



WHOLETEIME FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

When can I apply for NFRS?

The application portal for Wholetime (full time firefighters) is open from midday on Monday 17th July 2023 until midday on 14th August 2023. All details of how to apply are available on [Full Time Firefighters – recruiting now! – Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service \(northantsfire.gov.uk\)](https://northantsfire.gov.uk)

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

You must be at least 18 years of age at the point of application.

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

There is no maximum age.

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.

What is the salary of a Firefighter?

Firefighter	Basic annual	Basic hourly rate	Overtime rate
Trainee	27,178	12.41	18.62
Development	28,310	12.93	19.40
Competent	36,266	16.54	24.81

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 firefighters must be clean shaven to ensure the Breathing Apparatus (BA) seals correctly.

Do I need any formal qualifications?

A level 2 Maths and English qualification is required in order to complete the apprenticeship, a literacy and numeracy test as part of the selection process. You do not need any other formal qualifications to become a Firefighter. If you 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.



What kind of tests does a Firefighter need to pass in order to qualify?

In order to be appointed you must successfully complete a bleep test and a Job-Related Test (JRTs) which are part of the recruitment process. These are designed to test your strength, fitness, endurance, perception and manual dexterity. You would also need to pass a medical examination and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Do I have to be fit to apply?

Yes, there is a requirement for you to maintain an appropriate level of fitness which meet our operational requirements. It is your responsibility to ensure that you always comply with this requirement during your employment. Your fitness will be assessed throughout your employment.

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.

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 will assess any reasonable adjustments that we need to put in place to support you through the selection process. You will need to state 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.

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 Breathing Apparatus (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.



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

Yes, you will have an eye test as part of the medical exam. There is a minimum unaided vision standard that must be met, if the minimum standard is achieved, the Fire Service will equip you with prescription safety glasses.

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

All applicants need an appropriate level of colour perception. The recommended test procedure uses the Ishihara / Farnsworth 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 you 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. 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.

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. Tattoos are acceptable providing they could not be deemed as offensive.

Is there a requirement to be able to swim?

This is a desirable criterion.



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

No, 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.

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

No, 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.

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.

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

You'll work a 42-hour week which includes shifts.

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.

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 Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Can I join a fire service pension scheme?

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



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 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.

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 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.

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 collisions; 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.

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 a number of factors, such as retirement rates and service requirements. We are unable to provide specific numbers at this stage.

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.



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 Fire and Rescue Service and wished to continue as an On-Call Firefighter with the other Fire and Rescue Service, 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.

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 service values.

If successful, when do I provide notice to my current employer?

Notice should be provided when you are in receipt of a formal offer of employment with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service which will include a start date. Do not provide notice on receipt of a conditional offer only.

What happens if my application is successful?

If your application is successful, you will be required to attend an induction course followed by an 8-week initial residential training course at the Fire Service College which is based in Gloucestershire, a subsequent 3-week local conversion course will follow.

A full schedule will be provided to you alongside a formal offer of employment.

What are the different stages of the recruitment process?

The following gives you an indication of the recruitment process, what to expect and what will be required of you:

- Online registration and assessment - Sift
- Online testing - Ability Tests
- Multi-stage fitness test (bleep test)
- A practical assessment day (Job-Related Tests (JRTs))
- Interview
- Medical/Fitness Test
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and pre-employment checks



Stage 1 – Sift

The start of the recruitment process involves completing an online assessment (the sift). This assessment is divided into three elements.

The first element requires you to give some personal details and register. You will then be presented with details of the Firefighting role and asked to consider how the role meets your expectations in terms of working environment and future career. 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:

- Whether you are over the age of 18 years
- Whether you live in Northamptonshire
- Whether you have the right to work in the UK
- Whether you have any unspent criminal convictions
- Whether you have any court judgements outstanding against you

At the end of this element, you will be advised as to whether you are eligible to continue with your application or not.

Stage 2 – Online Ability Tests

Once you have completed the online registration and eligibility screen, you will receive an email from the online system advising you of how and when you can access the second and third elements of the sift.

The second element of the sift is a Behavioural Styles Questionnaire, which explores your preferred behaviours in a working environment. No revision or additional study is required for this element.

The third element of the sift is a Situational Judgement Test which 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.

You will also be invited to complete 3 further online tests:

- Numerical reasoning
- Verbal reasoning
- Mechanical reasoning



Stage 3 – Multi-stage fitness test

This is a multi-stage fitness test that requires you to run back and forth along 20 meter track in time to a series of beeps.

The beeps during the course of the test get progressively faster as the levels increase. You are required to reach the other side of the track before the next beep. The expected standard required for the role of a firefighter is Level 8 shuttle 8.

Stage 4 – Job Related Tests (JRTs)

If you are successful through the multi-stage fitness (bleep) test you will be invited to undertake the JRTs which will comprise of the following:

- Casualty evacuation
- Enclosed space test
- Equipment assembly
- Equipment carry
- Hose running
- Ladder climb
- Ladder extension (non-assessable)
- Ladder lift simulator

More details on the various tests are available on [our website](#).

Stage 5 – Interview

If you are successful through the JRTs you will be invited to an interview which may consist of a short presentation.

The interview will be based on the role and service values.

Stage 6 – Medicals

If you are successful through the interview stage you will be required to attend a medical with our Occupational Health.

Stage 7 – Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and pre-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.