

# **Firefighter Interview**

## **PREPARATION GUIDANCE**

This guidance will help you prepare for the interview stage of the process to become a Retained Duty System Firefighter with Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service.

We strongly recommend you set aside some time to read through this guidance and then prepare thoroughly.

### **The interview**

The interview will be conducted with 2-3 people who will ask you questions about your skills and experience. Thorough notes will be taken to ensure that a record is kept of all the examples you give.

The main aim of the interview is to gather examples of when and how you have used skills that are important for potential firefighters. There are five areas that will be assessed.

This guidance is aimed at familiarising you with the type of questions you may be asked and the way in which you should structure/phrase your examples. Later, some example questions are provided for your practice.

### **Preparing for the interview**

Here are some suggestions of what you can do ahead of your interview to prepare:

- Read through your application form.
- Practice talking about everything in your application.
- Think about what questions an interviewer might ask and what examples you would give.

#### **Practical Tips**

- Confirm the date, time, location and route, the name and telephone number of the person you are meeting and what they expect you to bring. Carry this information with you to the interview.
- If you cannot attend the interview, always call and let the Fire & Rescue Human Resources Department know as soon as possible. (01670 591123)
- Leave plenty of time to get there, always plan to be 10 -20 minutes early. If you think that you are going to be late, call and let them know as soon as possible.
- Take an umbrella with you. You will not be comfortable sitting in wet clothes for an hour if you get caught in the rain,
- Go to the toilet before you enter the interview.

#### **What to Wear**

- Aim for smart and tidy.

## Talking About Your Experience

As in your application form, the main body of your interview will investigate your skills, experience and how you have actually used the relevant personal qualities and attributes that are being assessed. Specifically, your interviewer will be looking for examples of what you have actually said, done or decided. Your interviewer will not be able to give you credit for hypothetical examples of what you would or might do in a particular situation. In the same way, your interviewer cannot give you credit for what other people may have done. It is acceptable to describe the context of an example within a team effort, but you must also specifically refer to what you did within that team. For example, if you are talking about a team effort and referring to, 'what we decided', it is important to clarify what specific contribution you made to that team's decision.

Don't say <input type="checkbox"/>	Do say <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'We said...'	'I said...' or 'he said...'
'It was decided...'	'I decided...' or 'she decided'
'Usually we spoke to...'	'I spoke to...'
'I would write...'	'I wrote...'
'We solved the problem by...'	'My contribution was to...'

## Structuring Your Answer

When structuring your answer try to make sure that you:

- set the scene by describing the **context** of your example;
- clearly describe **what** you did and said;
- state **why** you chose that course of action; and
- say what the **outcome** of your actions were.

After you have given your example, your interviewer will ask follow up questions to clarify his or her understanding of how you have used the particular personal quality and attribute being investigated. This is to ensure that your interviewer has a full picture of how you have used a particular attribute or personal quality and what the result was.

### Choosing an Example

Your interviewer is primarily interested in your personal experiences. Where you have gained that experience is less important than the actual demonstration of your personal qualities and attributes. When you are choosing an example you are encouraged to think about situations at work, college, in your home life, in your hobbies, or in any other clubs or organisations you may be a member of. It is important that you choose an example that is clear in your memory, enough that you will be able to confidently talk your interviewer through what you did and why.

# Practice questions

In this section you will find descriptions of the type of question that will be assessed during your interview. For each of these, you will also find examples of the type of interview questions you may be asked. To get used to talking about your experience, you should practice answering these questions aloud, keeping in mind the need to give specific examples about what you have actually done.

You will not be asked these actual questions during your interview, but you will be asked for examples of the areas described below.

After you have gone through the practice questions, for each of the area you should think of as many examples of your experience that demonstrate what has been described.

## Practice questions

<b>Working with Others</b>	This is about working effectively with a variety of people whether they are in your team or in the community.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Give me an example of a time when you have built new relationships with team members.</li><li>2. Tell me about a time when you have worked to resolve an issue that was negatively impacting your team.</li></ol>	
<b>Commitment to Excellence</b>	This is about adopting a conscientious and proactive approach to work, and achieving and maintaining excellent standards.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Give me an example of when you have completed a task or project to a high standard.</li><li>4. Tell me about a time when you have been unhappy with the standard of work being produced.</li></ol>	
<b>Commitment to Development</b>	This is being about committed to, and being able to develop yourself and others.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. Tell me about the last time you learned something.</li><li>6. Give me an example of when you have encouraged someone to improve.</li></ol>	
<b>Commitment to Diversity and Integrity</b>	This is about understanding and respecting other people's differences and treating people fairly and ethically.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Tell me about a time when you have acted with consideration of someone's needs that were different to your own, e.g. working with a different age group, ethnicity, religion etc.</li></ol>	

8. Give me an example of how you have taken responsibility for your own actions.