all the time informally) at a meeting where a full agenda is discussed chaired by the driver's nominated Chairman. We very much involve drivers with the decision making process, for example; in new vehicle purchase, the lead driver for the route concerned will have a big say in the specification and choice of bus for the service. This would normally include a factory visit. We openly discuss the Company's performance and there are regular newsletters. We have a 'can do' approach.

Can you explain the pay make up?

Driving staff are paid weekly on an hourly basis. Individual duties are averaged out on a roster to ensure earnings are consistent. Holidays are paid at a fixed daily rate which reflects average and above earnings across the team. In addition, sick pay and Bank Holiday payment are at fixed daily amounts. The hourly rates vary from basic for Monday to Friday between 05.00 and 21.00 to the highest rates payable for rest day working at weekends after 21.00, which are paid at over £15.00 per hour. All rates are doubled on public holidays and tripled for those who work on Boxing Day.

A unique feature of our pay set up is the tax free subsistence, which is a fixed daily amount when driving away from base. This is for meals when on duty, and is therefore, not liable to income tax or national insurance. It amounts to an average gross figure of over £1.00 per hour. A further benefit, is that all our duties are paid right through at the prevailing hourly rate. We do not make deductions for actual or nominal breaks as many traditional bus operators do. Our average median earnings are some of the highest across London.

How long are your driving periods?

Across London many are up to the maximum 5.5 hours allowed by law, but we lead in reducing these times wherever possible and over 80% of our driving periods are under 4.5 hours with many under 4 hours. We are a leader in this much needed improvement in a driver's working conditions.

As I will be travelling by car, is there parking available?

Yes, there is plenty of free parking on site and around the immediate area. However, we operate a Staff Travel Plan, which aims to reduce car usage as much as possible. For that reason, we also have excellent support facilities for bicycles and motorcycles including showers on site and secure parking.

Do you have facilities for lady drivers?

We welcome ladies and we have excellent toilet facilities at base with dedicated showers and changing. In addition, we go to great lengths to ensure we have toilet facilities at each terminus, some of which are dedicated to us. We also have two mobile rest rooms for use where facilities are not available.

Can you assist with flexible or part time working

We do what we can to provide family friendly working hours within the confines of our operational obligations. We have a number of part time staff and welcome the opportunity to discuss the possibilities that might be available to you.

Can you explain some of the terms used, PCV, etc?

PCV: Passenger Carrying Vehicle (driver)

P.S.V: Passenger Service Vehicle (the bus)

Any Other Questions?

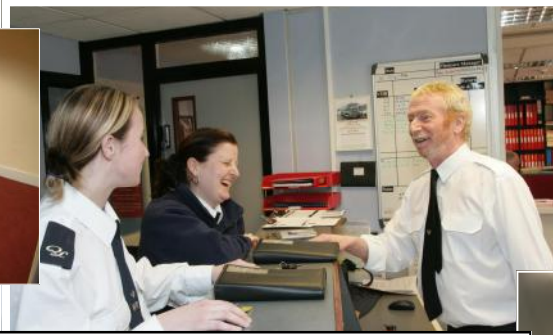
If there are any questions we have not answered, please call (or e.mail) Grahame or Terry on these numbers, they will be happy to assist:

Jon Ball (Bus Services Manager) 01372 731761 (jon.ball@qualityline.org)

Terry Torch (Training Manager) 01372 731712 (terry.torch@epsomcoaches.com)

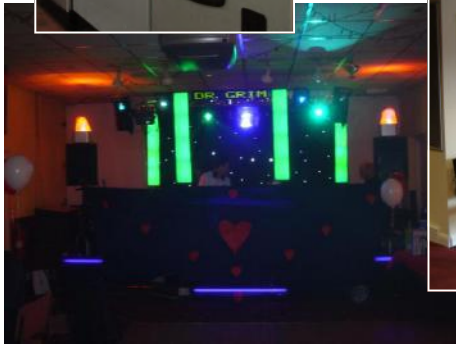
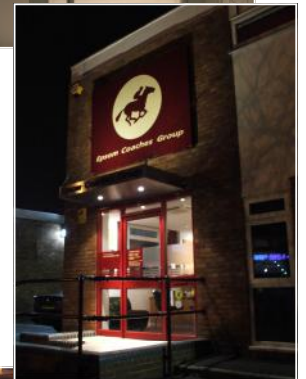
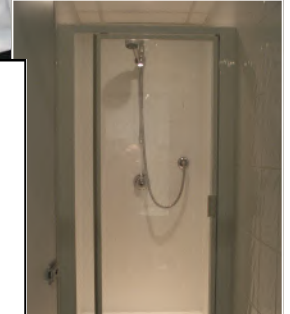


**A change
for the better**



Welcome aboard?

Thank you for your interest in Quality Line, we hope this brief introduction to our Company has been of interest to you. However, we can explain much more about what we do and the job itself in person and at your convenience. We would also be delighted to give you a tour of our base in Epsom as we are very proud of our fleet and facilities. We realise that changing jobs is not always easy, but we can offer security (as any of our staff who have completed 25 years service will testify) the best vehicles to drive and the complete pay and conditions package, unrivalled in our industry. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information or for an interview and driving assessment.



How to contact us:

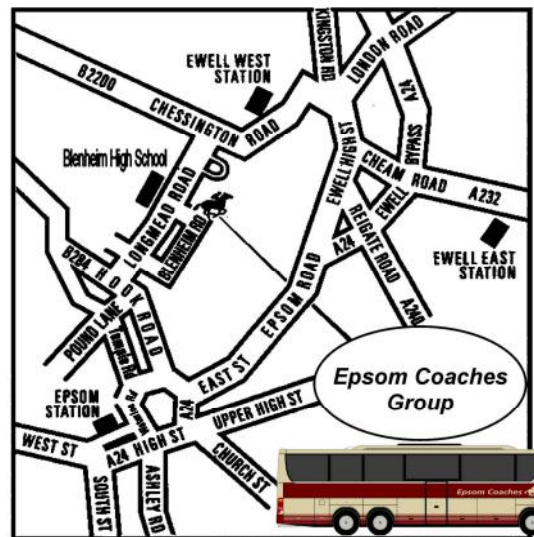
**Epsom Coaches Group
Blenheim Road
Longmead Business Park
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Surrey KT19 9AF**

Tel: 01372 731712 (Recruitment line)

Fax: 01372 731778

E.mail: terry.torch@epsomcoaches.com

Web site: www.epsomcoaches.com/recruitment



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