

Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment FAQ's



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**



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Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

When can I apply for NFRS?

The application portal for wholetime firefighter recruitment will be open and advertised on our website and social media platforms when we are actively recruiting. You can access the portal via the NFRS website:

[Full Time Firefighters – Recruiting Now! – Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service](#)

What is the maximum age to apply to become a firefighter?

There is no upper age limit to apply.

What is the minimum age to apply?

You must be **18 years old** (or older) at the time of employment (May 2025).

You can begin the application process from **17.5 years old**.

What qualifications or documents do I need?

You must provide the following documents:

- Valid UK passport or UK birth certificate
- Full UK **manual** driving licence
- GCSE English and Maths at grade A-C / 9-4* (or equivalent qualifications)

- National Insurance number

If you are not a British citizen, you must also provide **valid Right to Work documentation** confirming **Indefinite Leave to Remain** status.

What behaviours do I need to be a good firefighter?

Our values at NFRS include:

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

You will need to be:

- Enthusiastic and committed
- A good team player
- Adaptable and able to work independently when required
- Able to communicate effectively
- Trustworthy with sensitive information

No prior experience is necessary. Full training and support are provided. Most assessments are based on the **NFCC Leadership Framework**.

What does a typical workday involve?

- **Community safety and prevention** – visiting schools, businesses, and local groups
- **Emergency response** – including fires, traffic collisions, rescues, floods, and chemical spills
- **Training and routine tasks** – equipment checks, operational preparation, and inter-agency support

What tests must a firefighter pass to qualify?

You must pass **all stages of the recruitment process**, which include physical, fitness, medical, and behavioural assessments.

What are the stages of recruitment?

There are **7 main stages**:

Stage 1 – Initial Application Form

Stage 2 – Recruitment Day

Includes:

- **Multistage Fitness Test (Beep Test):**
 - Standard: Level 8, Shuttle 8 (aerobic capacity of 42.3 ml O₂/kg/min)

- Practice versions are available on YouTube, Spotify, and App stores
- **Group Exercise:**
 - Assessed against NFCC Leadership Framework
 - Focus: teamwork, communication, and problem-solving
- **Written Assessment:**
 - Assesses numeracy, literacy, awareness, and understanding of EDI principles

Stage 3 – Job-Related Tests (JRTs)

Includes:

- Hose run (6 lengths)
- Ladder lift simulator (15kg)
- Equipment carry
- Ladder extension and control
- Casualty evacuation (55kg dummy, 30m backwards walk)
- Ladder ascent/descent (13.5m ladder, leg lock, instruction)
- Equipment assembly/disassembly
- Enclosed space crawl (BA set, obscured mask, not under air, not timed)

Stage 4 – Confidence in Water Assessment

You will need to:

- Swim at least **50 metres unaided**
- Demonstrate water safety skills and confidence

Stage 5 – Assessment Centre

Includes:

- **Panel Interview** – competency-based, focused on behaviours and experiences
- **Safe and Well Exercise** – assess decision-making, communication, and information analysis

Stage 6 – Medical and Fitness Tests

- Medical screening includes evaluation for any conditions posing operational risk
- Minimum aerobic fitness: **42.3 ml O₂/kg/min**

Stage 7 – Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) & Employment Checks

- Enhanced DBS check
- ID verification, proof of address, and reference checks
- Includes drug and alcohol testing

What questions will I be asked in the interview?

Interviews are **competency-based**, focusing on past behaviour and how you handle challenges, based on the **NFCC Leadership Framework**.

Can I re-sit a test if I'm unsuccessful?

No. You must pass each stage to progress. However, you can reapply in future recruitment rounds.

Will I receive feedback?

Due to high volumes of applications, feedback is not provided during the early stages.

What if I have a medical condition or disability?

All applicants undergo an individual assessment with Occupational Health. Reasonable adjustments are considered in line with the **Equality Act 2010**.

Can I apply if I have asthma?

Yes, but it will be assessed by Occupational Health.

Can I apply if I have dyslexia?

Yes. If declared at the application stage and supported by an educational psychologist's assessment, reasonable adjustments will be made.

Can I keep my beard for religious reasons?

Unfortunately, no. A clean shave is required to ensure a proper seal when using breathing apparatus for safety reasons.

I wear glasses or had laser eye surgery – can I apply?

Yes. An eye test will be conducted as part of the medical. Prescription safety glasses will be provided if needed.

I may be colour blind – can I apply?

You need adequate colour perception. Most applicants with slightly abnormal green colour vision are suitable. The **Ishihara test** is recommended.

Can I apply if I have a criminal conviction?

This depends on the nature of the offence and whether the conviction is spent. All applicants undergo an **Enhanced DBS check**.

Can I apply with tattoos or piercings?

- **Tattoos** are acceptable as long as they are not offensive
- **Piercings** must be removed during incidents or training for safety reasons

Is a driving licence required?

Yes. A full UK **manual** driving licence is essential to provide cover across the county.

I'm not a UK citizen, and English is not my first language – can I apply?

Yes, as long as you have the right to work in the UK. You must pass literacy and numeracy assessments.

What is the firefighter salary?

Rank	Annual Salary	Hourly Rate	Overtime Rate
Development	£30,384	£13.87	£20.81
Competent	£38,881	£17.75	£26.63

Do I need to be able to swim?

Yes, you must confidently swim **50 metres unaided**.

Can I apply if I live outside Northamptonshire?

Yes.

Can I choose which station I work at?

No. You will be allocated based on vacancies.

What are the shift patterns?

- **2-2-4 Pattern:** 2 day shifts (08:00–18:00), 2 night shifts (18:00–08:00), 4 days off

- **Day Crewing:** 07:30–18:00, 4-day week (no nights or weekends)

What are the benefits and leave entitlements?

- **Annual leave:** 30 days + 8 public holidays (33 days after 5 years)
- **Sick pay:** Full pay for 6 months, half pay thereafter
- **Wellbeing support:**
 - Access to gym equipment and time to train
 - Occupational health
 - Mental health support via MIND, Health Assured, Kind Minds
- **Professional qualifications** via the **Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE)**

Where are the wholetime fire stations in Northamptonshire?

- Mereway
- Mounts
- Moulton
- Wellingborough
- Kettering
- Corby
- Rushden (Day Crewing VCS)
- Daventry (Day Crewing VCS)

Is there a pension scheme?

Yes, details will be provided to successful candidates.

What if I can't attend an assessment or training date?

You will not be able to continue in the process if you miss any mandatory dates.

What if I miss or am late to an assessment?

You will be withdrawn from the recruitment process.

Will there be a holding list?

We do not anticipate a holding list for unsuccessful applicants. A holding list may be maintained for **successful** candidates awaiting vacancies.



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