

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I am interested in applying for a job as a wholetime firefighter, how do I apply?

A. All applications should be made online via [our website](#).

If you have problems with your application please contact Herts HR Department via email on: hr.recruitment@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Q. What qualifications are needed?

A. GCSE A* to Grade C in English and Mathematics (or recognised equivalent Key Skills/Basic Skills or Adult Literacy and Numeracy Level 2.) and a full driving licence (you will be required to provide these as evidence at the recruitment event and your current address must be on your driving licence).

Q. Why do applicants for wholetime firefighter posts need to hold GCSE's (Grade A*-C) or a recognised equivalent qualification in English and Mathematics?

A. The role of a wholetime firefighter has over the years become increasingly technical and there is an expectation that all operational personnel will be able to undertake educational self-study in the areas of: firecraft, the science of fire behaviour, the mechanics of a wide range of operational equipment and the use of IT equipment and associated software systems.

As an organisation that doesn't currently operate multi-level entry criteria, we intend to ensure that we employ a broad range of staff; from those who will be content to remain as wholetime firefighters, to those who will reach senior levels of management/command within the Fire and Rescue Service.

It is important therefore, that our recruitment criteria is set in such a way that it attracts people with a broad range of skills/abilities and as a result we have set our recruitment criteria to ensure we attract the right calibre of applicant, who possess the level of educational qualifications considered necessary to undertake the role of a wholetime firefighter.

We do not insist on this for on-call (retained) firefighters as we appreciate that their role is different to that of the wholetime firefighter. The wholetime firefighter requires a broader range of skill sets than on-call firefighters due to the limitations of the time that they can spend on training and the limited opportunities to undertake specialist work/roles.

Q. Why can't I apply if I live outside of the Hertfordshire post code boundaries?

A. There are several of reasons for this:

- Hertfordshire has a diverse population and by recruiting applicants from within the county we are attempting to ensure that the demography of our workforce matches up with the communities in which we serve.
- Due to a high number of enquiries received, we aim to make the recruitment process manageable and ensure that the organisation can cope with demand and also process all eligible candidates fairly.

Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service - Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Q. Do I have to be a British citizen to apply?

A. You can be of any nationality to apply, provided that you have the permanent right to remain without restriction in the UK; citizens of the European Union are automatically eligible to apply. All candidates will be required to provide evidence of your legal right to work in the UK during the recruitment process.

Q. Is there an age restriction?

A. You must be 18 years of age or above at the commencement date of the wholetime firefighter recruit course; there is no upper age limit for candidates.

Q. Is there a height limit for applicants?

A. There is no minimum or maximum height limit for applicants.

Q. Does your Fire and Rescue Service accept applications from females and people from black and ethnic minorities?

A. Hertfordshire and Rescue Service (HFRS) is an equal opportunities employer, we strive to ensure that our workforce is reflective of the communities we serve. Applications are accepted from **all** members of our community, regardless of gender, marital/parental status, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic origin, disability, age or any other factor which cannot be justified.

Q. Will the process be quicker and easier because I've served in the military?

A. Everyone has an equal chance of applying for the role of a firefighter, no special provisions are made for personnel currently serving in or leaving the military. If you have served in the armed forces it may help you with discipline and the physical side of the job, however there is much more to the role of a modern firefighter than just these aspects of the job. There is no process for ex-forces to transfer straight across into the Fire and Rescue service, just as there is no process in place for firefighters to transfer directly into the military.

Q. I have a criminal record; can I still apply to be a firefighter?

A. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from becoming a firefighter. If you have a criminal record, you will have to declare this in the application stages. You will be subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 which you will need to read as each offence will be different. Before an offer of employment is made a disclosure document from the Criminal Records Bureau may be obtained. If at this stage a conviction is highlighted that has not been declared, your application will be withdrawn from the recruitment process.

Q. Can I apply if I wear glasses?

A. As part of the medical, candidates will undergo an optical examination. If you require glasses and dependent on your level of eyesight, the Service may provide you with prescription safety glasses.

Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service - Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Q. I have a disability; can I still become a firefighter?

A. Under the Equality Act 2010 a disability is defined by the Act as: Anyone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The organisation will ask candidates if they need adjustments to be made as part of the recruitment process to allow them to be considered for the job and to give details of the type of adjustments they may require in order to take part in the selection process and to fulfill the role of a firefighter. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and if reasonable adjustments can be made to enable individuals to take part in the selection process, these will subsequently be replicated on the incident ground.

Q. If I'm unsuccessful at any stage of the process, can I re-sit?

A. You have to be successful at each stage of the recruitment process to progress to the next stage. We do not have the facility to allow candidates to re-sit the process.

Q. What if I can't make an assessment date or the training course date?

A. The dates of the assessments and training course dates have been set and agreed at the beginning of the recruitment process. If you are unable to make any of the dates you will not be able to continue with the recruitment process on this occasion.

Q. What will happen if I forget to attend a recruitment event or arrive late at any of the assessments?

A. Your application will be immediately withdrawn from the recruitment process.

Q. I've recently passed the National Firefighter Selection process with a different Fire and Rescue service and I am on their holding list. Do I still need to apply and go through your recruitment process?

A. Yes. Our processes and requirements may differ from those used within other Fire and Rescue services and in the interests of fairness, it is vital that all candidates have been assessed in the same way.

Q. On completion of my training course, which station will I be based at?

A. On completion of an initial recruit training course, personnel may be posted to any Wholetime, day-crewed or day-crewed plus fire station within Hertfordshire. This will be dependent on the operational needs of the Service at that time.

Q. Are there any career prospects?

A. Yes. As your career progresses there will be opportunities for development and promotion. This could include moving into a specialist area such as Fire Protection (enforcing legislation in non-domestic premises) or promotion into one of our management roles.

Q. Will I have to pay for my uniform?

A. Uniform is provided free of charge including any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that will be issued to you.

Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service - Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Q. How much will I get paid during the 16 week training course?

A. You will be paid £22,237 which is the current rate for trainee firefighters. Once the training course is completed it rises to £23,162 whilst in development but once fully competent it rises to £29,638. Fringe allowance is paid in some areas of the county but will not be paid during the training course.

Q. What do I have to do to become competent?

A. You will need to pass and complete the 16 week basic training course and then undertake an Emergency Fire Services Operations in the Community NVQ Diploma within two years. This will be co-ordinated and supported by HFRS.

Q. How much annual leave do wholetime firefighters get?

A. Wholetime firefighters have 30 days annual leave plus eight public holidays per year.

Q. What if I have dyslexia?

A. If you have dyslexia, or suspect you may have dyslexia, we are able to put appropriate measures in place to support you through the selection process. You will need to identify this on the application form and should you be shortlisted for the next stage, you will be asked to submit an assessment report from an appropriately qualified health or education professional. This assessment report will help us identify how best we can support you, not only at selection stage but potentially throughout your Fire Service career. You may find it useful to contact the British Dyslexia Association.

Q. What if I have asthma?

A. Asthma does not necessarily prevent you from becoming a firefighter. Firefighters are exposed to smoke and other toxicants as part of their job. These are irritating to the lungs and upper respiratory tract and can exacerbate the symptoms of wheezing in firefighters with asthma. Your condition will be assessed at the medical stage by our Occupational Health Department (OHU), after which a decision will be made as to your suitability for the role of a firefighter.

Q. Do I have to be fit to apply?

A. You will need to be fit and maintain your level of fitness throughout your career as a firefighter. As part of the recruitment process you will be required to undertake a fitness test to determine your aerobic capacity as well as a number of physical tests. The aerobic capacity test is the standard bleep test and you will need to reach level 9.6. If successful in your application you will be required to maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle throughout your career as a firefighter.

Q. Why do I need a full UK driving licence to apply?

A. Firefighters are required to work at various locations across the county so require a full driving license to enable them to drive service vehicles.

Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service - Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

Q. Why must my postal address be on my driving licence?

A. It is a legal requirement to have your driving licence details up to date and HFRS use your postal address to confirm you are living in the Hertfordshire catchment area before applying.

Q. What happens if I receive an injury or become ill whilst on the 16 week training course?

A. Every effort will be made to treat any injuries whilst on the course, however, if a more serious injury is sustained or illness prevents attendance on the course then the individual may be withdrawn from the course. All successful candidates who are offered a place on the recruit course will be advised to temporarily refrain from playing any sport or taking part in any activity that may cause them injury and potential removal from the course.

Q. Are tattoos acceptable for employment as a firefighter?

A. Any person who has a tattoo which could be construed as offensive to any religion, belief or is in any way discriminatory, violent or intimidating **will not** be considered as a suitable candidate for employment within HFRS. This is irrespective of where the tattoo appears on your body.

Q. Are body piercings acceptable for employment as a firefighter?

A. All body piercings **must be removed** when on duty. Additionally, any cavity caused by body modifications such as flesh tunnels or ear stretchers are strictly prohibited for health and safety reasons unless they can be surgically corrected.

Q. What can I expect if I get invited to attend a medical?

A. You will be expected to provide a urine sample under controlled conditions which will be used for a drugs test and you will need to bring along photographic I.D. You will also be required to undertake the following investigations with a nurse:

- Height and weight
- Blood pressure/pulse
- Urinalysis
- Spirometry (lung function test)
- Audiology (hearing test)
- Eyesight test (if required)
- Palpation of the abdomen
- Testing of the reflexes