



# Wholetime Firefighter Candidate Information Pack



## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
<i>The role of today's Firefighter</i> .....	1
<i>What will be expected from me as a Firefighter?</i> .....	1
<i>What are the duties and responsibilities of a Firefighter?</i> .....	1
<i>Hours of Work</i> .....	2
<i>Could I be a Firefighter?</i> .....	2
<i>What you can expect from us</i> .....	2
RECRUITMENT STAGES .....	4
<i>Stage 1 – Realistic Job Preview and Eligibility Questions (online)</i> .....	4
<i>Stage 2 – Psychometric Tests (online)</i> .....	4
<i>Stage 3 – Pre-fitness Test Questionnaire (by email)</i> .....	5
<i>Stage 4 – Fitness Test</i> .....	5
<i>Stage 5 – Interview</i> .....	6
<i>Stage 6 – Practical Tests</i> .....	6
<i>Stage 7 – Medical, Employment Checks and Basic Disclosure</i> .....	7
<i>Stage 8 – Verification Fitness Test</i> .....	8
<i>Stage 9 – Kitting out</i> .....	8
<i>Stage 10 – Orientation Evening &amp; Functional Fitness Sessions</i> .....	8
TRAINING COURSE .....	9
DATES FOR RECRUITMENT STAGES .....	10
MAP OF SYFR SERVICE BOUNDARY .....	11



## 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 wholetime 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).
- 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.
- Operational Resource Team (ORT) – employees working this system will provide operational cover on a demand led basis and could potentially work on any watch/shift where staffing is required.

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 (map available at the end of this document)
- 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.

**Please note:** there is a limit to how many times you can undertake some of the recruitment assessments. If you have applied for a Firefighter role with SYFR (On-call or Wholetime) in the last 12 months, please contact us before applying so we can ensure you are eligible to progress.

## 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 July 2019)

Trainee £23,366 per annum

Development £24,339 per annum



Competent £31,144 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 Story – Making South Yorkshire Safer & Stronger

Our story has been created to help every member of staff, regardless of rank or role, to understand the challenges we face, their place in addressing them and their contribution towards making us a leading fire and rescue service.

This is South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's 10 year vision and has details of our specialisms, our aspirations and how we will achieve these, as well as our behaviours;

Honest,  
Integrity,  
Respect.



## RECRUITMENT STAGES

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

When the recruitment process is open a link to apply on our online recruitment system will be made available on our website. You will then be invited to progress through the selection tests which will 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 on to the next stage.

### Stage 1 – Realistic Job Preview and Eligibility Questions (online)

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.

As part of this stage you will be asked to declare any unspent criminal convictions. 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.

#### Reasonable adjustments

We understand that in some cases additional support may be needed to enable a candidate to participate fully in the Selection Process (e.g. Dyslexia). You will be asked during this initial stage what, if any, reasonable adjustments you require. We will then contact you to ensure that the necessary arrangements are made on your behalf. In the case of dyslexia, we will request from you a copy of your dyslexia assessment report.

This detail is kept confidential and has no bearing on a selection decision.

### Stage 2 – Psychometric Tests (online)

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 reasoning 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>Phase 1</b>	<b>Behavioural Styles Questionnaire</b>	This is a questionnaire about your typical behaviours and the values you emphasise at work. You must rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with statements about your working style.
<b>Phase 2</b>	<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>Phase 3</b>	<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 15 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 18 minutes to complete the questions.

**Please note:** there is a limit to how many times you can undertake the psychometric tests. If you have applied for a Firefighter role with SYFR (On-call or Wholetime) and have undertaken the above tests in the last 12 months, please contact us before applying so we can ensure you are eligible to progress.

### Stage 3 – Pre-fitness Test Questionnaire (by email)

Once you have successfully passed the initial sift you will be required to complete a Pre-fitness Test Questionnaire. This will be kept confidential and, if necessary, reviewed by our Occupational Health Unit (OHU) who will contact you, if required, to discuss any issues or concerns ahead of the Fitness Test and Practical Testing.

### Stage 4 – Fitness Test

You must complete a bleep test and achieve a minimum level of 8.7 to demonstrate your physical fitness.

The bleep test involves continuously running between two lines 20m apart to a series of bleeps. The speed starts at 8kph and progressively increases each level. The test finishes if you fail to reach 3 consecutive lines in time for the bleep or when level 8.7 is achieved.

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.



## 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.

Following your interview you will be required to undertake verification tests under examine conditions to corroborate your online numerical and verbal reasoning tests.

**Please note:** there is a limit to how many times you can undertake the Interview stage. If you have applied for a Firefighter role with SYFR (On-call or Wholetime) and have been interviewed in the last 12 months, please contact us before applying so we can ensure you are eligible to progress.

## Stage 6 – Practical Tests

These job-related assessments consist of six different tests which will assess your 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>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.
<b>Team Exercise</b>	This is an assessed group activity.



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.

This is the final stage of the competitive selection process.

Candidates will be selected for employment subject to satisfactory:

- medical
- employment checks
- basic disclosure
- references

GP medical questionnaires will be requested at this point, as will kit measurements and details of your current and previous employer(s) for references.

## **Stage 7 – Medical, Employment Checks and Basic Disclosure**

### **Medical**

The medical appointment at our headquarters will incorporate:

- A review of your medical questionnaire (signed by your GP and if relevant other organizations e.g. the Armed Forces)
- 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 (may be on a separate day)
- 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.

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

### **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.

### **Stage 8 – Verification Fitness Test**

You will be required to undertake the bleep test again to demonstrate you have maintained the required fitness levels.

Subject to selected candidates satisfactorily completing all of the above, formal offers of employment will be made, subject to satisfactory references.

### **Stage 9 – Kitting out**

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

### **Stage 10 – Orientation Evening & Functional Fitness Sessions**

The Orientation Evening is an informal opportunity for you to meet your course instructors and ask any questions ahead of your training course.

The Functional Fitness Sessions will be held in the run up to your employment starting and will help prepare you for the physical demands of the training course.



## TRAINING COURSE

Once a formal offer of employment has been offered and accepted, you will be invited to attend an Induction immediately followed by a 12-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.

As part of the training course you will complete a swimming assessment. The ability to swim is not essential to join our service as a Firefighter but SYFR do have a water rescue attribute.

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.



## DATES FOR WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT STAGES

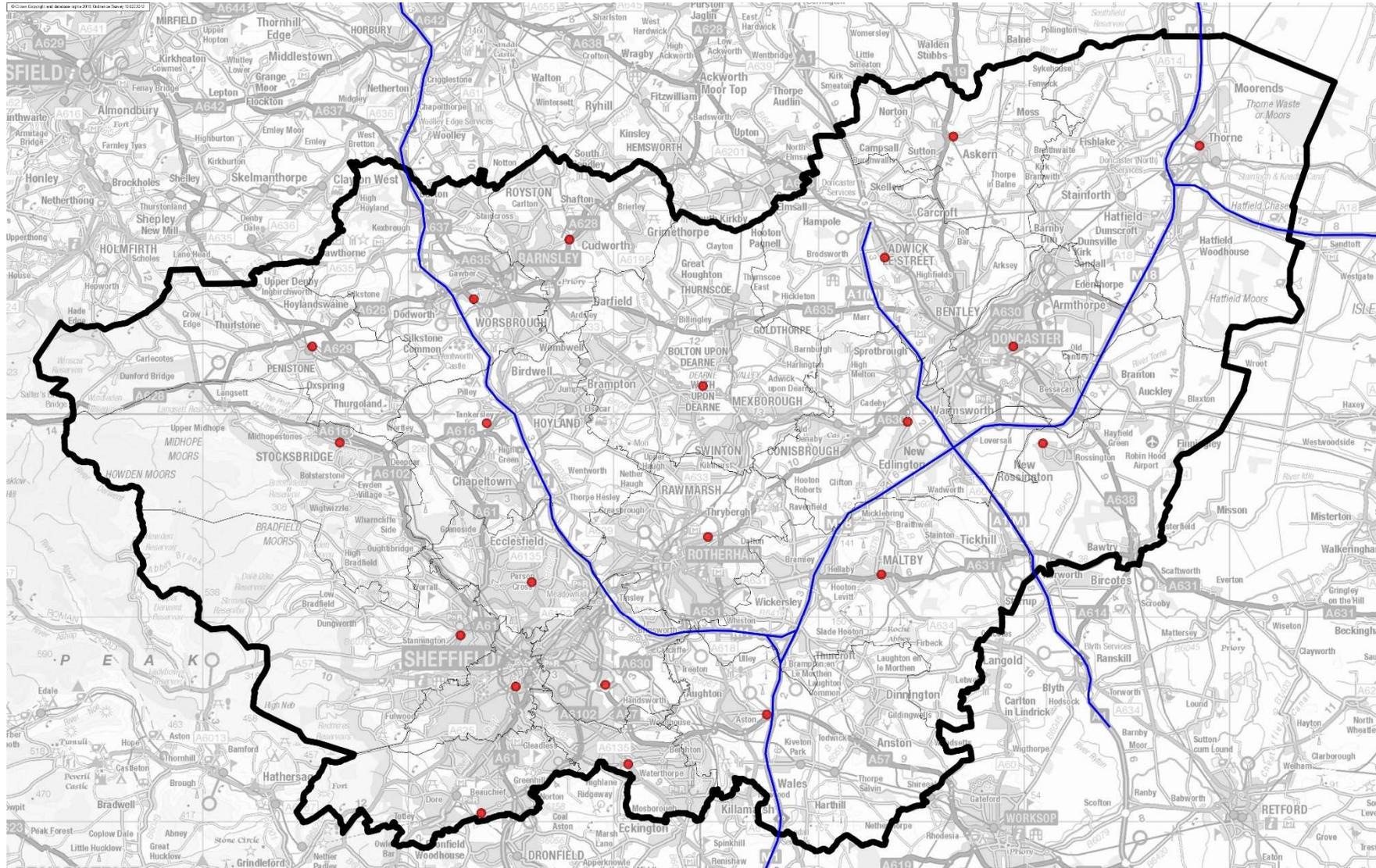
Activity		Date
Stage 1	Realistic Job Preview and Eligibility Questions	Opens Midday 14 Nov 2019 Closes Midday 18 Nov 2019
Stage 2	Phase 1 - Behavioural Styles Questionnaire	Opens Midday 22 Nov 2019 Closes Midday 25 Nov 2019
	Phase 2 - Situational Judgment Test	Opens Midday 29 Nov 2019 Closes Midday 02 Dec 2019
	Phase 3 - Ability Tests	Opens Midday 06 Dec 2019 Closes Midday 09 Dec 2019
Stage 3	Pre-fitness Test Questionnaire	16 Dec 2019
Stage 4	Fitness Test (Bleep Test)	03 – 04 Jan 2020
Stage 5	Interviews	14 Jan – 02 Feb 2020
Stage 6	Practical Tests	14 – 16 Feb 2020
Stage 7	Medical, Employment Checks and Basic Disclosure	30 Mar – 12 Apr 2020
Stage 8	Verification Fitness Test (Bleep Test)	20 Apr 2020 at 17:30
Stage 9	Kitting Out	19 – 21 May 2020
<b>For New Recruits</b>		
Stage 10	Orientation Evening	01 Jun 2020 at 18:30
	Functional Fitness Sessions	04 May 2020 at 17:30 11 May 2020 at 17:30 18 May 2020 at 17:30 01 Jun 2020 at 17:30
	Induction	10 – 12 Jun 2020
	Initial Trainee Course (12 weeks)	15 Jun – 04 Sep 2020

**Please note: You MUST be available for all of the above stages in order to be considered for this role.**

Unfortunately, if you are unavailable it may not be possible to progress your application. If you are unavailable on a particular date, please notify us by email as soon as possible to [recruitment@syfire.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@syfire.gov.uk) and we will try to accommodate your needs where possible.



# MAP OF SYFR SERVICE BOUNDARY



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