



# **South Yorkshire FIRE & RESCUE**

## **Wholetime Firefighter Information Pack**



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## INTRODUCTION

### **The role of today's Firefighter**

What do you imagine when you think of a Firefighter?

The traditional image is perhaps of a Firefighter turning out in a fire engine with blue lights flashing and sirens wailing, heading to rescue people from a burning building.

Whilst this is still a small part of what we do, the demands of our fire service have changed considerably in recent times and the role and requirements of our Firefighters has changed too.

The types of emergencies we attend are more varied- road traffic collisions, people who are trapped, floods and storms, chemical spillages and the growing threat of terrorism are just some of what we are now trained to respond to. Thankfully, overall the number of incidents we attend is decreasing.

Our service is focusing more and more on prevention and protection work so that we can continue to reduce the number and impact of incidents in South Yorkshire. A major part of a Firefighter's role is in contributing to this.

Our Firefighters spend a lot of their time out in the community delivering fire prevention advice and other safety messages. They visit people's homes and talk to people about how they can plan to avoid and survive a fire if it occurs. This involves conducting home fire safety checks and fitting smoke alarms.. They also deliver presentations and talks to school children, community groups and voluntary groups to educate and promote fire safety awareness.

South Yorkshire communities are diverse and we are working hard to meet their differing needs through the services we provide. Our Firefighters must be able to communicate effectively with varied individuals and groups- from older people, young adults and school children to religious groups and people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. Treating people with dignity and respect is at the heart of what we do.

### **What will be expected from me as a Firefighter?**

- to maintain an appropriate level of physical fitness
- to maintain the skills you need to do the job by attending training sessions
- to undertake a development programme to demonstrate competence in your role as a Firefighter

### **What are the duties and responsibilities of a Firefighter?**

- Educate your community in how to stay safe
- Save and preserve lives in danger
- Take responsibility for effective performance
- Resolve emergency incidents as effectively as possible
- Protect the environment from the effects of hazardous materials
- 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 and equipment

### **Hours of Work**

You will be required to work days, nights, evenings, weekends and public holidays. SYFR operate the following wholtime duty systems to meet the needs of our communities.

- 2-2-4 – employees working this system will work two day shifts (08:00-19:00) followed by 2 night shifts (19:00-08:00) followed by four days off (known as rota days).
- Close Proximity Crewing (CPC) – employees working this system participate in self-rostering and will work an eleven hour day shift (0800 – 1900 hours), being available on station or with the appliance for immediate mobilisation, followed by thirteen hours (1900 – 0800 hours) of close proximity “on-call” from the station (CPC night shift) during which time employees will be on ‘stand down’ from all duties except responding to operational incidents and operationally essential work. Employees must work a minimum of 13 shifts and a maximum of 17 shifts per month, equating to 182 shifts per year.
- Day Staffing (DS) – employees working this system work an average of 38.5 hours per week, typically working two day shifts (08:00-19:00) followed by two days off followed by three day shifts. The pattern is then reversed for the following week meaning employees only work alternate weekends.

You will be informed of your shift pattern upon appointment and will also be advised which station you will be initially based at following your training course. Please note that you may be required to work any of the above duty systems during your career with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue.

### **Could I be a Firefighter?**

As an Equal Opportunities employer; we actively encourage interest from all sections of the community and positively welcome applications from women, people with disabilities and members of black and minority ethnic groups who are currently under-represented in our workforce.

To be considered for a Wholetime Firefighter position in SYFR, you must:

- be eligible to work in the United Kingdom
- be 18 years of age by the time your training course starts
- live within our service boundary (South Yorkshire)
- have a basic swimming ability and water confidence which will enable you to operate safely in water rescue situations
- be physically fit to meet the requirements of the role and medical examination
- be able to demonstrate reading, writing and numerical skills to meet the requirements of the role
- You must also be committed to maintaining and developing new skills, and studying on top of your normal working days.

### **What you can expect from us**

Being a Firefighter is an interesting, varied and fulfilling career. In addition to safety critical training we can offer a wide range of specialist and general training opportunities to contribute to your personal development and career aspirations.

#### Pay (as at October 2016)

Trainee £22,237 per annum

Development £23,162 per annum

Competent £29,638 per annum

You will be paid at trainee rate when attending the trainee course. Once you have completed the required training you will be paid at the development rate. When you've completed your

development programme (when you have been deemed competent in role) you will be paid at the competent rate of pay.

### Uniform

All new firefighters are issued with their uniform and kit before the initial training course starts.

Kit includes a 'working rig' uniform which is everyday dress and 'personal protective equipment' which is the full firefighting kit including helmet, boots and sports kit.

### Leave

Annual leave comprises of 34 days per annum including public holidays and will be taken in accordance with whichever Duty System you are appointed to.

### Career Progression

We are committed to the continued development of all staff. How you progress in your career is dependent on you showing your competence in the role as part of our development programme. As well as the development opportunities we offer, prior learning and previous qualifications and experience are also taken into account as part of your future career development.

### Pension

On appointment to the Fire Service you will be automatically enrolled into the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015.

### Our Values

Professional  
Reliable  
Inclusive  
Dedicated  
Efficient

## **RECRUITMENT STAGES**

To become a Firefighter you will have to undertake a series of tests designed to assess your suitability for the role.

The first step is to register your interest via our website at <http://www.syfire.gov.uk/jobs/>.

When the next recruitment process begins we will then contact you and invite you to progress to the selection tests to assess your suitability for the Firefighter role. The first two stages are designed to make an initial assessment of your potential to work as a Firefighter using a range of specifically designed questions which examine the qualities and basic knowledge you need for the role. Firefighter recruitment is always a competitive process, with an extremely high number of applicants competing for a small number of roles, so we can only take the highest performing individuals at each part of the selection process on to the next stage.

### **Stage 1 – Realistic Job Preview Introduction/Eligibility Questions**

Being a firefighter is challenging and can involve a number of situations not commonly found in other jobs. These questions will help you decide whether you are likely to enjoy working as a firefighter.

The Eligibility Questions allow us to establish whether you are eligible to apply to become a firefighter with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue. If you leave the eligibility screens without submitting your details this information will not be saved.

## Stage 2 – Psychometric Test

The purpose of this stage is to examine key qualities you need to work in the role of a firefighter. These assessments are designed to give all candidates a fair chance to show that they have the skills, abilities and personal qualities important for success as a firefighter.

The psychometric tests include multiple choice ability tests. These tests relate to the role of a Firefighter and assess your ability to work with numbers, solve problems as well as verbal and mechanical questions.

Please be aware that the below details are an indication of the type of psychometric tests undertaken but may be subject to change in future recruitment processes.

<b>Behavioural Style Questionnaire</b>	The Behavioural Styles Questionnaire is a questionnaire about a candidate's typical behaviours and the values they emphasise at work. Candidates must rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements about their working style.
<b>Situational Judgment Test</b>	In this test you will be presented with the type of situations you could face in the role of a Firefighter and will be asked how you think you should react to each situation. This is not a timed test but should take between 20 and 30 minutes.
<b>Verbal Reasoning</b>	This test is designed to measure your ability to interpret and make sense of written information. This is a timed test and you will have 12 minutes to complete the questions.
<b>Numerical Reasoning</b>	Firefighters need to be able to make basic mathematical calculations. You will be presented with a number of scenarios that will show numerical information in a variety of formats from tables to graphs. This is a timed test and you will have 15 minutes to complete the questions.
<b>Mechanical Reasoning</b>	Questions will comprise images and contain very little text. Candidates will be required to apply cognitive reasoning to mechanical, physical and practical concepts in order to solve related problems.

Before undertaking the psychometric tests you will be asked if you require reasonable adjustments to complete the timed tests, for example if you are dyslexic. If the answer to this question is yes you will be prompted to contact us with information of the adjustments you require and if applicable, a copy of your dyslexia report.

## Stage 3 – Declaration of Criminal Convictions & Fitness Declaration and Consent

Once you have successfully passed the initial sift you will be required to complete:

- A declaration of any unspent criminal convictions and a medical questionnaire.

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 you are obliged to declare any unspent convictions or criminal proceedings pending as these may bar you from working as a Firefighter. This will be checked before an offer of employment is made. Failure to declare any unspent conviction(s) will result in your application being withdrawn.

- A Fitness Declaration and Consent Form. This will be kept confidential and reviewed by our Occupational Health team who will contact you, if required, to discuss any issues or concerns ahead of the Practical Testing.

#### Stage 4 – Practical Selection Tests

These job-related assessments consist of seven different tests which will assess your fitness and practical ability to handle fire service equipment. The tests are designed to simulate the tasks carried out in the training course and then in the role of Firefighter.

<b>Bleep Test</b>	You must achieve a minimum level of 8.7 to demonstrate your physical fitness in the bleep test. Further information on these tests can be found in the Firefighter Recruitment Exercise, Fitness and Nutrition guidance available on our South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue website.
<b>Ladder Climb</b>	This is a physical test of confidence and the ability to follow instructions. You will ascend a 13.5 metre (45 foot) fire service ladder to a point two thirds of the full working height, take a leg lock and remove your hands from the ladder and look down to the assessor to identify a symbol placed flat on the ground at the foot of the ladder. You will be assisted if necessary by the safety officer.
<b>Casualty Evacuation</b>	This is a physical test of upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. Guided by a safety officer, you will drag backwards a 55kg (approx. 8½ stone) dummy along a distance of 30 metres (100 foot) around four cones within a set amount of time
<b>Ladder Lift</b>	This is a test of upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. You will raise the bar of a ladder lift simulator to a height of 190cm (6 foot) with 15 kg of weight placed on the simulator cradle, giving a total lift load of 24 kg (approx. 3½ stone). You will be assisted if necessary by the safety officer.
<b>Enclosed Space</b>	This is a test of confidence, agility and identification of claustrophobic tendencies. Wearing a breathing apparatus facemask, you will negotiate a crawl and walkway with clear vision. You will then retrace your steps wearing a mask that obscures your vision. This is a timed exercise. You will be assisted if necessary by the safety officer.
<b>Equipment Assembly</b>	This is a test of manual dexterity. You must assemble and then disassemble a piece of equipment following a demonstration by the safety officer.
<b>Equipment Carry</b>	This is a test of aerobic fitness, stamina, upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. You will need to carry items of equipment a distance of 25 metres (82 foot) around two cones within a given amount of time.

Full instruction is given on the day and you will be given protective clothing to wear.

Further information regarding general exercise, aerobic training and strength training is available on our website.

#### Stage 5 – Interview

This will be your opportunity to show to the interview panel how your skills and attributes contribute to your suitability for the role of a Firefighter. As part of this you will be asked to prepare and deliver a short presentation/briefing on a topic relevant to our fire service.

The Interview is the final stage of the competitive selection process. Candidates will be selected for employment subject to a satisfactory swimming test, medical, references, employment checks and basic disclosure.

GP medical questionnaires and references from previous employers will be requested at this point.

## **Stage 6 – Swimming Test**

You will need to demonstrate the following at a local swimming pool:

- Jump/dive into deep water
- Swim 50 metres continuously on front and back in deep water
- Tread water for 30 seconds
- Surface dive to the floor of the pool (3 metre depth)
- Climb out unaided without ladder/steps and where the pool design permits

## **Stage 7 – Medical, References, Employment Checks, Basic Disclosure & Kit Measurements**

### Medical

The medical appointment at our headquarters will incorporate:

- A review of your medical questionnaire (obtained from your GP and if relevant other organizations e.g. the Armed Forces and Sports Clubs)
- An examination with our medical officer who will assess your fitness for the role. This will include further medical testing should any medical problems be detected
- A series of screening tests with our occupational health nurse including:
  - Hearing test
  - Lung function
  - Blood pressure
  - Vision
  - Weight and height
  - Substance misuse and alcohol testing
- A comprehensive eyesight test carried out by a qualified optometrist

Further information on the medical specifics can be found in our Frequently Asked Questions on our website.

### **Medical Standards**

#### I have a medical history of Asthma, can I still apply?

SYFR will consider applications from applicants with a history of asthma, past or current, however each application will require individual an assessment. This will include;

- Careful history that focuses on current symptoms and treatment requirements,
- Potential triggers including exercise and irritant exposures
- The frequency and history of exacerbations

Applicants whose asthma causes symptoms with exercise or exposure to common irritants such as cold air, smoke or fumes (i.e. triggers that are likely to be encountered at work) irrespective of any treatment they are using, and those with frequent exacerbations provoked by infection or seasonal allergy are not likely to be considered fit for fire fighting.

In some cases specialist testing in the form of a histamine challenge test will be arranged

#### I am a diabetic. Can I still apply?

SYFR will consider your application, however we will need a report from your Specialist Consultant requesting the following information and an individual risk assessment will be undertaken:-

- Category of Diabetes (Type 1 or 2)
- Evidence of stability of control
- Evidence of blood sugar levels (HbA1c) over a recent 12 month period

#### I have a medical condition – can I still be a Firefighter?

Probably yes – you need to declare your condition – giving as much information as possible on your declaration of health form. We will get information from your GP (and where relevant Armed Forces and/or sports clubs) and will get further information via Consultants, testing etc. as appropriate.

Each case is taken on its own consideration. In the event that you are not considered fit, this will be because your condition is likely to worsen or be a safety issue to you and others. Where possible you will be given the opportunity to train with reasonable adjustments, if necessary.

Where musculoskeletal surgery has taken place, generally we would assess at two years' post surgery.

Where there has been a history of a psychological condition generally we would wish the individual to have been symptom free for at least two years.

#### What are the eyesight requirements to join the fire service?

The current guidance for eyesight standards are as below, however assessments will be made on an individual basis.

- Use of aids to vision is allowed
- Modern soft contact lenses are now considered safe to use on the fire ground.
- 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.
- Normal binocular field of vision.
- Near vision: N12 at 30cm unaided with both eyes open (applicants  $\geq$ 25 years)
- Near vision: N6 at 30cm unaided with both eyes open (applicants  $<$ 25 years)
- No history of night blindness or any ocular disease likely to progress and result in future failure of the visual standards for Firefighters.
- Individuals with protanopia, deuteranopia, monochromatism and tritanopia/tritanomaly are generally unfit for service as a Firefighter. Individuals with protanomaly rarely meet the required standards while deuteranomalous individuals should be safe for Firefighting. Where required an occupational functional test will be carried out.
- Individuals who have undergone laser surgery can be considered, provided 12 months have elapsed and the individual can satisfy the above criteria.

### What are the hearing requirements

Firefighters must not only communicate over the radio but they must respond to shouted warnings, audible alarms and cries for help – all above the environmental noise at incidents.

The military H2 standard is required. Hearing aids are allowed on the fire ground, but a functional test would be required to ensure that the required standard was met.

### References

References will be sent for you, prior to your medical. You will need to supply details of your current and previous employer(s) for references to be obtained.

### Employment Checks

- Proof of residence – to verify that you reside within our service boundary (South Yorkshire) you will be required to bring to your medical relevant documents, dated within the last 3 months, to confirm your address e.g. a utility bill or bank statement.
- Eligibility to work in UK – in line with section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 all employers in the UK have to make basic checks on everyone they employ. Therefore you will be required to bring to your medical relevant documents to confirm your eligibility to work in the UK, such as a passport.

### Basic Disclosure

You will need to complete a basic disclosure online. A basic disclosure certificate will inform us of any unspent convictions. Please note, it is your responsibility to be sure of the status of any prior conviction(s). If your disclosure certificate highlights any conviction(s) that you have not declared to us your application will be withdrawn.

Please be aware that some of our Firefighters carry out activities for which an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (previously CRB) is required e.g. fire cadet instructing. You could therefore be required to complete an enhanced DBS check at a later stage in your employment.

### Kit Measurements

You will need to provide your measurements to enable us to order your uniform and fire kit.

Subject to selected candidates satisfactorily completing all of the above, formal offers of employment will be made.
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### **Stage 8 – Kitting out and Bleep Test**

An appointment will be made you to collect your uniform and Fire Kit.

At this stage, you will also be required to undertake the bleep test again to demonstrate you have maintained the required fitness levels. Please note that failure to undertake the bleep test and/or meet the required level of fitness, level 8.7, will result in you being unable to continue to the training course and your offer of employment will be withdrawn/contract terminated.

## **TRAINING COURSE**

Once a formal offer of employment has been offered and accepted, you will be invited to attend a 2-day Induction immediately followed by a 13-week Initial Training Course (ITC).

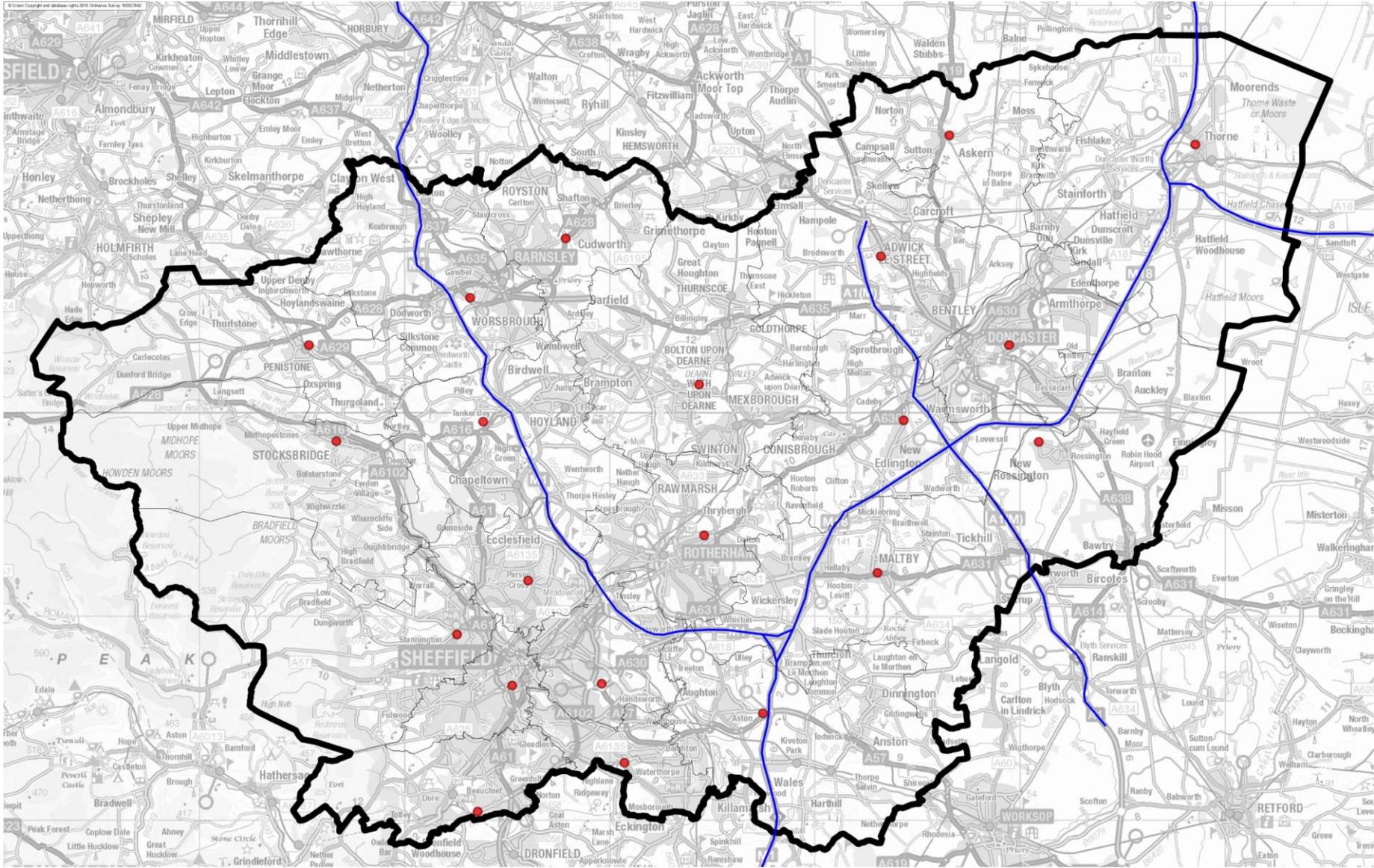
The ITC is physically demanding and requires good levels of stamina and upper body strength. You must ensure you maintain the required fitness levels to safely participate in the ITC.

The ITC will be held at our Training and Development Centre (TDC) in Handsworth and will cover the safety critical training needed to enable you to be safe to ride a fire appliance. Due to the duration and intense nature of the training, the course is residential and on-site accommodation is provided.

You will be required to pass all elements of the training before joining your designated team on a fire station and working further to demonstrate your competence, eventually becoming a fully competent Firefighter.

## TIMELINE

Registrations of interest	Ongoing open process
Application and Online Ability Tests	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2017 to 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2017
Practical tests	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2017 to 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017
Interviews	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2017 to 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
Swimming Assessment	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
Medical Examinations	20 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2017
Kitting Out	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2017 to 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
Fitness Confirmation (Bleep Test)	6 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
Induction	31 <sup>st</sup> May 2017 to 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2017
Initial Training Course	5 <sup>th</sup> June 2017 to 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2017



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