

Wholetime Firefighter Information Pack



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Introduction

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) are pleased to invite applications to join us as wholetime firefighters. This is challenging and highly rewarding career.

Our communities value the services we offer and need to feel confident in our highly skilled teams, who reduce risk as well as respond to emergency situations. Our teams continually evolve and improve how we operate whilst maintaining the highest standards for our communities.

If you feel that you have what it takes, we'd like you to join our 2018 recruitment process.

TWFRS is seeking to recruit up to 20 wholetime firefighters to start in late October 2018. We may also have the opportunity to recruit more wholetime firefighters in 2019. We will appoint from the list of those who successfully completed this recruitment process, but due to numbers, we may not be able to appoint this time around. This list is called a candidate pool which will be shared between CDDFRS, NFRS and TWFRS.

CDDFRS and NFRS may appoint a smaller number of wholetime firefighters from the candidate pool in 2019.

This document has been written to provide you with details of each stage of the recruitment process for the role of wholetime firefighter. It is important that you are aware of how you will be assessed and what to expect at each stage. All the details you need to apply are provided in this document.

If you have any queries prior to entering into the recruitment process, please visit our FAQ pages on our website and if you still have an outstanding query, email <u>Recruitment@twfire.gov.uk</u>.

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About County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue (CDDFRS)

CDDFRS provides a fire and rescue service from 15 strategically placed fire stations managed via five areas; Darlington, Derwentside, Durham, Easington and Wear & Tees. The fire stations are staffed by either wholetime firefighters, part-time ('on call' previously termed retained) firefighters or a combination of both.

Placing our operational, community and fire safety staff in local areas enables us to provide a more integrated, cohesive and focused approach to addressing local risks, as well as improving access to services and advice for local residents and members of our business community.



The map below shows where the stations are located throughout the service area.

Some of our stations are on call and occupied only on a need basis. CDDFRS are here to make the communities within our area a safer place to live, work and visit. We are governed by a separate statutory body known as the Combined Fire Authority. Our Service is accountable to the Combined Fire Authority which is comprised of locally elected councillors, who are members of the authority.

County Durham and Darlington Fire Authority is responsible for the fire and rescue service across the two unitary authority areas of County Durham and the borough of Darlington, serving a population of over 620,000 people spread over almost 2,460 square kilometers. Fire cover is provided 24-hours a day, every day of the year.

All 999 calls are received by our control room at Service Headquarters at Belmont. Fire appliances are then mobilised from 15 fire stations across the Service area. All front-line fire appliances are equipped with state-of-the-art rescue equipment and there is also a fleet of specialist appliances, which are used during road traffic collisions, water rescues and other specialist rescues. Firefighters are trained and ready to respond to a range of emergencies, not just fire. These include: road, rail or air crashes, flood, animal rescues, chemical spills and even terrorist attack.

Shift systems

CDDFRS operates a variety of rota systems, which may involve working anti-social hours, weekends and public holidays. The majority of our stations follow a four-day shift pattern working two day shifts, two nightshifts, and four days off. We also have a day crewing station which is Monday to Friday day shifts and two-day crewing plus stations where staff self-roster their shifts working day shifts but stay on station and also provide on call cover during their 'stand down' hours. You may be expected to work any of these working patterns whilst employed by us.

About Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service

The primary purpose of Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is to make Northumberland a safer place to live and work through Prevention, Protection and Response. The services provided are a risk critical provision of Northumberland County Council that are delivered to the highest standard with fully qualified professional teams.

NFRS currently has 15 community fire stations in Northumberland, delivering services 365 days a year. The Service received over 7,000 emergency calls, attended over 3,300 incidents in 2017/18 and utilises a number of duty systems based on risk:

Whole-time Duty System: The Service has two whole- time community fire stations in the south east of the county which is largely urban. Operational firefighters work 10 hour day shifts, and 14 hour night shifts. Day Staffing: The Service has two Community Fire Stations with firefighters working during the day for a 12 hour shift period, and responding following pager alert during the 12 hour night shift. Retained Duty System: In rural areas, firefighters who live or work within five minutes of the station will respond to a pager alert if there is an incident in their area.



Holy Island has a garaged fire engine. Firefighters from Berwick, Belford and Seahouses Community Fire Stations will respond to an incident using the fire engine and equipment stored on the island where appropriate.

Fire Control

Fire Control provides an emergency call handling and mobilising service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Fire Control Operators ensure that the right vehicles, equipment and staff are sent to a variety of incidents. In addition, Fire Control provides the out of hours service on behalf of NCC.

Community Safety

The Community Safety department undertakes Safe and Well-Being visits, fitting smoke alarms and providing general safety advice where appropriate. CSD is also responsible for the delivery of the Prince's Trust Team programme, the firesetters intervention programme, Young Firefighters Association and manages the service's volunteer and apprentice programmes.

Fire Safety

The Fire Safety department has established strong relationships with businesses in Northumberland, in order to support them in their responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Order places a duty on all fire and rescue authorities to enforce fire safety in non-domestic properties. Fire Safety officers process applications for petroleum storage certificates, comment on licensing applications under the Licensing Act 2003, invoke enforcement policy where appropriate, undertake fire safety inspections and provide technical fire safety advice.

Fire Support Services

Fire Support Services department has responsibility for the following NFRS areas; Health and Safety, fleet management, specialist equipment, Fire Control, policy and document management, stores, communications, management and risk information systems, catering and management of contracts for services such as vehicle workshops, stores and Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

Learning and Development

Learning and Development department provides a risk-based programme of training to ensure the health, safety and welfare of firefighters attending a wide range of incident types. Learning and Development staff are responsible for all aspects of internal and external training to operational and corporate staff as well as members of the public. Working closely with Human Resources colleagues the team also facilitates Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Recruitment.

Civil Contingencies

The Civil Contingencies team works within the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum to prepare and plan for emergencies within Northumberland and protect and support communities when emergencies occur. A joint Community Risk Register is used to identify local Hazards and Threats and prioritise multi-agency planning, training and exercises. The Civil Contingencies Team drives Business Continuity and Emergency Planning across the County Council.

About Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS)

We serve a resident population of 1.104 million divided amongst the five constituent councils:

- Gateshead
- Newcastle
- North Tyneside
- South Tyneside and,
- Sunderland.



17 Community Fire Stations:

• 14 Wholetime stations

- 1 retained (Chopwell)
- 2 Day Crewing Close Call
- (Birtley and Rainton Bridge)

24 pumps:

- 7 stations are 2-pump
- 10 stations are 1-pump

We serve 43% of the North East's population in just six percent of the total land area. This density populated region is comparable to other Metropolitan areas, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and West Midlands. Our area covers 334 square miles and borders with County Durham in the south and Northumberland to the north. Of the 1.104 million people in the area, 4.14% of those over the age of 3 years (44,000) would classify themselves as having an ethnic origin with primary languages including Bengali, Cantonese, French, Farsi, Hindi, Kurdish, Punjabi and Urdu.

We want our service to look like the community we represent. Recent figures show that just 3.29% of the service's employees are from a minority ethnic background and only 22.35% are women. We need people from all different backgrounds to bring a different set of skills to those what we have currently have and to bring these skills to benefit the next generation of firefighters.

The Service aims to recruit an inclusive workforce that is representative of the communities we serve. Equality shapes our service, leadership and our commitment to our communities. Healthy, proud and engaged staff from a range of backgrounds are empowered to innovate whilst fostering an environment of mutual trust.

Our vision is 'Creating the safest community' and our mission is to save life, reduce risk, provide humanitarian services and protect the environment. We do this through our committed values which all employees share.

Commonalities across all three Services

Rates of pay

Rates of pay for operational wholetime firefighters from 1st July 2017.

Firefighter	Annual £
Trainee	£22,459
Development	£23,394
Competent	£29,934

N.B. from Trainee to Competent may be a minimum of three years.

Pension benefits

New entrants will be contractually enrolled on to the Firefighter Pension scheme 2015, the benefits of the pension include;

- A secure pension with benefits set out in law.
- A pension of 1/59.7th of your pay every year, added to your pension account and protected against inflation.
- The option to convert part of your pension into a tax-free lump sum when you retire.
- Immediate payment of pension benefits to you.
- Retire at pension age 60, or retire early from age 55 (but with an early payment reduction).
- If you have to retire because of permanent ill health or injury at any age, you can take partial retirement, at or after the age of 55 without leaving employment.
- A lump sum of three years' final pay if you die in service.
- Family and dependant benefits.
- A substantial employer contribution towards the cost of your benefits.
- The opportunity to transfer previous benefits into the scheme in the first 12 months of membership.

- The choice of deferring payment of your pension benefits until State Pension Age if you leave the scheme early, or transferring them to another pension arrangement (unless you were a member for less than three months when you would get a refund of contributions instead).
- Employee contributions vary from 10% to 14.5% of your pay depending on your rate of pay.

Job description

Role: Firefighter

Location:

Any fire station within the fire and rescue service to which you have been appointed to, as directed by the Chief Fire Officer.

Duties and responsibilities:

Emergencies

- Respond immediately and safely to all emergency calls and requests for assistance.
- Deal with emergencies as directed and work effectively and efficiently as a member of a disciplined team.
- Minimise distress and suffering, including giving first aid care.

Dealing with people

- Establish and maintain the confidence of members of the public.
- Maintain links within the community.
- Be sensitive to the needs of others with regard to fairness and dignity issues.

Fire safety

- Give general fire safety advice and guidance to people when requested.
- Work to help educate members of the community on the risks and hazards of fire and other emergencies.
- Assist in Service initiatives, programmes and strategies to reduce fire calls.

Health and safety

- Recognise health and safety issues at work and deal with them to minimise or eliminate the degree of hazard or risk.
- Ensure personal safety and that of others at all times.

Personal fitness and hygiene

- Maintain level of physical and medical fitness necessary to carry out the duties of a Firefighter.
- Maintain personal appearance, hygiene and cleanliness of uniform in keeping with a disciplined service.

Equipment

- Maintain all firefighting and emergency equipment in a state of readiness, including cleaning, repairing and testing as required to approved standards and procedures.
- Check firefighting resources provided for Fire and Rescue Service use, including hydrants and fixed installations.

Local geography

- Know the local streets, roads and buildings situated within the fire station response area.
- Be aware of the risks, possible hazards and water supplies to be found within the fire station area.

Administration

- Complete basic paperwork and routine administration, including recording of information.
- Use information technology as required and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Keep personal records up to date.

Training

- Take part in a continuous training programme by attending lectures, exercises, practice drill sessions and other forms of training to maintain competence levels.
- Attend training courses as directed.

Fire authority

- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the level of responsibility and expertise as may be required by the Chief Fire Officer.
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Service.

Pre-application information

Age

Applicants must be 18 years of age or over at the commencement of training. You may apply to be a wholetime firefighter if you are aged between 17 years 6 months and 18 years old, as long as you are 18 years old once you commence training. Your date of birth is verified as part of the process.

Work permit

As an employer, the Fire Authority is subject to the provisions of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. It could be guilty of committing a criminal offence if it employed someone who does not have permission to be in or to work in the United Kingdom. The Fire Authority reserves the right to request relevant documentation from all those offered employment, in order to satisfy its obligations. For more information you may find the following immigration advice website useful: <u>www.workpermit.com</u> or <u>www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk</u>.

Identification

As an employer we need to ensure all prospective employees have the right to work in the United Kingdom. You will be asked to bring some form of photographic identification with you e.g. passport, driving licence, any other relevant documentation and a work permit if applicable, at the interview stage of the recruitment process so your identification can be verified. Please visit <u>www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk</u> for more information on prevention of illegal working.

Driving

If you hold a driving licence you must inform us if your licence is endorsed, giving details to the nature of the offence, offence code (e.g. CD10 driving without due care and attention) and also give details of the penalty (e.g. £ fine and number of penalty points). If you had to attend court you will need to give details of the outcome.

Diversity monitoring

This helps us ensure we are accessible to all groups in the community. The data is held in accordance with the GDPR and is not used to assist or make selection decisions. It will be used for statistical analysis only.

Medical standards

Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to assess each applicant on an individual basis, regarding their suitability to perform the role of a firefighter, in accordance with Equality Act legislation. This means that Fire and Rescue Authorities will consider what reasonable adjustments could be made to enable you to proceed with your application provided any such adjustments do not contravene Health and Safety legislation. Health & Safety legislation places the obligation on Fire and Rescue Authorities to ensure that individuals are safe at work for their own protection and that of others. (In the context of the Fire and Rescue Service "others" includes colleagues and members of the public).

To ensure that support is readily available, you are required to bring your specific needs to the attention of the human resources team in advance. Please email

Recruitment@twfire.gov.uk

The visual entry standards for fire-fighters are as detailed below:

- Unaided visual acuity of 6/60 and read N48 at least 30cm with both eyes open.
- Have a corrected visual acuity of at least 6/9 and read N12 at 30cm with both eyes open. Please note, applicants can use glasses of an appropriate specification on the fire ground should they be needed to obtain this standard of vision.
- Have normal binocular visual field determined by confrontation techniques or formal testing methods.
- Operational firefighters must have an appropriate level of colour perception. Individuals with either normal colour vision or slightly abnormal green colour vision are suitable for appointment.

If you are unsure whether you meet these requirements you are advised to seek advice from a qualified optometrist.

Candidates who have undergone laser eye surgery will not be considered for appointment until a minimum of 12 months after the date of the procedure. This does not preclude anyone from joining the recruitment process.

Secondary employment

If successful and you intend to continue with any other employment whilst employed by CDDFRS, NFRS or TWFRS you must declare it. You will be unable to undertake secondary employment whilst in phase 1 during your initial training.

Declaration of offences

You are required to declare any offence for which the conviction is not yet spent. Within the meaning of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 – incorporating the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act (exemptions) 1975 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exemptions) (Amendment) Order 1996 – you are advised to declare any charge that is pending as a subsequent conviction could lead to your dismissal from the Service. Broadly the Act provides for anyone who has ever been convicted of a criminal offence and not sentenced to more than 2.5 years in prison to become a 'rehabilitated person' at the end of the rehabilitation period, provided there have been no further convictions. At the end of this period, the conviction is considered spent and thus to be treated as it had never happened. Generally speaking, there are fixed rehabilitation periods for specific offences. If you are unsure whether you have to declare a previous conviction you should contact your local Probation Office, Citizens Advice Bureau or your Solicitor. Alternatively, you can consult the Home Office publication 'A Guide to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974'.

Do you really want to be a firefighter?

The following list of questions has been designed to help you decide whether being a firefighter is really for you. Simply tick Yes or No to each of the following questions.

	Yes	No
Are you genuinely interested in people?		
Can you get on with people from different backgrounds and cultures?		
Do you want to work as part of a close-knit team?		
Can you work under pressure?		
Can you think on your feet and solve problems when you know a lot depends on your suggestion?		
Do you have the sensitivity to deal with members of the public when they are distressed, confused or being obstructive?		
Can you take responsibility for representing the Service when you are at work and when you are not?		
Are you committed to always maintaining and developing your skills?		
Are you committed to maintaining your health and physical fitness?		
Are you prepared to work in situations where you may see blood, seriously injured or dead people?		
Are you prepared to talk to people in the local community about fire safety?		
Are you a practical person who likes to work with your hands/equipment?		
Do you enjoy making things or finding out how things work?		
Are you someone who can always be relied on to be somewhere on time?		
Are you prepared to work at height?		
Are you prepared to work outside in all types of weather, when it is wet and cold?		
Are you prepared to work unsociable hours?		
Are you prepared to work in enclosed spaces?		
Are you prepared to carry heavy equipment?		

If you answered 'Yes' to ALL of the above, and you think that you have what it takes to protect the community you live and work in, read the information provided and join our recruitment campaign.

Wholetime firefighter recruitment process

The following notes are designed to give you an indication of the recruitment process, what you can expect and what will be expected of you. There are eight stages:

9-13 July 2018

Stage 1. Registration. Job preview and eligibility screening.

16 – 18 July 2018

Stage 2. Behavioural style questionnaire.

20-23 July 2018

Stage 3. Situational judgement questionnaire.

25-30 July 2018

Stage 4. Ability tests (numerical, mechanical & verbal)

6-10 August 2018 Stage 5. Role related tests.

20-31 August 2018

Stage 6. Competency based interview.

10-14 September 2018 Stage 7. Occupational Health Medical.

17-28 September 2018 Stage 8. Pre-employment checks

> 29 October 2018 Start date

Stage 1 Registration. Job preview and eligibility screening.

The initial stage of the recruitment process is undertaken online, there is no application form to complete and return. Please note that CVs or any other form of application will not be accepted.

Dyslexia

If you are dyslexic and require reasonable adjustments you must contact the human resources team by emailing <u>Recruitment@twfire.gov.uk.</u> They will advise you of how to continue with your application. Evidence of your dyslexia will be required.

Please note the online assessments are not designed to be completed using tablets and mobile phones. Tests must be completed using one of the following internet browsers:

- * Internet Explorer 9 and above
- * Firefox 4.0 and above
- * Google Chrome 10.0 and above
- * Safari 5 and above (Mac and PC)

Your browser should also have JavaScript and Cookies enabled. Refer to the Help function of your browser for guidance about these settings. The tests are designed to be viewed with a screen resolution of at least 1024 x 768 pixels.

The online assessment is divided into four elements, each one must be completed before progressing to the next stage.

SIFT

Requires you to register and provide your personal details. You will only be able to apply once. Please ensure you check all details are correct before submitting your registration, particularly national insurance number and email address. Due to the volume of applications we are unable to reopen the registration if any errors are made at registration stage. **N.B.** there are systems in place to sift out those who

have registered more than once. In such cases, we will not progress either of your submissions. **N.B.** Ensure that you check that the information has been entered correctly before you submit as you will not have an opportunity to make amendments.

During the sift, you will also complete a realistic job preview questionnaire which will give you more information about being a firefighter and help you understand some of the challenges and demands of the role. This is not assessed but will help you determine whether the role is for you before you move on to the formal tests.

You will also be asked some basic questions to ensure that you are eligible to apply. As part of your eligibility assessment, we will identify, for example:

- Whether you are over the age of 17 years and 6 months
- Whether you have the right to work in the UK
- Whether you have any unspent convictions that may temporarily preclude you from working as a firefighter (all unspent and pending convictions must be declared – failure to do so will result in your application being automatically withdrawn)

If you meet the eligibility requirements you will be invited to complete the behavioural styles questionnaire.

Online registration for the SIFT opens 09:00 on Monday 9 July 18 Online registration for the SIFT closes 23:59 on Friday 13 July 18

Stage 2. Behavioural style questionnaire.

Behavioural styles questionnaire

Explores your preferred behaviours and values in a working environment. The purpose of the questionnaire is to assess whether you have the right behaviours and attitudes to be effective in the role. No revision or additional study is required for this element and the test is untimed. An example of the test is available at https://www.ddfire.gov.uk/wholetime-firefighter

If you are successful you will be invited to complete the situational judgement test. Please note all test results are final and automated feedback reports will be available.

Behavioural styles questionnaire opens 09:00 on Monday 16 July 18 Behavioural styles questionnaire closes 23:59 on Wednesday 18 July 18

Stage 3. Situational judgement questionnaire.

Situational judgement test

This measures your judgement and decision-making skills in situations that are typical in the Fire and Rescue Service. No knowledge or experience as a firefighter is required to complete this test and no prior revision is needed. The test is untimed. An example of the test is available at: https://www.ddfire.gov.uk/wholetime-firefighter

If you are successful you will be invited to complete the ability tests. Please note all test results are final and automated feedback reports will be available.

Situational judgement test opens 09:00 on Friday 20 July 18 Situational judgement test closes 23:59 on Monday 23 July 18

Stage 4. Ability tests (numerical, mechanical & verbal)

Ability tests

There are 3 ability tests.

- Numerical reasoning Candidates will be required to calculate basic numerical equations that are equivalent to GCSE level maths.
- Verbal reasoning Candidates will be required to answer questions on short passages of information. No prior knowledge is required.
- Mechanical reasoning Candidates will be required to apply cognitive reasoning to mechanical, physical and practical concepts in order to solve problems.

The tests are timed, with a set amount of time per question. Practice tests are available at https://www.ddfire.gov.uk/wholetime-firefighter

If you are successful you will receive an email inviting you to the next stage of the process. Please note all test results are final and feedback reports will be available.

Ability test opens 09:00 Wednesday 25 July 18 Ability test closes 23:59 Monday 30 July 18

Online tests FAQS

What happens if I lose internet connection whilst completing the tests?

An interrupted internet session will not affect your scores, your responses are recorded during your session as you enter them. This information is auto saved so that they when you log back in you can continue from where you left off.

Is the scoring system reliable?

Yes, the scoring system is totally reliable. When you submit your responses, these are scored automatically by computer against a pre-determined scoring key which is applied to all candidates in exactly the same way.

Can I see my test results?

We do appreciate that you may want to know more details about your results. Unfortunately we are unable to give out any additional information because we need to maintain the security of the scoring process. This is to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly in future recruitment campaigns. While we understand this may be frustrating for you, we hope you can understand the importance of ensuring a fair process for all candidates.

Why is my score so low?

It's helpful for you to understand how scoring is applied to your responses to generate the final result you get. The score you are given is a 'percentile' score not a 'percentage' score and is different to what you might be used to when completing tests. Knowing the difference between the two types will help you appreciate how you scored.

A percentile score is a score generated by comparing the results of your responses to a group of individuals who have also completed the test. This group is called a comparison group or norm group. Percentile scores show your results in relation to how you performed in comparison to this norm group. For example, if you have a percentile score of 60, then this means that your score is better than 60% of people in that norm group. It does not mean that you have answered 60% of the questions correctly.

I have missed the test window; can you reopen the test for me?

Unfortunately, due to the large volume of applications, we are unable to re-open the tests for candidates. Dates of tests are advertised prior to the start of the recruitment process so it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they are available for all dates.

I completed the test on my mobile phone or tablet and the system crashed, can I retake the tests?

Unfortunately, not. Candidates are advised not to use a mobile phone or tablet to complete the tests, so it is their responsibility to ensure the correct browser is used.

Stage 5. Role related tests

If you are successful at the online stage, you will be invited to undertake the role related or practical tests which will be held at CDDFRS and TWFRS locations. The role of a firefighter is physically demanding so it is important for us to assess your ability to handle the situations and challenges you will face. The tests are designed to assess your level of physical fitness in line with the requirements of the role. Candidates must perform all the tests whilst wearing firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE), provided on the day. For each test, full instructions will be provided.

The role related tests will take place between the 6 and 10 August 2018. You will work in groups and will be tested individually. The session will last about 3 hours.

Ladder climb – designed to assess confidence at heights. Wearing a safety harness, you are required ascend two thirds of the way up a 13.5 metre ladder and take a leg-lock. You will be asked to lean backwards and outstretch your arms to the sides, then confirm a symbol being shown by the assessor at ground level.



Casualty evacuation – designed to assess upper and lower body strength and coordination. Candidates drag a 55kg dummy backwards around a 30M course, by a carrying handle fixed to the dummy.



Ladder lift – designed to assess upper and lower body strength and coordination Candidates raise the bar of a ladder lift simulator to the required height with 15kg of weight placed on the simulator cradle, which gives a total lift load of 24kg.



Enclosed space – designed to assess confidence, agility and stamina. Candidates put on a facemask and with un-obscured vision make their way through a crawl and walkway. Once inside the crawl/walkway they have their vision obscured and return to the start.



Equipment assembly – designed to assess manual dexterity. Candidates are given a demonstration of the test before having to assemble and disassemble a number of components to make an item of equipment.



Equipment carry –designed to assess upper and lower body strength and coordination Candidates carry items of equipment up and down a course between two cones placed 25m apart. They are given a brief, a demonstration of correct lifting techniques and are permitted to practice picking up the correct items.



Stage 6. Competency based interview.

Upon successfully passing the practical tests you will be invited to attend an interview and presentation which will last for about an hour. This will be our chance to get to know more about you and ask you about the information you provided with your online application. The interviews will be held during 20th and 31st August. The panel will be made up of staff across the three fire services.

The questions you are asked during interview will be competency-based. The aim of competency-based interviews are to explore how you have used specific skills in your previous roles (paid or voluntary) and your approach to problems, tasks and challenges.

Stage 7. Occupational Health Medical.

Prior to attending your medical, you may need to obtain a list of your vaccinations from your GP and a report from a qualified optometrist. If required, you will be provided with a form to take to the optometrist when we confirm that you have passed the interview.

We will need you to take a full medical assessment prior to joining us which will be conducted by our occupational health provider. You will complete a questionnaire looking at your medical history and complete the following tests:

- Hearing test
- Lung function
- Eye test
- Grip strength
- Blood pressure
- General tests based on your completed medical questionnaire
- Drug and alcohol test

It is important that you do not complete any exercise or consume alcohol or caffeine immediately prior to the medical.

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Fitness test

Firefighting can be a physically demanding and hazardous activity with potential for exposure to high physiological and environmental loads. To ensure effective and safe operational performance an appropriate level of physical fitness is essential.

Should you be successful at interview stage, you will be invited to attend a fitness assessment (VO2 max) which will be carried out on a treadmill to determine aerobic fitness. The minimum requirement for candidates at recruitment is 42.3 mls/O₂/kg/min (equivalent to level 8 shuttle 8 on a bleep test).

Fitness Guidance for Applicants

Following the Fire Fit research into the physical demands of UK firefighting, the below levels of cardiorespiratory fitness and physical strength and muscular endurance serve as a guide to inform applicants on how best to prepare for the National Firefighter Selection Tests (NFST). While this does not guarantee success at NFST, it provides applicants with some guidance on expected physical competencies for selection.

You are likely to have the minimum level of cardiorespiratory fitness for UK firefighting if you can:

- Run 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometres) continuously in 12 minutes or less (This is equal to running 6 laps of a 400 m outdoor athletics track in 12 minutes).
- Run on a treadmill at 7.5 mph (12 km/h) for 12 minutes.
- Perform the multi-stage shuttle run test (bleep test) to at least level 8 shuttle 8.

You are likely to have the minimum physical strength and muscular endurance if you can:

• Shoulder press 25 kg once in an overhead, upright seated position.

Stage 8. Pre-employment checks

If you are successful at all stages of the recruitment process, we will need to check your references. Should an unsatisfactory reference be received, any offer of employment will be withdrawn. We will also need to carry out a baseline personnel security check (BPSS) which again must be satisfactory in order to progress your application.

Offers of employment will be made as vacancies arise and your details may be placed on a holding list.

We would like to take the opportunity to wish you every success throughout the recruitment process.