



# Life on the open road; Paul's experience as an Apprentice Bus Driver



Becoming a bus driver was a lifelong ambition for Paul Savage, he dreamed of a life on the road, behind the wheel of a passenger carrying vehicle, but the right opportunity just hadn't come along. That was until he got the chance to complete a bus driver apprenticeship, provided by Stagecoach and Interserve Learning & Employment.

Paul was working in a care home as a chef manager when he felt his role was no longer for him and he needed a change. He started to look for other jobs on recruitment sites such as Indeed and came across the opportunity to train to become a bus driver. As driving had always been a passion of his, he quickly hit the apply button.

After a successful telephone interview with Interserve Learning & Employment, Paul was invited to the Stagecoach depot in Barnsley for his face-to-face interview and was soon



offered the role of Apprentice Bus Driver, something he didn't realise existed but was the perfect role for him.

### Life on the road

Since starting his apprenticeship, Paul has soon adopted a routine and become a fully-fledged member of the Stagecoach driving team. A typical day sees him arriving for work and having a quick chat with his colleagues before picking up his routes for the day, checking the diversion boards and heading out to the depot to collect his bus.

Once he reaches his vehicle, he completes a set of safety checks, ensuring he reports any defects back to the engineers, checks his routes once again and begins his duties by driving to his first stop and collecting passengers.

Paul recalls one of his highlights was when an opportunity arose to take on a new route in the Barnsley Area. He put his name forward for this and was successfully selected to take the new route. This is something that he really feels lucky to have done and really appreciates the opportunity, saying: "It almost feels prestigious."

Whilst on shift, Paul always tries to ensure passengers have the best experience. He told us: "Interaction can only be for a few seconds but can leave a huge impact on you as a driver, Stagecoach as a company and most importantly on your passengers. A smile, hello or thank you, it goes a long way!"

### The route to becoming a bus driver

Paul is completing an apprenticeship alongside his day job and benefits from 20% off-the-job training. He believes the best bit about the training is learning as part of a group, explaining: "I enjoy the workshops and having a room full of different people who can bounce off each other. These workshops encourage learning and feedback from learners at all different levels."

Apprentice Bus Drivers are also supported through dedicated mentors who are appointed by Stagecoach to shadow new drivers whilst on the road. Paul recalls that his Mentor Chris [NAME] was a great help, saying: "He was really professional and taught me everything I needed. Even now, I regularly stop and think, what would Chris do here?"

Paul is an advocate for apprenticeships and says: "The apprenticeship programme has been really beneficial, as it's provided me with all the tools I need to complete my job. If I struggle, there is a huge support network I can access. The training has been really



beneficial and personally, I would not be able to do the job without the apprenticeship.”

And what does Paul enjoy most about being a bus driver? Well it was hard to narrow it down to just one thing, he explains: “I enjoy all of the job! Being on the road, interaction with the public, road safety and how it can be improved. Work doesn’t feel like work, when you enjoy it as much as this.”

Speaking about the Interserve and Stagecoach apprenticeship programme, Emma Phillips, Strategic Account Manager for Passenger Transport at Interserve said “It’s great to hear about Paul’s experience, truly bringing to life the Stagecoach & Interserve partnership as the first employer and training provider to implement a Passenger Transport Bus Driver Level 2 apprenticeship. Significant investment, time, resource and commitment have gone into ensuring that this apprenticeship is successful. Our vision is to continue to adapt and evolve to meet industry and learner needs, while improving the perception of Bus Drivers nationwide. All learners are fully equipped to complete their roles safely and with exceptional levels of customer service – which Paul’s story demonstrates just perfectly!”

For more information on the Bus Driver Apprenticeship with Stagecoach visit <https://learning-employment.com/stagecoach-bus-driver-apprenticeship/>.

\*images are for illustrative purposes only and not of Paul.