



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE**

# **Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment**

## **Information Pack**





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## **A message from Ben Ansell, Chief Fire Officer**



I am very proud to lead Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service and was delighted that HMICFRS recognised the fantastic work that we do supporting our communities.

I am passionate about our one team ethos and I know that everyone within the Service is key in ensuring we provide an excellent service to our communities.

We have a fantastic workforce that works tirelessly to help make Dorset and Wiltshire a healthier and safer place to visit and work. Our people are the heart of our Service, and without the energy, drive, commitment and professionalism of our staff we would not be able to do what we do.

I am committed to making sure we continue to invest in our people so that we can provide an efficient and effective fire and rescue service.

If you share our vision and think you could make a positive difference to our people and communities, we would love to hear from you.



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## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Wholetime Firefighter with Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS).

We are providing this recruitment information pack to give you a good understanding of the role of a Firefighter; what we do as a Service; and information about the recruitment and selection process.

Please take time to read this information carefully as it provides all the information you need to guide you through the process. We have also produced a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document that is available to download from our website (<https://www.dwfire.org.uk/working-for-us/wholetime-recruitment/>).



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

SILVER AWARD WINNER 2019  
PROUDLY SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SERVE.



# Think you know about the role of Firefighters, think again . . .

Firefighting involves much more than putting out fires. We play a crucial role in:

## Response:

- **Rescuing** people from road traffic collisions
- **Supporting** the ambulance service with medical emergencies
- **Rescuing** people from fast flowing water and protecting properties from flood damage
- **Rescuing** people from height and confined spaces
- **Providing** specialist animal rescue services

## Prevention:

- **Educating** young drivers to prevent accidents and injuries
- **Keeping** our communities safe from fire and other dangers with safe and well visits
- **Educating** children in road and fire safety through school visits and community events
- **Changing lives** through being an instructor on a youth intervention programme
- **Saving lives** through mentoring young people in our arson prevention programme

## Protection:

- **Making** people safer in their places of work by advising business owners on fire safety regulations
- **Making** buildings safer where people work, live and carry out leisure activities



## Firefighter Rolemap

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Title</b>
FF1	Inform and educate your community to improve awareness of safety matters
FF2	Take responsibility for effective performance
FF3	Save and preserve endangered life
FF4	Resolve operational incidents
FF5	Protect the environment from the effects of hazardous materials
FF6	Support the effectiveness of operational response
FF7	Support the development of colleagues in the workplace
FF8	Contribute to safety solutions to minimise risks to your community
FF9	Drive, manoeuvre and redeploy fire service vehicles

**This Rolemap outlines the varied responsibilities and duties expected of a Firefighter within their role.**



## Who are we?

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is a modern Fire Service bringing two counties together and serving the local authorities of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Swindon, Dorset and Wiltshire.

We are proud that Her Majesty's Inspectorate has graded us as 'Good' across the three inspection pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People and we continue to strive to be the best we can be.

Dorset & Wiltshire has 50 fire stations serving our local communities and crews are available to respond 24 hours a day.

Alongside emergency response, our work also focuses on prevention, protection and resilience – working for and with our communities to ensure that local people are as safe as they can be.

Our 1350 staff comprise of:

- 404 Wholetime Firefighters
- 610 On Call Firefighters
- 35 Fire Control
- 301 Corporate Staff

We have 74 pumping appliances, 3 aerials, 57 other appliances including 4X4, water carriers, technical rescue, operational support, as well as 2 Training Centres, one Headquarters, and several support offices.

In 2019 and 2020 we have:

### **Been there when you need us**

- Attended 14,208 incidents
- 3,251 fires (984 deliberate)
- 706 accidental fires in the home
- 276 fires in non-domestic buildings
- Rescued 116 people from fires
- Attended 172 animal rescue incidents

### **Protected you and the environment from harm**

- 1,173 fire safety audits
- 5,000+ positive engagements with businesses
- 1,278 building regulation consultations

### **Helped to make safer choices**

- 41,252 children received safety messages
- 24 intensive youth courses delivered
- 12,934 safe & well checks
- 18,127 people received road safety messages





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We are working for and with our communities to ensure that local people are as safe as they can be.

These are where our wholtime stations are located. Please visit our [website](#) for specific information on each of these stations:

- Christchurch; Poole; Redhill Park; Springbourne; Westbourne; Weymouth; Ferndown; Stratton; Swindon; Westlea; Chippenham; Salisbury; Trowbridge

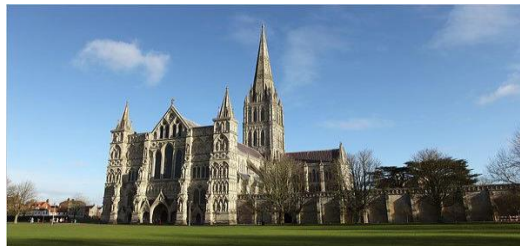
## Employee Benefits

*Investing in our people: 'one team approach'*

**Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service offers a wide range of employee benefits and strives to ensure that our employees feel valued and rewarded. These benefits include:**

### Iconic location

Dorset and Wiltshire are beautiful counties to live and work in. We have many areas of outstanding natural beauty, including the Jurassic coast which is a World Heritage site, Salisbury plain and historic landmarks such as Salisbury Cathedral and Stonehenge. Both counties are popular destinations for visitors.







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## General Benefits

**Firefighter Pension Scheme** – Enrolment into the appropriate pension scheme for all service employees which includes retirement options. Members of the schemes will benefit from a generous employer contribution.

**Smarter Working** – spanning a large geographical area, we are committed to reducing unnecessary travel for staff working across the two counties to reduce our carbon footprint. We have invested in office 365, promoted on line meetings, and provided the equipment and infrastructure to support working from any location with an internet connection.

**Annual leave** – Generous annual leave allowance with a basic entitlement for those on the shift system of 23 days plus 8 bank holiday days. After 5 years' service the basic leave entitlement increases by 3 days.

**Learning and Organisational Development** – Opportunities for employees to further develop in their roles and pursue training and development pathways and qualifications.

**Parking on site** – Free car parking available to all service employees at our fire stations, HQ and support offices.

**Loyalty award** – Long service award after 20 years' continuous service.

**Continuous service** – Existing Local Government / Fire Service employees entering the service with no break in service will maintain continuous service.

**Union Membership** – we recognise Unison, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), the Fire and Rescue Service Association (FRSA) and the Fire Officers Association (FOA) as negotiating partners.

**Sports & Social Club** – There are a variety of sports and social clubs within the service, this includes an in-house lottery subscription where 5 prizes are drawn each month.

## Employee Discounts

**BLUE  
LIGHT  
CARD**



**Blue Light Card** – Access to many online discounts / promotional offers as part of the UK's Emergency Services, NHS or Armed Forces. Link: <https://www.bluelightcard.co.uk/>.

**Local discounts** – Discounts are available at local companies within the Dorset and Wiltshire area upon showing your Service ID card.

## Family Friendly



**Flexible working** – your working environment and work life balance is important to us, so we offer flexible working patterns, as well as career breaks, where possible. This allows members of staff to work flexibly within the requirements of their role.

**Maternity / Paternity / Adoption / Parental leave** – The service provides leave for employees who meet the criteria outlined within DWFRS policies and procedures:

- Eligible members of staff are entitled to a maximum of 52 weeks' Maternity Leave
- Members of staff may be entitled to Statutory Maternity Support Leave (incorporating Paternity Leave) of a maximum of two weeks providing they meet the eligibility requirements
- Eligible members of staff are entitled to a maximum of 52 weeks' Adoption Leave
- If staff meet the eligibility requirements, they are entitled to a maximum of 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave for each child, up to their 18th Birthday

## Health & Well-being

### Mental Health Support 'Mindful Employer'

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service have signed up to the Mindful Employer Initiative, the Charter for Employers who are positive about mental health. The Charter provides a voluntary set of aspirations for DWFRS to work towards to help support staff with mental health conditions.



**Blue Light Programme** - Mind is delivering the Blue Light Programme to provide mental health support for emergency services staff and volunteers from ambulance, fire, police and search and rescue services across England and Wales.



**Mindful Employer** - Provides employers with easier access to information and support to help staff who experience stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions.

**Counselling** - The Service works with an external counselling provision to provide private and confidential counselling service to DWFRS members of staff. Counselling is available to all DWFRS staff and their immediate family members, and retired staff and their immediate family members.

**TRiM** - Trauma Risk in Management (TRiM) is a system developed by the Royal Marines and widely adopted by the military, police forces and fire and rescue services and is considered an effective form of stress management. This is stress which follows as a result of a traumatic incident. This can be any event from a minor accident to a major disaster. It can affect survivors, victims, rescuers and helpers as well as onlookers, witnesses, colleagues, friends and family members.

**Eye voucher** – Employees are eligible for free eye tests and a discount towards glasses.

**Flu Vaccinations** – Employees are eligible for flu vaccinations.



**Routine medicals** – Employees attend a routine medical every three years as part of supporting their health and fitness.

**Free Gym access** – Within our stations, employees can use the gym equipment free of charge following a full induction by one of the service's PEI's (this includes treadmill, rowing machine, exercise bikes, weights).

**Leisure centre access** – Employees are eligible to use the Five Rivers swimming pool facilities at a corporate discounted rate. Link: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure-memberships>.

**Physio sessions** – The service offer up to 6 physio sessions to provide interim support for any condition to support the health and wellbeing of an individual.



**Fire Fighters Charity** – Helping everyday heroes recover their lives by supporting their physical health, mental health and social wellbeing. All Service employees including their family members are eligible: Link: <https://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/>.

## Terms and Conditions

### Contracts/ shift working

Wholetime Firefighters are required to work a flexible shift pattern, this is equivalent to 42 hours per week which will involve working days, nights and/or weekends. Different stations have different shift patterns. For more information on shift patterns please visit our website [here](#)

### Pay

All remuneration is paid in accordance with the National Joint Council (NJC) Conditions of Service for the Local Authorities Fire Services.

### Trainee Firefighter:

During your initial training course you will have an annual salary of **£23,833**

### Firefighter in Development:

Following completion of your initial training your salary will increase to **£24,826**

### Competent Firefighter:

Once you have successfully completed the relevant stages of your development, which is achievable in around 18 months to two years into your role, your salary will increase to **£31,767**

### Pension Scheme

Wholetime Firefighters are eligible to join the Firefighter Pension Scheme 2015 and will be automatically enrolled.



## **Do you have what we need?**

If you think you can't be a Firefighter because you don't meet the stereotype you have in mind, think again! If you care about the safety of others and want to be part of the community, working to help keep communities safe, this could be the job for you. Do you have these characteristics?

- **Are you a role model that leads by example?**
- **Are you a team player?**
- **Want to work within your community and make a difference?**
- **Looking for a challenging and rewarding career?**
- **Respect for diversity, with a fair and ethical approach?**
- **Do you have physical and mental strength?**
- **Are you calm under pressure with the ability to work outside your comfort zone?**
- **Can you stay focused and achieve a goal under stressful emergency situations?**
- **Do you have the drive, ability and initiative to make a positive personal impact?**
- **Are you able to work at height and in dark confined spaces?**

**If you were able to answer 'Yes' to all the above, then we have your next career ready and waiting**

### **Are you prepared to:**

- **Get hot/cold whilst working?**
- **Carry heavy equipment?**
- **Work unsociable hours?**
- **Work in situations where you may see blood, seriously injured, or fatalities?**
- **Deal sensitively with people in difficult situations?**
- **Talk to groups & individuals in the local community about fire safety?**

**If you answered 'no' for any of the questions above, we strongly suggest you think seriously about whether being a Firefighter is right for you.**



## Eligibility criteria to apply

Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria to be able to apply for the role of Firefighter:

- Be over the age of 17 years and six months at the closing date for applications (you must be 18 years or older at the point of employment)
- Have the right to work in the UK without any restrictions
- Do not have any unspent criminal convictions\*
- Do not have any court judgements outstanding against you
- Hold a current UK full driving licence
- Be confident in water.

**As well as the above criteria, candidates should be aware that they will need to meet the required fitness standards, medical health check and eyesight standards for entry.**

*\*The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 gives you the right not to disclose details of offences which are seen as 'spent'. However you are required to declare any convictions for offences that are not 'spent'. If you are unsure about whether a conviction is spent please refer to the website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) - New Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974*

*A criminal record may not automatically bar you from appointment (it may in some cases). The Service will consider whether the conviction makes you unsuitable for appointment. Failure to declare a conviction, caution or bind-over may disqualify you from appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light.*



# Development and future career opportunities

## Development opportunities

DWFRS is committed to supporting the development and progression of all staff. There is a fair and consistent approach to performance and future promotions. One of our key priorities is 'Developing and Supporting our People'.

We provide a flexible approach to learning (including our own internal e-learning system known as GROW) with Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and have Development Pathways for all staff at all levels in the Service.

We provide access to specialist development activities and identify training to help improve operational, managerial and leadership roles.

## Promotion Opportunities

Once you have completed your training and are no longer a Firefighter in development, it will be possible for you to apply for promotion. There is a full and varied career available for those interested in career progression, with several different role levels that people can aspire to be promoted to within the Fire Service (including salary information from 1 July 2020):

- Crew Manager (£35,219)
- Watch Manager (£39,383)
- Station Manager (£45,183)
- Group Manager (£52,301)
- Area Manager (£60,756)
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer (salary agreed by Fire Authority)
- Chief Fire Officer (salary agreed by Fire Authority)

We have a new, innovative promotion process that staff can apply to if they want to apply for a role at a higher level. Promotions to roles at Crew Manager and Watch Manager are completed through a number of elements, testing your skills and knowledge, and providing you with training to ensure you have the right skills once promoted. The promotions portal is online so you can track your progress, receive timely feedback at each stage, monitor the different stages you have reached, as well as seeing what you need to do next.

Our promotions process has been co-designed with staff and provides a flexible approach to learning and continual development enabling people to work at their own pace. It places emphasis on staff being able to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge needed to progress and gain promotion and that their actions have had a positive demonstrable impact on colleagues and the Service.



## **Career opportunities**

The role of a Firefighter is the first step in a rewarding career. As well as the opportunity of progressing your career through station-based roles, there are many varied career pathways in other operational disciplines. Here are a couple of examples of opportunities available:

### **Fire Safety**

The Fire and Rescue Services are the enforcing authority for fire safety matters in commercial premises as well as most other buildings and workplaces under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Fire Safety team work with partners to ensure that the legislation is followed, guidance is provided to the Responsible Person, and that enforcement action is taken where necessary.

As well as the requirement for Firefighters to have a basic knowledge of fire safety systems and procedures so that they can identify potentially dangerous conditions, there is scope to undertake further training as part of a career progression route to support with fire safety related project work, training and ultimately to lead the team of Fire Safety Inspectors. Opportunities exist to increase technical knowledge through professionally accredited examinations and nationally recognised competence in auditing premises, enforcement activity and assessing building regulation submissions.

### **Training**

Opportunities to gain promotion can lead to roles in one of our training centres for the right candidates. If successful, you can become an instructor in Breathing Apparatus, Compartment Fire Behaviour, Road Traffic Collisions and Incident Command. This will mean providing input to new recruits and also to long serving Firefighters. As well as training people to develop their skills further we would support and develop you so that you will be able to provide subject matter expert advice to the service.





## Our Vision and Values

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is 'passionate about changing and saving lives'.

### Our Vision:

We are much more than a Fire and Rescue Service. We are about helping you to become safer, healthier and to live more independently. Improving your wellbeing and investing in our future generations is central to our way of thinking. We will play a key part in supporting our communities and businesses to grow safely and responsibly. When you need us, we will respond quickly and professionally to limit distress, harm and economic loss.

We also have five priorities:

- **Help you to make safer and healthier choices** – we want you to be more aware about the risks you face and support you and your business to be safer. We are committed to improving the wellbeing of you and your family.
- **Protect you and the environment from harm** – we will work with you to improve your safety and reduce the effect that day-to-day hazards and risks can have on you and your environment.
- **Be there when you need us** – we will continue to provide a professional and prompt response when an emergency happens.
- **Make every penny count** – we will continue to be a well-respected and trusted Service, offering excellent value for money.
- **Supporting and developing our people** – making sure our staff are at the centre of everything we do, are well led and have the right knowledge and skills, is crucial to the success of our Service.

### Our Values

To help us deliver these priorities and our vision, we have developed a framework of our values known as RESPECT, which is an acronym for the seven things that we stand for in terms of how we work:

- Responsibility
- Equality
- Support
- Professionalism
- Excellence
- Communication
- Transformation

We recognise that great service is not just about what we achieve but also about how we deliver, so RESPECT runs through everything that we do. To help everyone working for us to have a common understanding of what these words mean in their day to day roles, each of the



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seven values are underpinned by a set of behaviours and we use these to ensure consistency and to continuously develop the way that we work.

We encourage future candidates to find out how they might work within our RESPECT framework by visiting our website [www.dwfire.org.uk](http://www.dwfire.org.uk) and completing our [RESPECT self-assessment](#) before applying.

## **Diverse communities served by our diverse workforce**

We respond to a wide range of incidents with our highly trained, highly skilled teams who have a wealth of training, experience and knowledge. The communities we serve can be as diverse as the situations we tackle.

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to ensuring that its workforce reflects the community we serve. At the present time this is not the case as women are under-represented within our operational service and the wider workforce does not reflect the ethnic diversity within our communities.

We are an equal opportunities employer and we are committed to putting equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything we do. We welcome applications from all members of our community and encourage women, black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and the LGBTQ community to join us.

Although we require our Firefighters to have a good standard of fitness and practical ability, having a disability will not prevent you from applying. We do have our 'Frequently Asked Questions' which should be able to answer any questions that you may have regarding applicants with disabilities.



# Becoming a Firefighter with Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

## Recruitment Process

The recruitment procedure has several different stages to its process. We need the best and most committed people to join our team. Every day at work you are required to give 100 percent. If you are one of the successful applicants to make it through the process you will be rewarded with a competitive salary, fantastic career opportunities, and the chance to work as part of a highly skilled Service, whilst achieving further qualifications and personal goals.

### **Stage one – Register Interest, Realistic Job Preview, Eligibility and Online Assessment Process**

You will be able to register your interest and start your application from 10am on 05 October 2020. This will involve participating in a simple multi-stage online sifting process requiring you to complete and pass various stages before being asked to complete a formal application form. This process is used to help us manage the high volumes of applications we receive for this role, fairly and efficiently.

Due to the high volumes of application, the process will be managed online and supported **by email only** and you will be given clear instructions and how to access support if needed, at each stage. Detailed information explaining how the process works and the dates of each stage are included in this recruitment guide. *Please read this guide carefully before starting the online process*, as it will help you understand and complete the process successfully without the need to contact us directly. Should we need to contact you we will do so by email or telephone when necessary.

### **Online Registration**

All applicants must complete the registration and eligibility screening stage to formally start an application. This takes less than 15 minutes to complete and must be completed before the set **closing date of 09 October 2020** at midnight. From this time/date the online portal will be closed and no late registrations will be possible under any circumstances.

You will need to register your name, address, contact number, National Insurance Number (please ensure you have this available when you register) and e-mail address. All communication is by e-mail so it is critical that you use one e-mail address only and check this throughout the selection process.

As part of the registration you will also be asked to give details relating to equality and diversity which is optional. We encourage you to complete this accurately as it provides us with useful information on the diversity statistics for all applications received.

As part of the registration process you will also be asked if you meet the following essential criteria:



- Must have a current UK full driving licence
- Be able to permanently live and work in the UK without any restrictions
- Be aged 17 years and six months or over at the closing date for applications
- Do not have any unspent criminal convictions\*
- Do not have any court judgements outstanding against you
- Be confident in water

*\*The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 gives you the right not to disclose details of offences which are seen as 'spent'. However you are required to declare any convictions for offences that are not 'spent'. If you are unsure about whether a conviction is spent please refer to the website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) - New Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974*

*A criminal record may not automatically bar you from appointment (it may in some cases). The Service will consider whether the conviction makes you unsuitable for appointment. Failure to declare a conviction, caution or bind-over may disqualify you from appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light.*

**Please ensure you read the questions carefully and answer them accurately as you cannot amend them once recorded.** If you do not meet all the above criteria you are not eligible and will not be able to proceed with your application. The criteria are applied strictly and consistently, and **no exceptions will be made**. Therefore, please do not contact us to query the criteria or seek to apply if you do not meet the basic eligibility requirements. *If it is found at a later stage that you do not meet the essential criteria you will be removed from the process.*

The online sifting process will be managed on behalf of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service by HR Solutions Hub, a professional service who specialise in administering the assessments and tests which make up the sifting process.

As we move through the sifting process, please check your e-mails daily, including trash/spam/junk folders, for information on when and how to access the various stages. We will be adhering to a strict timetable and it is your responsibility to regularly check your emails as **we will not extend deadlines under any circumstances**.

Once you have completed the registration and eligibility stage you will be informed immediately whether you have:

- passed and will be contacted to progress as per the published process
- failed and the reason why you have failed
- or that you have been referred to the HR Department of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service because we require further information from you before deciding if you are eligible.

These outcomes are clearly explained and final and you do not have the right of appeal.



## The Online Assessment Process

This is a timetable showing the timing of the online sifting process. Please make a note of these dates to avoid missing your opportunity to complete them in time.

Activity Required	Start and closing dates
Online registration	Start: 10am on 05 October 2020 Closing: midnight on 09 October 2020
Step 1 – Behavioural Questionnaire	Start: 10am on 13 October 2020 Closing: 12 noon on 15 October 2020
Step 2- Situational Judgement Test	Start: 10am on 21 October 2020 Closing: 12 noon on 23 October 2020
Step 3 – FRS Ability Tests	Start: 10am on 28 October 2020 Closing: 12 noon on 30 October 2020

### Step 1 - Behavioural Styles Questionnaire

On 13 October 2020 you will receive an email from the **Apollo** system with a link to access the first stage of the assessment process which is an online Behavioural Styles Questionnaire. The deadline to complete this questionnaire is 15 October 2020 at 12 noon. If you do not complete it before this time you will not be progressed further in the recruitment process. You will be informed whether you have passed or failed this questionnaire by email on 20 October 2020. If you have passed you will be progressed to the next assessment which is a Situational Judgement Test. If you have failed, your application will not be considered further.

### Step 2 - Situational Judgement Test

On 21 October 2020 you will receive an email from the **Apollo** system with a link to access the Situational Judgement Test. The deadline to complete this questionnaire is 23 October 2020 at 12 noon. If you do not complete it before this time you will not be progressed further in the recruitment process. If you have passed you will be progressed to the next assessment which is the Fire Service Ability Tests. If you have failed, your application will not be considered further.

### Step 3 – Fire Service Ability Tests

On 28 October 2020 you will receive an email from the **Test Partnership** system with a link to access the FRS Ability Tests. These are short tests measuring your verbal, numerical and mechanical reasoning. The deadline to complete them is 30 October 2020 at 12 noon. If you do not complete it before this time you will not be progressed further in the recruitment process. You will be informed whether you have passed or failed these tests by email on 09 November 2020.

If you pass the FRS Ability Tests, you will be sent an email from HR Solutions Hub informing you of this on Monday 09 November 2020. This email will also contain a link to access our online application form which you should complete to submit your application. You will be able to access this link from 09 November 2020 and have until midnight on 15 November 2020 to



submit your application. If you have failed the tests your application will not be considered further.

We strongly advise that you complete each stage as soon as possible and do not leave it until the actual deadline. **It is not possible for us to give extensions to any of the deadlines given.**

### **General Guidance and Information**

All the online stages should be completed by *you, alone and unassisted* on a computer, laptop or tablet. **They are not compatible with a smartphone.** You should ensure that you have a *stable internet connection* when accessing and completing all the online stages. **Checks will be undertaken at a later stage in the selection process to verify that you have completed these tests without assistance.**

Should you experience any IT issues accessing the online system during any of the online stages please email [applicant.support@hrsolutionshub.co.uk](mailto:applicant.support@hrsolutionshub.co.uk) for assistance. This support is available between *0900 and 1800, Monday to Friday only*. Any emails received outside these hours will be responded to by 1200 on the next working day. Support is only available via email so please do not attempt to contact us by telephone.

**Please make note: as we receive many hundreds of applications, we will not be able to provide you with individual results or feedback from the assessments you have completed so do not email us requesting these at any stage of the process.**

Should you require any information during the online sifting process described above, please refer to this guide as it will have all the information you need.

Should you wish to view some sample questions please visit our website and view the [Online Assessments page here](#).

### **Stage two – Completion of Online application form**

If you pass the FRS Ability Tests, you will be sent an email from HR Solutions Hub informing you of this on Monday 09 November 2020. This email will also contain a link to access our online application form which you should complete to submit your application. You should access this link from 09 November 2020, and you will have until midnight on Sunday 15 November 2020 to submit it. **Please be aware that you must complete and submit your application by the deadline as no extensions will be given.**

### **Stage three - Fitness Testing and Document Checks**

We anticipate that the Fitness Tests will be held in the weeks commencing 30 November and 07 December 2020.

You will be required to bring photo documentation with you to confirm your identity (passport / driving licence) and evidence of your right to work in the UK. We will provide details nearer the time.



You will be required to undergo a blood pressure check prior to being able to take the fitness test.

You will be required to demonstrate a standard of 42 VO<sub>2</sub> max, which is the national minimum standard for someone joining the Fire Service. This is achieved by a bleep test (shuttle run), which involves running continuously between two markers 20 metres apart.

The running speed is determined by an audio bleep and the interval between the bleeps decreases as you complete each level. You will need to run for roughly eight minutes and 30 seconds to achieve Level 8 Shuttle 8, which is the equivalent of a VO<sub>2</sub> max of 42.3. Please visit [www.bleeptests.com](http://www.bleeptests.com) for more information about a bleep test to help you to prepare.

We will be adhering to government Covid-19 safety measures to protect the health and welfare of our staff and candidates throughout this stage of the selection process.

- For an overview of the fitness requirements for being a Firefighter, [click here](#).
- For a useful 12 week training programme to help you achieve these standards, [click here](#).

Firefighting is a difficult and demanding job, so we have to test whether new joiners are fit and able to perform all aspects of the role that may be required for operational duties.

## **Stage four – Practical Assessment and Verification Test relating to completion of initial Online Fire Service Ability Tests (Re-Testing)**

### **Practical Assessment**

We anticipate that the Practical Assessments and Verification Tests will be held in the weeks commencing 18 January and 25 January 2021.

At this stage of the process you will be tested both physically and mentally with a selection of tests which are designed to replicate the type of work you will be expected to undertake as a Firefighter. They are designed to assess your level of fitness, strength and manual dexterity as well as your level of confidence in simulated exercises.

All our tests are derived from the agreed national Firefighter selection tests as set out by the National Firefighter Chiefs Council (NFCC).

### **Ladder Lift**

You will be required to lift a bar which replicates the head of a large Fire Service ladder from a height of 75cm to a height of 182cm in the way demonstrated to you. The maximum weight of the bar will be 15Kg for the test.

This test will require upper body strength.

### **Casualty Evacuation**

To simulate rescuing a casualty, you will be required to drag a casualty dummy backwards around a 30m course in a set time whilst guided by an instructor. Techniques for lifting will be demonstrated before the test.

This test requires core strength and endurance.





### **Ladder climb**

Wearing a fall arrest harness you will be required to ascend a fire service ladder to a marked height where you will then be required to take a leg lock and lean backwards and identify a number, letter or symbol being displayed from the ground.

The method of climbing the ladder and the leg lock will be demonstrated to you prior to taking part in the test and you will have the opportunity to practice at a lower height before the test. This test requires coordination and agility as well as you showing you are comfortable working at height.

### **Equipment assembly**

In this test you will be required to assemble and disassemble a piece of fire service equipment in a way shown to you prior to the test commencing, whilst following the instructions given. This test requires manual dexterity and the ability to follow instructions.

### **Confined space**

In this test you will need to negotiate a set path whilst working with restricted mobility. You will be wearing a breathing apparatus set on your back and a mask will be on your face; however, this will not be providing air. The first part of this test is done without restricted visibility, however for second part you will not be able to see, and you must use the techniques shown to you at the beginning to find your way.

This test requires agility, endurance, concentration, and you to demonstrate you can work with restricted/no visibility.

### **Ladder extension**

For this test you will be required to lift a weight using a lifting method shown to you to a required height and then back down, whilst maintaining control. The weight to be lifted is 28Kg.

This test requires grip and upper body strength along with coordination.

### **Extend to lower**

This test simulates the making up of a fire service ladder where you will be required to lift a weight of 42Kg.

This test requires grip and upper body strength.

### **Equipment carry test**

This test involves moving items of fire service equipment over a set distance. You will be running, lifting, carrying and dragging various items in a set order, which will be explained before the test, with the methods of lifting, carrying and holding. As you do each stage the next instruction will be given to you, so this is not a memory test.

To complete this test, you will need to combine all aspects of fitness with good endurance alongside core, upper and lower body strength and agility.

On the day of the Practical Assessment, you will be fully supervised and will be provided with the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to wear. For the majority of the tests you will be in full fire kit (PPE) which includes, boots, leggings, overcoat (tunic), helmet and gloves. You will need to ensure you wear appropriate clothing underneath which does not limit your movement such, as you would wear in the gym or exercising, which needs to include full leg covering (leggings/tracksuit trousers etc) and a pair of full length socks (not ankle socks) is essential for a good fit in the fire boot.



In order to help you prepare for the practical tests, you will be able to find a 12 week training programme [here](#). You can refer to this and use it as a training guide.

### **Online Ability Test Verification**

As part of stage four in the process, candidates will be re-tested on the initial online ability test(s) completed at the beginning of the process. These checks are in place to verify that you have completed these tests without assistance.

As with all other stages in this process, we will be adhering to the government Covid 19 safety measures to protect the health and welfare of our staff and candidates throughout this stage of the selection process.

### **Stage five – Presentation and Interview**

We anticipate that the Presentations and Interviews will be held in the weeks commencing 22 February and 01 March 2021.

This stage will assess your verbal and written communication skills.

This stage will include a written element as well as being asked to give a presentation which will allow us to assess your ability to stand in front of people and confidently present your information. This is something that our Firefighters are required to do regularly when working with the local communities.

You will also be required to take part in an interview with a panel of representatives from within Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service. This will focus on past experiences, your skills and personal attributes which will determine your suitability for the role of a Firefighter.

For those candidates invited to this stage, more information and guidance will be made available nearer the time.

During the coronavirus pandemic, we are abiding by Government guidance around social distancing. As such, we will review our ability to carry out face to face interviews nearer the time. When we are able, more information will be made available to candidates.



# Pre-employment checks

## Medical Assessment

You will be required to attend an appointment at our Occupational Health Unit for a medical and fitness assessment. The medical will include:

- Height
- Weight
- Blood pressure
- Blood Glucose Test (finger prick or by urine sample)
- Eye test – near and distance vision (with and without spectacles if worn)
- Breathing test (lung function)
- Hearing test (audiometry)
- Fitness assessment being Chester Treadmill Walk Test (CTWT)

Additionally, you will be asked questions about your general health and any disabilities/medical needs you may have (a medical questionnaire will need to be completed prior to your attendance) An Occupational Health Technician will conduct the necessary tests. This will be followed up (not necessarily straight away but on the same day) with an appointment with the Occupational Health Physician who will review the test results, undertake any further testing (if required) and provide a medical decision on your fitness for operational duties. Please note prior to this decision (and largely dependent on your test results and clinical information you have disclosed) the physician may require your consent to liaise with any specialists or treating teams you have/or had. Alternatively, you may be referred back to your GP for further tests to be conducted on the NHS. In such cases a decision regarding your fitness will remain pending until the Occupational Health Physician has all the information needed to enable them to make a clinical informed decision.

We receive many enquiries from applicants during recruitment regarding current and/or past medical issues. Unfortunately, we cannot give definitive guidance regarding individual issues as all clinical matters require consultation with the Occupational Health Physician and GP's/treating teams for them to decide whether an applicant is suitable to carry out the role of a Firefighter. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, we do not divulge any medical information to anyone outside of occupational health without your written consent.

## Eyesight standards

For your eyesight test, you will be asked to attend an appointment with your local Specsavers opticians, who will assess your vision in line with our eyesight entry standards. A form will be provided to you which the optician must complete, and you will need to send back to the Service before attendance at your occupational health physician appointment. Our eyesight entry standards are:



- Vision must be binocular
- Have a **minimum uncorrected** distance visual acuity of 6/18 in the better eye and 6/24 in the worse eye
- Have a corrected visual acuity of 6/9 binocularly with a minimum of 6/12 in the worse eye
- Have no more than +3.00 dioptres of hypermetropia in each eye
- Be able to read N6 at 30cm unaided with both eyes open (applicants aged 25 years and under)
- Be able to read N12 at 30cm unaided with both eyes open (applicants aged 26 years and over)
- Have a normal visual field in each eye, as determined by confrontation techniques or formal testing methods
- 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 serving Firefighters
- Have an appropriate level of colour perception
- Have not undergone refractive surgery in the previous 12 months

### **Hearing standards**

Applicants for firefighting who meet the H2 standard should be considered fit for role. Applicants who score lower than H2 may be required to undertake additional functional testing before a decision on fitness can be determined.

### **Right to work**

In order to comply with the law under Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, we will need proof of your eligibility to work in the UK. If you are successful at the stage one assessments, you will be required to provide evidence of your eligibility at stage two Fitness test. This evidence can be in the form of a Passport or Birth Certificate along with your National Insurance Card or your most recent P45 or P60. For further information please refer to the website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) - Right to Work in the UK.

### **References**

References will be requested for candidates who are successful in this recruitment process and will be taken up before any formal offer of appointment can be confirmed. References must include at least two people who are willing to supply a reference for you, one must be from your current or most recent employer (or teacher). You may not use relatives as referees.

If you are currently a DWFRS On-call employee your second reference must be from your Station Manager.

Any gaps in your employment history of more than one month will need to be explained, for example, caring and childcare responsibilities. If you are/have been self-employed you will need to provide proof. e.g. tax returns for that period.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS Basic) checks**

All roles at Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service require a satisfactory Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check. A Basic DBS clearance check will be undertaken on successful candidates prior to offer of employment.



# Apprenticeship and initial Basic Skills Acquisition Course information

## Apprenticeship

All new Wholetime Firefighters will be enrolled onto the Firefighter Apprenticeship. This enables them to gain a qualification that is aligned to our training programmes and accredits our training through a nationally recognised qualification route at Level 3 (A Level equivalent). The duration of the apprenticeship is 24-30 months:

- The training and development programme consists of several formative assessments and concludes with an independent end point assessment
- The assessments will examine your knowledge, skills and behaviours
- The standard is being delivered in partnership with Bridgwater and Taunton College

Further information is available at:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/operational-firefighter/>

## Basic Skills Acquisition Course

We anticipate that successful applicants will begin employment with Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service during the first week of June 2021, in order to be fully prepared for the Basic Skills Acquisition Course which we expect will commence on 07 June 2021.

This is the first two weeks of training and is a non-residential course. As a Trainee Firefighter you will get your first experience of using all ladders, pumps, hose and how to work safely at heights. You will learn how to operate safely at incidents and start to work as a team in demanding situations. This is a physically and mentally demanding course. After this you will start on your watch on station for a period of consolidation to continue to work on these skills.

**Casualty Care Acquisition** - Trainee Firefighters will be trained in the recognition and treatment of injuries, CPR and defibrillator use.

**Road Traffic Collision Acquisition** - Trainee Firefighters will learn about Vehicle composition and new vehicle technologies. You will learn how to use our cutting equipment and incorporate your Casualty Care skills to rescue people trapped in cars.

**Breathing Apparatus Acquisition** - Trainee Firefighters will learn about the BA Set and Telemetry Board, including how to test and use a BA set. You will work on how to operate safely in smoke and heat. You will study fire behaviour so that you understand what is happening as you enter a building on fire.



## Further Information

### Postings

Please be aware that, if successfully appointed, you could be required to work anywhere within the two counties of Dorset and Wiltshire. However, during the recruitment process we will seek preferences for an initial posting, for example:

- In the North of the Service area (Swindon, Stratton, Westlea, Salisbury, Chippenham, Trowbridge)
- In the South of the Service area (Weymouth, Poole, Redhill, Westbourne, Springbourne, Christchurch, Salisbury, Ferndown)

Initial postings will be for a minimum three year period, before you are eligible to be posted to a different Service location, unless there is a change in Service needs.

### Assessment throughout the process

Please be aware that candidates' attitudes and behaviours are assessed throughout the process in line with our core values and RESPECT framework which can be found [here](#).

### Pool

We will be filling a number of vacancies from this process; however, it is also our intention to hold a pool of successful candidates that we can offer positions to as further vacancies arise.

### Feedback

Due to the high volume of applications we will be dealing with throughout this process, it will not be possible to provide individual feedback to candidates.

### Covid-19

We will be adhering to government Covid-19 safety measures to protect the health and welfare of our staff and candidates throughout the selection process. We will be unable to progress your application if you cannot attend or complete all stages of the process on the specified dates.

As you are aware, the Covid-19 pandemic is an evolving situation, and this means that elements of our process may need to change to accommodate new government restrictions and guidelines. We will keep candidates updated and informed at all stages should any changes become necessary.

### Further questions

Please also check out our website if you have any unanswered questions, we have also produced a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document that is available to read or download from our website (<https://www.dwfire.org.uk/working-for-us/wholetime-recruitment/>).

If you still have queries after reading this document and our FAQs you can contact us at [wholetimerecruitment@dwfire.org.uk](mailto:wholetimerecruitment@dwfire.org.uk).