



**Wholetime (full time) Firefighter Recruitment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**1. When can I apply for a full time firefighter job with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)?**

The application portal for Wholetime recruitment is open from 17:00 on 15 November 2021 until midnight on 05 December 2021. You can access the portal through the NFRS website:

<https://www.northantsfire.gov.uk/full-time-firefighters/>

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

You must be at least 18 years of age at the start of the training course.

**3. What is the maximum age you can apply to become a firefighter?**

There is no maximum age.

**4. What is the salary of a firefighter?**

Firefighter	Basic annual	Basic hourly rate	Overtime rate
Trainee	£24,191	11.05	16.58
Development	£25,198	11.51	17.27
Competent	£32,244	14.72	22.08

**5. What are the qualities needed to be a good firefighter?**

You need to be enthusiastic and committed as incidents are unpredictable and can involve a range of skills. 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 is also required, and all male firefighters must be clean shaven to ensure the Breathing Apparatus (BA) seals correctly.

**6. Do I need any formal qualifications?**

You do not need any formal qualifications to become a firefighter, however, there will be a literacy and numeracy test as part of the selection process. If you are then successful and do not possess the requisite qualifications in Maths and English, you will be supported and required to undertake the level 2 Maths and English qualification. You will also need to study for and pass the Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) level 2 Operations Exams.

**7. What kind of tests does a firefighter need to pass in order to qualify?**

In order to be appointed you must successfully 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.



**8. What if I have a medical issue?**

Decisions relating to whether or not 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.

**9. 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.

**10. What if I have dyslexia?**

If you have dyslexia, we are able to 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 subsequently shortlisted to the next stage, you will need to submit an Assessment Report from an appropriately qualified educational psychologist. This document will help us to identify how we can best support you.

**11. I have a beard for religious reasons; will I have to shave it off in order to be a firefighter?**

Possibly, yes. The Service respects everyone's religious beliefs but there are health and safety reasons as to why facial hair cannot be accepted, including the need for you to wear a facemask when you are wearing BA. 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.

**12. 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.

**13. 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.

**14. 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 you prior to making a final decision. Please see the medical-related questions below for further information.



**15. I have a disability, can I apply?**

Yes, anyone who considers they have a disability can apply to join the fire service. You will be asked if you have a disability as part of the recruitment process and to provide details of any adjustments that you may require to take part in the selection process and to fulfil the role of a firefighter. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and if reasonable adjustments can be made, your application will proceed.

**16. 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 DBS check as part of the application process.

**17. 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.

**18. Is there a requirement to be able to swim?**

This is a desirable criterion.

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

You have to 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.

**20. 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.

**21. Can I apply if I live close to Northamptonshire?**

We are only accepting applications from those who live in the county of Northamptonshire. Proof of address will be required as part of the pre-employment checks.

**22. Can I choose which station to work at?**

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

**23. 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, 2-night shifts followed by 4 days off, or working day duty during the week.

**24. What annual leave will I get?**

Details about the annual leave allocation will be available if you are successful and are offered a contract of employment.

**25. Where are the locations of the fire stations in Northamptonshire?**

Locations of all our fire stations are on our [website](#). You must be prepared to work anywhere within NFRS.

**26. Can I join a fire service pension scheme?**

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

**27. Is there a requirement for a driving licence?**

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

**28. 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.

**29. 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.

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

You will be withdrawn from the recruitment process.

**31. 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. The duration of this list will be communicated to successful applicants.

**32. What do firefighters actually do, apart from putting out fires?**

The emphasis for us is on prevention, which means that firefighters engage with the community in order to keep them safe, working with local people and local businesses. They also deal with other types of emergency – road, rail or air traffic accidents; floods, chemical spills, rescuing people or animals. They also spend time training and doing



routine activities such as checking equipment, gathering operational information, and supporting other public services.

**33. Are there any career prospects?**

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

**34. How many jobs are there?**

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

**35. I am already a wholetime 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.

**36. 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 NFRS and wished to continue as an on-call firefighter with the other FRS, you would have to make a request for secondary employment.

**37. I am currently serving as an on-call firefighter in Northamptonshire. Can I transfer to 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.

**38. If invited for interview, what questions will I be asked?**

The questions you are asked during the interview will be based on the role and the [Service's values](#).

**39. 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.

These FAQs may be updated should further questions be raised during the recruitment process.