



Frequently Asked Questions

Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Frequently asked Questions and Answers

When can I apply for NFRS?

The application portal for Whole time recruitment will be open and advertised on our website and social media platforms when we are recruiting. You can access it through the NFRS website

This can be found on the website

[Apollo Assessment \(adc.uk.com\)](https://adc.uk.com)

What is the maximum age you can apply to become a Firefighter?

There is no maximum age.

What is the minimum age you can apply to become a firefighter?

You must be 18 years old (or older) at the time of employment. You can start the application process at 17.5 years old.

What qualifications do I need?

Although you do not need any formal qualifications, here are some of the requirements you must meet:

- Full driving license.
- Enhanced DBS check.
- Grade or above in Math's and English – if this isn't met but the applicant can pass the entry tests, support will be given to achieve a L2 qualification during the apprenticeship.
- Numerical, verbal, and mechanical reasoning – in terms of qualifications/subjects, an applicant will get a good grounding from Math's, English and Physics.
 1. Multi-stage fitness test: 1 of 3 possible fitness tests-Bleep test
 2. Treadmill test
 3. Chester step test
- Job-related tests: casualty evacuation; equipment shuttle; equipment assembly; confined spaces (BA rat run); ladder lift, extension and climb.
- Medical exam.



Frequently Asked Questions

What behaviors do I need to be a good firefighter?

Our core culture and values within NFRS are:

- Putting our communities first – our goal is to keep the people of Northamptonshire safe.
- Integrity – open, honest, and consistent
- Dignity and respect
- Leadership – every member of staff is a positive role model.
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion.

You need to be enthusiastic and committed as incidents are unpredictable and can involve a range of skills. Being a good team player is an important behaviour as you will be working as part of a team for most of the work undertaken on a day-to-day basis, but you will also need to be flexible and adaptable to situations and work independently if required.

You will need good communication skills and integrity. We work closely with members of the public and at some incidents we attend the information we are made aware of is highly sensitive.

No prior experience is necessary as full training and support is available and mandatory when you take on the role. A good level of physical fitness and strength is also required. (See entrance tests)

[NFCC Leadership Framework Final.pdf](#)

What does a typical workday involve?

- The emphasis is on prevention - Providing education programme's and safety messages to local schools, businesses, community groups and residents.
- Helping to prevent accidents and limiting the injury potential of those that do occur.
- Aside from fires, we deal with other types of emergencies – road, rail or air traffic collisions; floods, chemical spills, rescuing people or animals.
- Training and routines such as checking equipment, gathering operational information, and supporting other public services.



Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of tests does a fire fighter need to pass to qualify?

To be appointed you must successfully pass academic online tests.

You will also have to complete Job-Related Tests (JRTs) which are part of the recruitment process. These are designed to test your strength, endurance, perception and manual dexterity. You would also need to pass a medical examination and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. For more information on the fitness level required to be a firefighter please see link below.

[Physical Tests – UK Fire Service Resources](#)

What are the stages of recruitment?

There are 6 stages for our recruitment process.

Stage 1 – Initial application form

Stage 2 – Online tests

Every applicant will be sent an online SHL aptitude test to complete. SHL is a leading brand of psychometric tests and is usually comprised of multiple-choice questions.

The four tests we'll ask you to complete will focus on:

- Dependability and safety
- Situational judgement test (firefighter talent)
- Verbal reasoning
- Calculation (numerical)



Frequently Asked Questions

3 – Job Related Tests (JRTs)

If you are successful through the SHL tests you will be invited to undertake the JRTs which will comprise of the following:

- Hose running: (6 lengths)
- Ladder lift simulator assessment (15kg)
- Equipment carries (various equipment)
- Assembly ladder extension (Candidate will need to raise the weight to the required height and lower it in a controlled manner.)
- Casualty evacuation (55kg dummy along a 30-metre route whilst walking backwards)
- Ladder ascent descent (Applicant is to ascend a fully extended 13.5 metre ladder to two-thirds of its height, take a leg lock, remove hands from ladder, lean back, carry a basic instruction, and then descend the ladder)
- Equipment assembly (Candidate is to assemble and disassemble several components to make an item of equipment.)
- Enclosed space: (BA set worn NOT under air, facemask obscured. You will then be put into a rat run cage to find your way out. NOT timed)
- Bleep Test to 8.8
- Group Exercise
- Written Test

Stage 4 – Interview/assessment

If you are successful through the JRTs you will be invited to an interview. Your interviews will likely focus on:

- Effective communication
- Openness to change
- Working with others
- Commitment to excellence
- Commitment to diversity and integrity
- Personal impact



Frequently Asked Questions

Stage 5 – Medicals/fitness test

If you are successful through the interview stage, you will be required to attend a medical with our Occupational Health Provider. You will also be expected to complete and pass a fitness test.

Stage 6 – Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and employment checks

You will need to complete a DBS check and then complete other pre-employment checks such as us acquiring your references, checking your ID and proof of address document.

More details on the various tests are available on our website.

[Full time firefighters – Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service \(northantsfire.gov.uk\)](http://northantsfire.gov.uk)

If invited for an interview, what questions will I be asked?

The questions you are asked during the interview will be competency-based. The aim of competency-based interviews is to explore how you have used specific skills in your previous roles (paid or voluntary) and what your approach to problems, tasks and challenges would be. This type of interview is based on the premise that past behaviour is a good predictor of future behaviour.

Should you be successful at the physical tests and invited for interview, you will have access to an interview practice booklet prior to attending.

[NFCC Leadership Framework Final.pdf](#)

If I am unsuccessful at any stage of the testing process, can I re-sit?

You must be successful at each stage of the recruitment process to progress to the next stage. We do not have the facility to allow applicants to re-sit any part of the process. However, if you are unsuccessful this will not prevent you from applying again in the future.

Will I receive feedback on my performance in the selection process?

Unfortunately, owing to the large volume of applicants, we regret that we are unable to provide feedback during the initial stages of the selection process.



Frequently Asked Questions

What if I have a medical issue?

Decisions relating to whether your medical issue will prevent you from becoming a firefighter can only be made following a detailed and individual assessment with our Occupational Health provider.

What if I have Asthma?

It won't necessarily prevent you from becoming a firefighter. Your condition will be assessed at the medical stage by our Occupational Health provider.

What if I have dyslexia?

If you have dyslexia, we can put reasonable adjustments in place to support you through the selection process. You will need to identify this on the application form. If you are then shortlisted to the next stage, you must submit an Assessment Report from an appropriately qualified educational psychologist. This document will help us to identify how we can best support you.

I have a beard for religious reasons; will I have to shave it off to be a firefighter?

Yes. The Service respects everyone's religious beliefs but there are health and safety reasons as to why facial hair cannot be accepted. The main reason for this is the need for you to wear a facemask when you are wearing breathing apparatus. To ensure that the facemask forms a seal around the face, it is necessary to keep the face shaven where the facemask seals to prevent any dangerous airborne chemicals entering the facemask and putting your health at risk.

I wear glasses / have had laser eye surgery; can I apply?

Yes, you will have an eye test as part of the medical exam. If required, the Fire Service will equip you with prescription safety glasses.



Frequently Asked Questions

I think I may be colour blind, will this prevent me from becoming a firefighter?

All applicants need an appropriate level of colour perception. Individuals with either normal colour vision or slightly abnormal green colour vision are usually suitable for appointment to the fire and rescue service. The recommended test procedure uses the Ishihara test. We recommend you visit your local optician and let them know you are considering applying to become a firefighter, they will then advise you accordingly.

What medical grounds could I fail on?

Individual applications are considered on a case-by-case basis in line with the specific requirements of the role. The Equality Act 2010 requires that reasonable adjustments are considered when an applicant identifies that they have a disability. The service's medical adviser will discuss any medical conditions with the applicant and the service prior to making a final decision. Please see the medical-related questions below for further information.

I have a disability, can I apply?

Yes, anyone who considers they have a disability can apply to join the fire service.

Can I apply even though I have previously been convicted of a crime?

This will depend on the nature of the crime and whether the conviction is spent or not and will be at the discretion of the recruitment team. All applicants are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as part of the application process.

Is it OK to have a tattoo or body piercing?

Body piercings would need to be removed due to Health and Safety laws. The best advice would be to remove all jewellery before attending an incident or physical training to prevent the possibility of physical harm caused by jewellery rising to very high temperatures in a short amount of time. Tattoos are acceptable providing they could not be deemed as offensive.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I join a fire service pension scheme?

Yes, there is a pension scheme, details of which are given to successful candidates.

Is there a requirement for a driving license?

Yes, the Service requires whole time firefighters to provide cover anywhere in the County at short notice, therefore we ask for a driving license as part of the essential criteria.

I am not a UK citizen and English is not my first Language, can I still apply?

So long as you are eligible to work in the UK you are welcome to apply to be a firefighter. You will also need to pass a numeracy and literacy assessment as part of the recruitment process.

What is the salary of a Firefighter?

Firefighter	Basic Annual	Basic Hourly Rate	Overtime rate
Trainee	28,265	12.91	19.37
Development	29,442	13.44	20.16
Competent	37,675	17.20	25.80

Is there a requirement to be able to swim?

This is a desirable criterion. Some of our stations are water rescue stations and will require you to swim. You will not be able to work at these stations if you are unable to swim.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I apply if I live close to Northamptonshire?

Yes.

Can I choose which Station to work at?

Unfortunately, not. Candidates will be placed at Stations where there are vacancies.

What are the hours of work and duty systems?

On completion of your initial training, you will be allocated a station and a duty system. As a Service, we recognise the value of family friendly shift patterns and the substantive shift pattern is either a 2-2-4 pattern: 2-day shifts 08:00-18:00, 2-night shifts 18:00-08:00 followed by 4 days off or working a day duty shift during the week. Day crewing stations work 07:30-18:00 on a 4-day week rolling rota. They do not work nights or weekends.

What are the holiday entitlements and additional benefits?

- Operational staff: 30 days leave per year (+ 8 PHs); 33 days after 5 years' service.
- Sickness – full pay for the first 6 months; half pay from 6 months.
- Well respected profession with a history that stretches back hundreds of years.
- Qualifications from the Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE)
- Wellbeing:
 - fitness equipment on station and time in the working day to use it.
 - Wellbeing support team.
 - Health assured.
 - MIND.
 - Kind minds.
 - wellbeing days etc.
- Occupational health – access to At One for physiotherapy.

Where are the locations of the fire stations in Northamptonshire?

Whole time Stations:

- Mereway
- Mounts
- Moulton
- Wellingborough
- Kettering
- Corby
- Rushden (day crewing VCS)
- Daventry (day crewing VCS)



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I join a fire service pension scheme?

Yes, there is a pension scheme, details of which are given to successful candidates.

What if I can't make an assessment date or the training course dates?

The dates of the assessments and training course dates will be made known at the beginning of the recruitment process. If you are unable to make any of the dates, you will not be able to continue with the process as these are mandatory.

What will happen if I forget to attend or arrive late to any of the assessments?

You will be withdrawn from the recruitment process.

Will there be a holding list for applicants who meet the criteria but are not successful?

No, we do not anticipate having a holding list. We may have a holding list for those who are successful and may be offered a post as vacancies arise, and this list will be communicated to successful applicants.

Are there any career prospects?

Yes, there are opportunities and a clear path for development and promotion.

How many jobs are there?

The number of vacancies available depends on several factors, such as retirement rates and Service requirements. We are unable to provide specific numbers at this stage.



Frequently Asked Questions

I am already a whole-time firefighter in another fire and rescue service; do I need to go through all the assessments?

Yes, you will be expected to complete the application process in the same way as anyone else.

What if I'm a retained (on-call) firefighter in another fire and rescue service?

You will be expected to complete the recruitment process in the same way as anyone else. If you were to be successful with Northamptonshire FRS and wish to continue as an on-call firefighter with the other FRS, you would have to make a request for secondary employment.

I am currently serving as an On-call Firefighter in Northamptonshire. Can I transfer in the full-time service without going through the full application process?

Unfortunately, we are not able to facilitate this option at this current moment in time. However, we would encourage you to apply via the normal selection process.

What happens if my application is successful?

If your application is successful, you will be required to attend an initial training course at the Fire Service College which is based in Gloucestershire. It is an 8-week residential course at Moreton-in-marsh. You will then undertake 3 weeks in house training within NFRS.

Further FAQ can be found on our website - <https://www.northantsfire.gov.uk/full-time-firefighters/>