

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Creating the Safest Community



Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Applicant Guidance 2024: Appendix



Appendix 1

Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQA)

There are 9 PQAs that all UK firefighters have to be able to demonstrate. These are set out below and will help you when writing your supporting statement and to prepare for your interview.

Commitment to Diversity and Integrity – understands and respects diversity and adopts a fair and ethical approach in all situations

- Is concerned to treat people fairly and ethically (e.g. completes work according to same high standards regardless of individual differences)
- Recognises the importance of an awareness of the community and understands its needs (e.g. is aware and respectful of differing cultures and backgrounds)
- Recognises and has respect for others' backgrounds, views, values and beliefs (including religious beliefs)
- Maintains an open approach with others, taking account of, and accepting, individual differences such as age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, social background, disability, sexual orientation and physical appearance
- Is committed to the Fire and Rescue Service values and actively promotes them (e.g. challenges inappropriate behavior)
- Is honest when working with others and accepts accountability for own actions (e.g. takes responsibility for own mistakes; respects the need for confidentiality (is trusted to enter others' homes)
- Proactively challenges unacceptable behavior inconsistent with Fire and Rescue Service values, stating own and organisation's position clearly (e.g. when over-hearing a colleague use inappropriate language)

Openness to Change – is open to change and actively seeks to support it

- Demonstrates an understanding of the need for change within the Fire and Rescue Service (e.g. explains the reasons for new working practices to colleagues absent from briefings)
- Aware of the impact of changes to the Fire and Rescue Service on their role (e.g. understands changes to working practices)
- Accepts change both within the Fire and Rescue Service and in their own role (e.g. willingly participates in Community Fire Safety activities)

- Identifies ways, both within the Fire and Rescue Service and the local community, of supporting change and takes action where possible (e.g. volunteers to learn new tasks or ways of working)

Confidence and Resilience – maintains a confident and resilient attitude in highly challenging situations

- Remains in control of own emotions during emergency situations (e.g. does not panic and considers risk)
- Concentrates on the task despite pressure (e.g. pressure of time, noise, conflicting information and tasks, and concern for casualties)
- Challenges or questions others constructively to achieve more effective outcomes
- Retains confidence in own ability or convictions despite setbacks (e.g. after a Community Fire Safety talk is received poorly)

Working with Others – works effectively with others both within the Fire and Rescue Service and in the community

- Works effectively with all team-members according to defined role (e.g. in teams of 2 and up to teams of 20), adjusting his/her role in accordance with instructions and changing circumstances
- Proactively generates positive working relationships both internally (e.g. attempts to get to know everyone in working environment) and externally (e.g. liaises with community groups to promote fire safety; works well with other emergency services)
- Concerned about the wider team and is aware of shared objectives, as well as those of his/her immediate work-team (e.g. willing to give Community Fire Safety talks at schools)
- Is sensitive to the feelings and well-being of others and takes action to support them (e.g. able to reassure and calm members of the public in emergency situations; reminds colleague to check air when using breathing apparatus)
- Is able to present an approachable and positive image of self and the Fire and Rescue Service to everybody in the community, irrespective of individual differences (e.g. age, ethnicity, gender)

Situational Awareness – maintains an active awareness of the environment to promote safe and effective working

- Constantly checks the environment and takes action to ensure safe working (e.g. looks for threats to safety of self and others)
- Has awareness of a range of safety related information without becoming unduly focused on any one piece of information

- Provides timely information to confirm progress and outcomes against objectives (e.g. keeps team informed at incidents of changing circumstances)
- Able to judge space and distance within three dimensions and time to perform tasks safely and effectively (e.g. able to judge space and distance to erect ladders.)

Effective Communication – communicates effectively both orally and in writing

- Communicates verbal messages clearly, concisely and at a level appropriate to the audience so that message is understood regardless of individual differences
- Is sensitive to the needs of the audience and tailors communication in response to feedback (e.g. able to convey the importance of fire safety without distressing members of the public unnecessarily)
- Demonstrates that they are listening to others to convey interest (e.g. by nodding and using other appropriate body language, or by asking questions) and maintains awareness for messages
- Checks understanding to ensure all messages received and sent are understood correctly
- Is comfortable communicating with both small (e.g. 2 people) and large groups (e.g. up to 30 people)
- Presents messages (e.g. fire safety information) in a way that promotes understanding (e.g. uses slides, videos and other visual aids appropriately during presentations and fire safety visits; engages with the audience)
- Able to write clear, basic and appropriate information or messages that are understood by the recipient (e.g. to complete standard Fire and Rescue Service forms and to use the BA operation entry board)

Commitment to Development – committed to and able to develop self and others

- Proactively reviews own performance using a variety of sources including seeking feedback from others
- Identifies development needs in own knowledge, skills and understanding and takes action to improve (e.g. seeks to identify and learn new methods from colleagues; recognises that own fitness levels need to be improved)
- Learns from a wide range of situations experienced by self or others (e.g. increases understanding about a community group following a safety discussion)

- Able to learn a large amount of job relevant information delivered both verbally and in writing, as part of initial training course and other development (e.g. operating procedures and standards)
- Actively encourages and supports others to improve their proficiency (e.g. updates colleagues concerning new information; shares own experiences)

Problem Solving – understands, recalls, applies and adapts relevant information in an organised, safe and systematic way

- Able to recall and apply correct, relevant job related information and procedures during incidents (e.g. training procedures for ladder erection)
- Able to adapt and apply standard or existing procedures and practices and personal skills to take account of a changing environment and to minimise risk
- Generates more than one solution to a problem and evaluates which one is best (e.g. in deciding how best to promote community fire safety)
- Considers immediate and wider objectives and implications (e.g. health and safety) to plan ahead to complete tasks in most efficient and safe way
- Prioritises, plans and completes tasks in a logical and systematic manner despite conflicting information (e.g. able to manage own actions during emergency situations)
- Able to interpret basic numerical information (e.g. in dials, tables, charts) and use basic arithmetical calculations correctly (i.e. addition, subtraction, division and multiplication) to apply task procedures (e.g. able to work out operation times when using BA equipment)

Commitment to Excellence – Adopts a conscientious and proactive approach to work to achieve and maintain excellent standards

- Continually looks to improve standards of working and offers suggestions as necessary (e.g. provides feedback concerning new or existing work practices to influence change or improve service delivery)
- Approaches work proactively and efficiently both with routine tasks and during incidents
- Adopts a conscientious approach to work (e.g. checks work to ensure all tasks completed correctly and with due attention to detail; maintains levels of personal fitness)
- Completes work according to correct procedures (e.g. refrains from taking unsafe short-cuts)
- Completes work as instructed without being checked constantly

- Is clear about the role of the firefighter and operates within agreed levels of authority, within a disciplined environment (e.g. does not take action outside own level of control without seeking confirmation)

Appendix 2

Firefighter Role Map

The Role Map is used by all fire and rescue services, it tells you about the job and links to the PQAs.

Title
Inform and educate your community to improve awareness of safety matters
Take responsibility for effective performance
Save and preserve endangered life
Resolve operational incidents
Protect the environment from the effects of hazardous materials
Support the effectiveness of operational response
Support the development of colleagues in the workplace
Contribute to safety solutions to minimise risks to your community
Drive, manoeuvre and redeploy fire service vehicles

Appendix 3

Are You Ready To Be A Firefighter? Checklist

The following list of questions has been designed to help you decide whether being a firefighter is really for you. Simply tick Yes or No to each of the following questions.

	Yes	No
Are you interested in people?		
Can you get on with people from different backgrounds and cultures?		
Do you want to work as part of a close-knit team?		
Can you work under pressure?		
Can you think on your feet and solve problems when you know a lot depends on your suggestion?		
Do you have the sensitivity to deal with members of the public when they are distressed, confused or being obstructive?		
Can you take responsibility for representing the Service when you are at work and when you are not?		
Are you committed to always maintaining and developing your skills?		
Are you committed to maintaining your health and physical fitness?		
Are you prepared to work in situations where you may see blood, seriously injured or dead people?		
Are you prepared to talk to people in the local community about fire safety?		
Are you a practical person who likes to work with your hands/equipment?		
Do you enjoy making things or finding out how things work?		
Are you someone who can always be relied on to be somewhere on time?		
Are you prepared to work at height?		
Are you prepared to work outside in all types of weather, when it is wet and cold?		
Are you prepared to work unsociable hours?		
Are you prepared to work in enclosed spaces?		

Are you prepared to carry heavy equipment?		
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If you answered 'Yes' to ALL of the above, and you think that you have what it takes to protect the community you live and work in, read the information provided and join our recruitment campaign.

Appendix 4

Medical Standards - Eyesight

As we get older our eyesight deteriorates. Firefighters require a certain level of eyesight to enable them to carry out their role. With this natural deterioration, it stands to reason that firefighters must meet a required standard of vision when applying to join the fire service as firefighters.

If you have any doubts regarding your eyesight we suggest that you book an appointment with your optician and take the information below to ask his/her opinion.

Colour blindness

Candidates who believe they have colour blindness may wish to be formally assessed prior to submitting an application form. The minimum standard accepted is the Farnsworth D-15 standard test. We also conduct functional tests as part of the medical process if candidates display difficulties with colour perception. Candidates must also pass the Ishihara test.

The vision standards for eyesight are:

Visual acuity

Use of aids to vision should be possible at the recruitment stage

Corrected visual acuity should be 6/9 binocularly, and a minimum of 6/12 in the worse eye

The minimum uncorrected vision for recruits should be 6/18 in the better eye and 6/24 in the worse eye for both full time and retained firefighters. The current 6/60 unaided limit should be retained for serving firefighters:

- An upper hypermetropic limit of +3.00
- Testing for myopic corrections is no longer required
- VA testing protocols must be better defined (e.g. for Snellen, distances, ambient lighting and use)
- Vision must be binocular
- Be able to read N12 at 30cm unaided with both eyes open (applicants aged 25 and over)
- Be able to read N6 at 30cm unaided with both eyes open (applicants under 25 years of age)

Visual fields

Normal binocular field of vision is required.

Eye disease

You should have no history of night blindness or any ocular disease that is likely to progress and result in future failure of the visual standards for firefighters

Individuals with keratoconus are unlikely to be fit for firefighting duties

Compound astigmatism assess for capability, history of headaches and eyestrain

Refractive surgery

Successful Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK), laser assisted in-situ keratomileusis (LASIK), Laser Epithelial Keratomileusis (LASEK) and EpiLASIK treatments should be allowable if post-operative visual tests are satisfied

RK (radial Keratotomy) and astigmatic keratotomy are NOT suitable due increased risk of rupture and fluctuation in vision

Intraocular Refractive Surgery – used for high myopes. Therefore there are still risk of complications

Wavefront Guided Laser Refractive Surgery – since a Wavefront treatment aims to reduce aberrations, in theory it should produce better outcomes for night vision and vision in difficult low lighting levels or reduced contrast as might be encountered in a smoke-filled room; this technology could therefore have great relevance for firefighters – research is still underway to aid our understanding of this relatively new technology

Assessment after Refractive Surgery – an examination to consider the suitability of a refractive surgery patient for operational firefighting should include:

A slit lamp examination to confirm that the eye has returned to normal and that there is no significant loss of corneal transparency over the pupil area.

Refraction, topographic examination and pachymetry to screen for keratectasia.

Candidates should have their visual performance assessed using a technique sensitive to the presence of scattered light and aberrations.

Candidates should not be considered until at least 12 months post-surgery and when all medication has ceased.

Appendix 5

Frequently Asked Questions

Application and eligibility

1. Why can't I access the online application form?

We are expecting high volumes of applicants, during peak hours (i.e. within a few hours of registration opening and closing), so the website may be slow. You will have a better experience of the system if you do not access it during peak times.

Make sure that you are using a laptop or PC. The application form does not work well on a mobile device such as a tablet or mobile phone.

2. I have completed the form but why will it not let me save my answers?

There may 2 common reasons. Either you have not provided 2 different referee details, or, you have not completed a section on the form. Use the Section Summary table to see what section is incomplete.

3. Is there a limit to the number of applications you are taking?

No, there is no limit to how many applications we will accept. We will consider all of those who have completed the Registration within the published deadlines.

4. I have a disability, how do I request reasonable adjustments?

On the application form, you will be asked to declare any disability and we will use this information to consider what reasonable adjustments you may require. We may ask you for further information/supporting evidence.

5. I won't be 18 years old or older by 03 June 2024 but will be soon after, can I still apply?

No. There is a legal requirement for those who are given a job to be 18 years old.

6. I do not live in Tyne and Wear, can I still apply?

Yes. We do not have any post code restrictions for applicants. However, if you are offered a role, you will need to ensure that you have access to accommodation within a reasonable daily commute distance.

7. I have missed the deadline can I have an extension?

Unfortunately no. This campaign is strictly timetabled, which is why we pre-publish the dates of each stage.

8. I do not yet have a full UK driving licence, can I still apply?

Yes, however you must be willing to take the appropriate steps to holding a full UK driving licence. We have anticipated a business need for qualified drivers who can drive our Service Vehicles.

9. I have driving offences, do I need to declare these?

You must tell us if your licence is endorsed. You will be asked to provide details about the nature of the offence, offence code (e.g. CD10 driving without due care and attention) and also give details of the penalty (e.g. £ fine and number of penalty points). If you had to attend court you will need to give details of the outcome.

10. I have unspent convictions, do I need to declare these?

Yes, you are required to declare any offence for which the conviction is not yet spent.

Within the meaning of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 – incorporating the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act (exemptions) 1975 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exemptions) (Amendment) Order 1996 – you are advised to declare any charge that is pending as a subsequent conviction could lead to your dismissal from the Service.

Broadly, the Act provides for anyone who has ever been convicted of a criminal offence and not sentenced to more than 2.5 years in prison to become a ‘rehabilitated person’ at the end of the rehabilitation period, provided there have been no further convictions.

At the end of this period, the conviction is considered spent and should be treated as it had never happened. Generally speaking, there are fixed rehabilitation periods for specific offences. If you are unsure whether you have to declare a previous conviction you should contact your local Probation Office, Citizens Advice or your Solicitor. Alternatively, you can consult the Home Office publication 'A Guide to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974'.

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be carried out at 'standard level' for those who are offered employment.

11. I have made a mistake on my application form, can I make changes?

You are unable to make changes once you have submitted the applications. Unfortunately, we are unable to make any changes on your behalf either.

12. There is a problem with the system, who do I contact?

You can contact us by emailing Recruitment@twfire.gov.uk

Please note that we will respond to you as quickly as we can, however, help and advice are only available during our normal office hours: 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Online tests

13. What happens if I lose internet connection whilst completing the tests?

An interrupted internet session will not affect your scores, as your responses are recorded during your session as you enter them. This information is auto saved so that when you log back in you can continue from where you left off.

14. Is the scoring system reliable?

Yes, the scoring system is very reliable. When you submit your responses, these are scored automatically by computer against a pre-determined scoring key which is applied to all applicants in exactly the same way.

15. Can I see my test results?

We do appreciate that you may want to know more details about your results, but we are unable to give out any additional information because we need to maintain the security of the scoring process. This is to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly in future recruitment campaigns.

While we understand this may be frustrating for you, we hope you can understand the importance of ensuring a fair process for all.

16. Why is my score so low?

It's helpful for you to understand how scoring is applied to your responses to generate the final result you get. The score you are given is a 'percentile' score not a 'percentage' score and is different to what you might be used to when completing tests. Knowing the difference between the two types will help you appreciate how you scored.

A percentile score is a score generated by comparing the results of your responses to a group of individuals who have also completed the test. This group is called a comparison group or norm group. Percentile scores show your results in relation to how you performed in comparison to this norm group. For example, if you have a percentile score of 60, then this means that your score is better than 60% of people in that norm group. It does not mean that you have answered 60% of the questions correctly.

17. I have missed the deadline can I have an extension?

Unfortunately no. This campaign is strictly timetabled, which is why we pre-publish the dates of each stage.

18. I completed the test on my mobile phone or tablet and the system crashed, can I retake the tests?

No. You are advised not to use a mobile phone or tablet to complete the tests, so it is your own responsibility to ensure the correct browser is used.

19. Will there be a Pool for candidates who pass the tests but are not offered a chance to progress to the next stage?

No. For this round of recruitment we will not be placing candidates in a Talent Pool. If you are not invited to the next stage of the process, then that is point when your application ends.

20. Why do I need to sit another online test later in the process?

We have this process in place because we need some assurance that when you took the test at Stage 2, your answers were all your own. The validation tests will be done at our Headquarters and you will be supervised.