Shropshire
Fire and Rescue Service

Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment FAQ's

Application process

How do I apply?

When our Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment campaign opens, a link to the application portal will become available. Applications are only accepted when a campaign goes live. We advertise on social media in the run up to a campaign, advertising on the different stages and deadlines.

There will be a Candidate Information Pack available on the website when the campaign opens which will give you all the information you will need about the recruitment process.

What is the application process?

The process consists of the following:

- Online registration
- Online assessments
- Job related (physical) tests
- Interview process
- Medical and fitness tests
- Onboarding checks

You will need to apply through our recruitment system, Tribepad, as well as registering through Test Partnerships. It is important that you register on both systems.

There is a strict timetable for applying and undertaking the different stages. A full Candidate Information Pack will be available before a campaign opens which will detail all of recruitment process. You should note that all dates are set and cannot be changed, and no alternative dates can be offered.

What are the online assessments?

There are two different stages of written test:

- SIFT Assessments – these consist of a Behavioural Styles Questionnaire and a Situational Judgement Test.
- Ability Tests – these consist of assessments of numerical and verbal reasoning.

More information on all the tests will be included in the Candidate Information Pack.

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Do the assessments have to be done online?

Yes, all the written assessments have to be completed online. We are unable to offer hard copies of the tests.

Can I use my mobile phone / tablet to apply?

The system is not suitable to be used on a mobile phone. It is recommended to use either a desktop computer or laptop.

For other devices, you need to make sure you have the minimum internet browser requirements. These are:

- Internet Explorer 9
- Firefox 4
- Google Chrome 10.0
- Safari 5 (Mac and PC)

Your browser should also have JavaScript and Cookies enabled. You can refer to the Help section of your browser for guidance about these settings. The site is designed to be viewed with a screen resolution of at least 1024 x 768 pixels. You can check this by viewing your monitor's settings.

What other checks will be carried out if I am successful?

- Right to work – ID Checks
- Medical & fitness assessments
- References
- DBS checks

Eligibility requirements

Is there any specific eligibility criteria?

You will be asked a number of eligibility questions as part of the initial application process, which are:

- Will you be 18 at the commencement of the recruits course?
- Do you have the right to work in the UK?
- Do you have unspent criminal convictions?
- Do you live in one of the following counties:
    - Shropshire
    - Herefordshire
    - Worcestershire
    - Staffordshire
    - West Midlands
    - Cheshire
    - Wrexham
    - Powys

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What is the minimum / maximum age range to apply?

Applicants will need to be 18 at the time of the firefighter training course. There is no maximum age limit.

What qualifications do I need to become a firefighter?

There are no qualifications required to apply for the role of a firefighter. However, candidates will be required to pass the verbal and numerical reasoning tests within the process. Having Maths and English GCSE is an advantage as you will be required to complete as part of the apprenticeship programme. Support will be given.

Is there a requirement for a driving licence?

A full driving licence is desirable but not essential.

Will having a criminal record prevent me from applying?

Not necessarily. You only have to declare unspent convictions.

Some guidance is available from the Nacro site which you can access by following this link:

www.nacro.org.uk/resettlement-advice-service/support-for-individuals/disclosing-criminal-records/disclosing-criminal-records-employers/#longspent

However, if you are unsure whether your conviction is spent please take separate legal advice.

Are you considering Transfers from current firefighters at other services?

We are not accepting transferees from other Fire and Rescue Services. Firefighters employed by other services are welcome to apply but they will be required to follow the same recruitment process and the training programme.

Disability, reasonable adjustments and eyesight

I have a disability, can I apply?

Yes, anyone who considers themselves to 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 to enable you to take part in the selection process and to fulfill the role of a firefighter, then your application will proceed.

I'm dyslexic, will I be able to cope with the online assessments?

Dyslexia is classed as a disability, and you will be asked if you have a disability as part of the recruitment process.

If you have dyslexia, or are neurodivergent, you will need to provide proof such as; a report, a letter from your GP or a letter from school and forward it to us before the online assessments. You will then be allocated extra time to undertake the online assessments.

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

Yes. Firefighters require good vision in both eyes and part of the recruitment process will include an eye test. However, you will need to meet the standards of vision which requires a minimum uncorrected vision (i.e. without glasses) of 6/18 in the better eye and 6/24 in the worse eye and corrected vision (i.e. with glasses), should be 6/9 binocularly, and a minimum of 6/12 in the worse eye. You should also have an upper hypermetropic limit of +3.00. You will be required to provide us with evidence of your current eyesight standard during the recruitment process so, if you have any concerns, we suggest that you have an up-to-date eye test to check your own standard of vision before applying. Our Occupational Health Physician will determine whether your vision meets the standards to become a firefighter.

Role-related questions and training

Where will I train to be a Firefighter?

Candidates will undertake an 8-week residential training course at the Fire Service College, in Moreton in Marsh.

Can I choose which Station to work at?

Unfortunately, no. Candidates are placed at Stations where there are vacancies.

What do the different coloured Watches mean?

Operational staff at each station are split into shifts called 'Watches'. There are 4 Watches with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, Blue, Green, Red and White.

The reason for the 4 Watches is so the Service can provide continual service 24 hours a day.

Do I have to be a certain height / weight to apply?

No. Candidates will be expected to pass strength and fitness tests as part of the recruitment process, and these are at a level achievable for both men and women of all different sizes and builds who have a level of fitness.

How fit do you have to be to become a firefighter?

You will need to be of a reasonable fitness standard and to maintain your fitness levels throughout your career as a firefighter. You will be required to undertake a fitness test to determine your aerobic capacity as at least a VO2 max level of 42. You are also required to maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle. To improve your fitness levels, we recommend you follow the Fit4Fire programme.

Fit4Fire programme

Do I need to be able to Swim?

No, you don't need to be a strong swimmer, however the role does involve water rescue working with colleagues, so you need to be confident in, on and around water.

Can I have facial hair for religious or other reasons?

We respect that some individuals may wear facial hair for religious, cultural or personal reasons. However, operational firefighters must be able to wear breathing apparatus safely and achieve an effective seal between the facemask and the skin. Facial hair or stubble within the mask's sealing area may prevent an effective seal and could expose the wearer to smoke, chemicals or other hazardous substances. Applicants must therefore be willing and able to remain clean shaven within the facemask sealing area whenever required to wear breathing apparatus. A moustache or other facial hair may be permissible where it sits entirely outside the sealing area and does not affect the safe use of respiratory protective equipment.

Is it okay to have a tattoo or body piercing?

To ensure health and safety, employees are required to remove all personal jewellery where these pose a risk to their health and safety, before the commencement of duty. The Service recognises the social and religious significance of wedding rings and other items of jewellery. These items are accepted as long as they do not present a health and safety risk to the individual or any other person. For example, wedding rings, when worn, should be covered with adhesive tape, gloves, or similar throughout their period of duty.

Earrings and ear lobe extenders can only be worn during periods of non-operational activity. With regards to ear lobe extenders, individuals are only permitted to wear flesh-coloured blanks.

Tattoos that are considered to be discriminatory, violent or intimidating may be considered as a bar to employment.

Terms, conditions and workplace support

What is the salary?

Firefighters are employed on development rate of pay. Upon completion of their training and qualification, they are moved onto Competent rate of pay.

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Firefighters are paid in line with NJC pay scales. If you are employed under a job share scheme, these salaries will be pro rata.

What are the hours of work?

You will work 42 hours per week on the 2-2-4 shift system. 2 days, 2 nights, 4 days off. Day shifts start at 08:30 and end at 18:30. Night shifts start at 18:30 and end at 08:30.

What is the shift system?

The rota system for Wholetime firefighters is the Flexible Rostering system. Firefighters work 2-day shifts and 2-night shifts consecutively with 4 days off.

I see that you are considering job shares, what does that mean?

If you are employed under the job share scheme, you will work 1 day and 1 night shift, as opposed to a full-time member of staff who will work 2 days and 2-night shifts. Salary will also be pro rata. Job share opportunities can only be offered if there are other applicants requesting a job share.

Can I have a second job?

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has a policy on secondary employment. Employees cannot engage in this without first obtaining written approval.

What is your maternity policy?

12 months full pay for those that meet the requirements

Is there space where I can observe my religion in a dedicated space?

We have quiet spaces. These are dedicated rooms. They can be used to pray, have some quite time to contemplate and reflect. We will always consider a person's right to observe their religion within a reasonable period during the working day.