

New tram drivers testing their driving skills from today

Daytime full speed testing got underway on the new section of tram line on Wednesday.

Edinburgh Trams now has a bigger team of drivers who are testing their skills on the Newhaven line for the first time from today.

Around 40 new drivers, who have been taken on by Edinburgh Trams as part of a successful recruitment campaign, will be joining their more experienced colleagues in helping to usher in a new era for the network.

Before taking the controls of a real tram on the line, they have had thorough training at the operator's purpose-built learning and development facility. In the training suite there is a state-of-the-art simulator to familiarise them with both the existing system and almost five kilometres of new track. There are eight new stops, connecting Leith and Newhaven to the city centre and out to the airport.

Marlene Pearson, the operator's Training Manager, explained: "With Trams to Newhaven on schedule to begin passenger service soon, this sophisticated technology proved invaluable as we set about training extra drivers.

"Likewise, it allowed us to upskill all drivers and familiarise them with the extended line well ahead of the testing taking place.

“Simulator training also affords our driver trainers a well-rounded view of each candidate’s aptitude and trainability as it creates actual traffic situations and realistic effects of weather and light conditions.

“At the same time, it enables qualified drivers to hone their concentration skills in a safe environment, whilst familiarising themselves with signals, speed limits, and preparing for unexpected obstructions.”

Testing on the Newhaven line began last month at nights to ensure the newly constructed line, software, and signals work effectively and safely.

Edinburgh Trams’ Managing Director Lea Harrison said: “Our innovative approach to driver training has delivered numerous benefits for our business but, ultimately, the focus has been on keeping everyone safe. This is why we put new recruits and existing tram drivers alike through rigorous training and ongoing professional development programmes to maintain the highest safety standards.”

