

Firefighter Recruitment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Below are some FAQs that you may find helpful. Please refer to these before you contact us with a query.

Q1. How will I know when you are recruiting for firefighters?

Northumberland will shortly be entering into a regional recruitment process along with Durham and Darlington and Tyne and Wear Fire Services. Whilst it is not Northumberland's intention to fill vacancies within 2018 we will be looking to produce a list of successful candidates that we can draw upon as vacancies arise.

A guideline for your information is as follows:

9 - 13 July 2018 - Stage 1. Registration. Job preview and eligibility screening.

16 - 18 July 2018 - Stage 2. Behavioural style questionnaire.

20 - 23 July 2018 - Stage 3. Situational judgement questionnaire.

25 - 30 July 2018 - Stage 4. Ability tests (numerical, mechanical & verbal)

6 - 10 August 2018 - Stage 5. Role related tests.

20 - 31 August 2018 - Stage 6. Competency based interview.

TBC - Stage 7. Occupational Health Medical.

TBC - Stage 8. Pre-employment checks

Q2. What qualifications will I need to apply for the role of firefighter?

No formal qualifications are required however applicants are required to be successful in various psychometric tests before being invited to attend the physical assessments.

Q3. Are there any height limits?

There are no maximum or minimum height limits.

Q4. What is the eyesight requirement?

The visual entry standards for firefighters are:

- Unaided visual acuity of 6/60 and read N48 at least 30cm with both eyes open.
- Have a corrected visual acuity of at least 6/9 and read N12 at 30cm with both eyes open. Please note, applicants can use glasses of an appropriate specification on the fire ground should they need to obtain this standard of vision.
- Have normal binocular visual field determined by confrontation techniques or formal testing methods.
- Operational firefighters must have an appropriate level of colour perception. Individuals with either normal colour vision or slightly abnormal green colour vision are suitable for appointment.

If you are unsure whether you meet this criteria, you are advised to seek advice from a qualified optometrist.

Candidates who have undergone laser eye surgery will not be considered for an appointment to a position for a minimum of 12 months after the date of the procedure. Although, this does not preclude you from joining the recruitment process.

Q5. Can I apply if I wear glasses?

As part of the medical, candidates undergo an optician's examination. If you require glasses, and depending on your eyesight, the Fire Service will equip you with prescription safety glasses.

Q6. I have a medical condition, will this affect my application?

Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to assess each applicant on an individual basis with regard to their suitability to perform the role of a firefighter, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. In addition, under current legislation, as a Fire and Rescue Authority we need to ensure that individuals are safe at work for their own protection and that of others.

This means, that we will consider what reasonable adjustments could be made to enable you to proceed with your application. To ensure that your health, safety and wellbeing in the work environment is maintained, you will need to tell us about any condition or medication that you are taking.

Prior to applying, if you have any queries about your health condition or medication that you are taking, you may wish to contact: fire.recruitment@northumberland.gov.uk to discuss this.

Q7. How much annual leave would I be entitled to?

Within Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, on entry the paid Annual Leave entitlement is 25 allocated 'A' days and 13 other days (inclusive of bank holidays). However, other Fire Services may vary leave entitlement to suit local conditions.

Q8. If I am successful what salary can I expect?

Wholetime Firefighter	Annual £	Monthly £
Trainee	22,459	1,871.59
Development	23,394	1,949.50
Competent	29,932	2,494.50

N.B. from Trainee to Competent may be a minimum of three years.

Q9. Would I be able to progress my career in the Fire Service?

Yes, once competent there are opportunities for development in alternative roles and learning new skills for example becoming a HGV driver and more specialised skills such as advanced water rescue and Immediate Emergency Care (Trauma).

Promotion can be achieved once competence is demonstrated in your existing role, through enrolment onto one of our specific managerial development programmes.

Q10. If invited for interview, what questions will be asked?

The questions you are asked during interview will be competency-based. The aim of competency-based interviews are 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.

Q11. Is there a pension scheme?

- New entrants will be contractually enrolled on to the Firefighter Pension scheme 2015, the benefits of the pension include;
- A secure pension with benefits set out in law.
- A pension of 1/59.7th of your pay every year, added to your pension account and protected against inflation.
- The option to convert part of your pension into a tax-free lump sum when you retire.
- Immediate payment of pension benefits if you.
- Retire at pension age – 60, or retire early from age 55 (but with an early payment reduction).
- Have to retire because of permanent ill health or injury at any age.
- You can take partial retirement, at or after the age of 55 without leaving employment.
- A lump sum of three years' final pay if you die in service.
- Family and dependant benefits.
- A substantial employer contribution towards the cost of your benefits.
- The opportunity to transfer previous benefits into the scheme in the first 12 months of membership.
- The choice of deferring payment of your pension benefits until State Pension Age if you leave the scheme early, or transferring them to another pension arrangement (unless you were a member for less than three months when you would get a refund of contributions instead).
- Employee contributions vary from 10% to 14.5% of your pay depending on your rate of pay.

Q12. What will happen to my data?

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) any data collected in the course of any recruitment campaigns will be used Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and / or our recruitment partners for quality assurance purposes pertaining to the individual campaign. Following the conclusion of each campaign, your data

will be securely disposed of and you will need to re-register for any other campaign that you wish to apply for.

Q13. If I am a wholetime firefighter/on-call firefighter, can I be considered for an inter-service transfer?

We are not recruiting on an inter-service transfer basis at this time. You are welcome to apply for a post however, your application will be considered as an external applicant.

If your question is not answered above or on any of the firefighter recruitment pages our HR Team will be happy to answer questions relating to the recruitment process for the role of firefighter.

- **Telephone:** 01670 621126
- **Email:** fire.recruitment@northumberland.gov.uk