



**South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE**

# **Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment**

## **Candidate Information Pack**

Updated April 2022

*Making*  
**SOUTH  
YORKSHIRE  
SAFER &  
STRONGER**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The role of a Firefighter**

Our wholetime firefighters are the beating heart of our service – providing fire cover to South Yorkshire across 17 fire stations.

Known more commonly as full-time firefighters, our operational staff are trained to the highest possible standard, ensuring they are ready and able to respond to emergencies across the county.

Yet, whilst we know the image of a firefighter is still that of someone running into burning buildings to rescue people, the role of a firefighter has changed considerably in recent years. First and foremost, 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.

Secondly, our firefighters are now spending more time than ever out in the community delivering fire prevention advice. They visit people's homes and schools on a daily basis, fitting smoke alarms and providing potentially life-saving advice.

This is why it's vital we recruit a wide, diverse range of people for our operational roles – so we can continue to provide a first class service to the people of South Yorkshire.

All our staff, operational or otherwise, are bound by our three core behaviours – honesty, integrity, respect – as they work to deliver our organisational purpose of making South Yorkshire a safer and stronger place.

### **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?

All applications will be given equal consideration and we particularly welcome applications from individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds, women, those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or other (LGBT+) or are disabled as these groups are currently underrepresented within our workforce.

To be considered for the role of a Wholetime Firefighter 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) both at the time of application and at point of entry to the service (your start date of employment with SYFR). The exception to this is Armed Forces personnel or their immediate family, who are currently serving or have served within the last three years (proof of employment will be required) – See FAQs for more information;
- 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 6 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 2021)

Trainee £24,191 per annum

Development £25,198 per annum

Competent £32,244 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.

WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT PROCESS		
<b>Application</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>	Realistic Job Preview and Eligibility Questions
<b>Online Tests</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	Phase 1 - Behavioural Styles Questionnaire
		Phase 2 - Situational Judgement Test
		Phase 3 – Verbal & Numerical Ability Tests
<b>Physical Tests</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>	Fitness Test (Bleep Test)
	<b>Stage 4</b>	Practical Testing
<b>Interview</b>	<b>Stage 5</b>	Interview
<b>Final Selection</b>	<b>Stage 6</b>	Course Experience Day
<b>Medical &amp; Pre-employment Checks</b>	<b>Stage 7</b>	Medical, Employment Checks and Basic Disclosure
	<b>Stage 8</b>	Verification Fitness Test (Bleep Test)
	<b>Stage 9</b>	Kitting Out
<b>Preparation to start</b>	<b>Stage 10</b>	Orientation Evening
		Functional Fitness Sessions
<b>Employment Commences</b>	<b>Start</b>	Induction
		Initial Trainee Course (10 weeks)

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 need a copy of your dyslexia assessment report or Exam Access Arrangements.

The first timed tests are the Verbal & Numerical Reasoning tests so, for any reasonable adjustment related to additional time, this is the first opportunity to have this applied.

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 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. This is not a timed test.
<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.
<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 6 months, please contact us before applying so that we can ensure you are eligible to progress.

### Stage 3 – Fitness Test

#### Pre-fitness test Questionnaire

If you are invited to undertake the fitness test stage with us, 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.

#### Bleep 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 4 – Practical Testing

These job-related assessments consist of a number of 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>Functional Fireground Test</b>	<p>This is a test of aerobic fitness, stamina, upper and lower body strength (including grip strength) and co-ordination. It includes an equipment carry, casualty evacuation with a Breathing Apparatus set on your back and a hose carry. Full details including an informational video will be provided on the day and verbal instruction will be provided throughout the test from the safety officer.</p> <p>The time limit on this test is <b>11 minutes, 11 seconds</b>.</p> <p>The Fireground Fitness test will be the first test each candidate will take during their testing session.</p>
<b>Ladder Extension</b>	<p>This is a 2-part test of upper body and grip strength, carried out on a ladder simulator. The 1<sup>st</sup> test is to simulate fully extending a 10.5m ladder weighing approx. 28kg. The 2<sup>nd</sup> test is to simulate lowering a 13.5m ladder from full extension to ground level weighing approx. 42kg. Each test must be carried out in one continuous movement.</p>
<b>Ladder Climb</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Ladder Lift</b>	<p>This is a test of upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. You will raise the bar of a ladder lift to full arm extension. The starting weight will be 15kg for the first lift above the head, increasing in 5kg increments until a max load of 30kg is reached. There will be four lifts in total to complete as follows – 15kg, 20kg, 25kg and 30kg. All lifts must be achieved to pass this test.</p> <p>You will be assisted if necessary by the safety officer.</p>
<b>Enclosed Space</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Equipment Assembly</b>	<p>This is a test of manual dexterity. You must assemble and then disassemble a piece of equipment following a demonstration by the safety officer.</p>

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

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

## Stage 5 – Interview

As with any interview, you should expect to be asked about your knowledge of both the role and the organisation. This will be your opportunity to show the interview panel how your skills and attributes contribute to your suitability for the role of a Firefighter.

You will be asked questions relating to the NFCC Leadership Framework, there will be at least one scenario based question.

Following your interview you will be required to undertake verification tests under exam 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 6 months, please contact us before applying so we can ensure you are eligible to progress.

## Stage 6 – Course Experience Day

The purpose of the Course Experience Day is see how you perform in a simulated recruit course environment at our Training Centre. The day itself will include:

- Physical exercises e.g. hose running, ladder lifts, ladder carry.
- Practical exercises e.g team building tasks using Fire Service equipment.

The Course Experience Day is the final stage of the competitive selection process. It also provides you with the opportunity to experience life as a Trainee Firefighter and for you to see if it is the right fit for yourself.

This is the final stage of the competitive selection process.

Candidates will be selected for employment subject to satisfactory completion of the following:

- medical
- employment checks
- basic disclosure
- references
- verification fitness test

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 organisations 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 Frequently Asked Questions document 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. The exception to this is Armed Forces personnel or their immediate family, who are currently serving or have served within the last three years (proof of employment will be required).

NB: To be eligible for the role of Firefighter you must live within the South Yorkshire Service Boundary. This will be asked at the time of application and you will be required to provide proof of this both as part of your pre-employment checks and again when you start the Initial Training Course.

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.

## **INITIAL TRAINING COURSE**

Once we have received written acceptance of a formal offer of employment, you will be invited to attend an Induction immediately followed by a 10-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.

## **DATES FOR WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT STAGES**

The dates for the current wholetime firefighter recruitment process will be stated on the SYFR recruitment webpage as soon as we open for applications. Please ensure you look at this and keep a copy for your reference throughout the process.

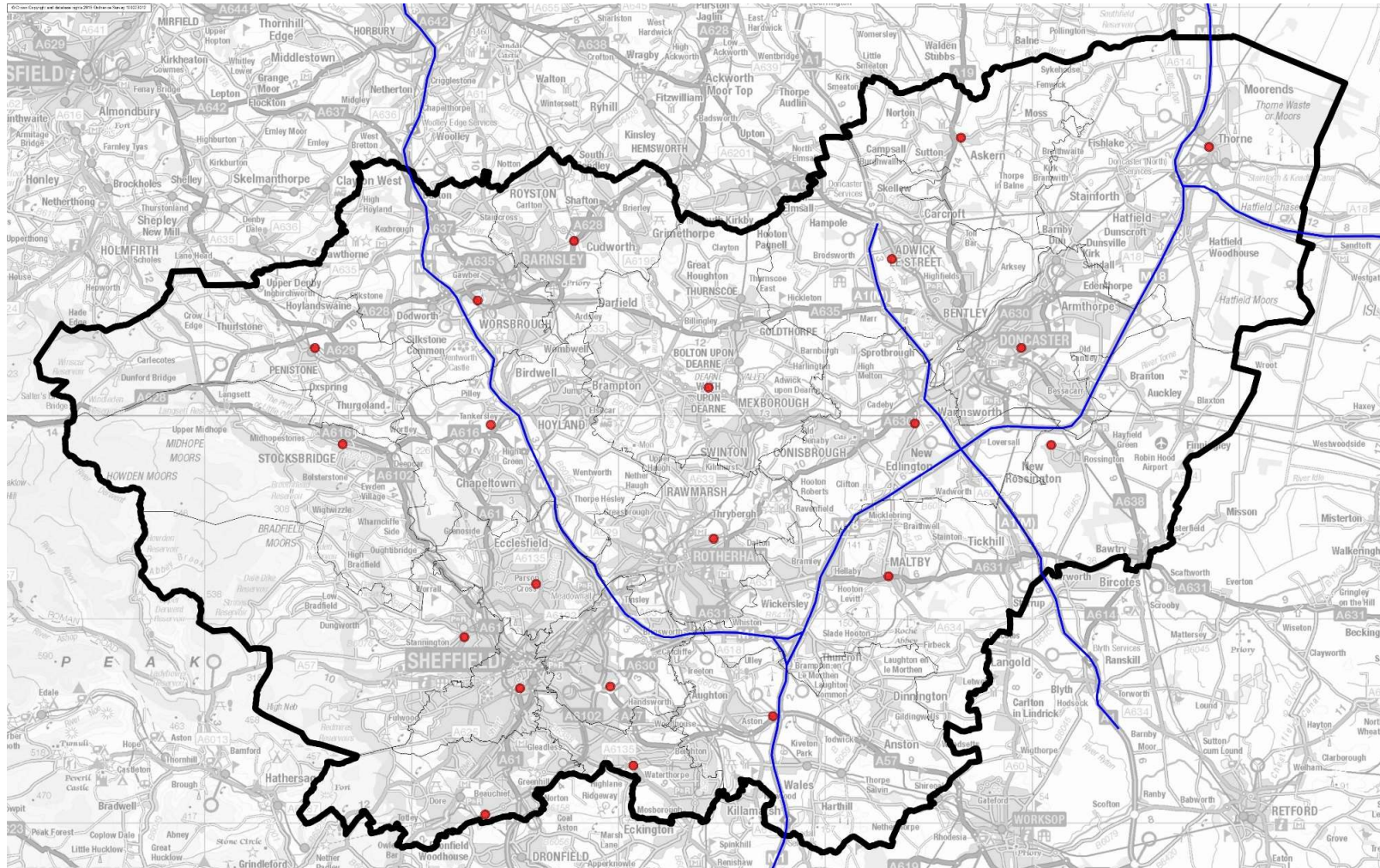
**Please note: You MUST be available for all of the recruitment stages in order to be considered for this role.**

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

Furthermore, if you are scheduled to attend/undertake any of the above stages and are unable to do so due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. illness), we cannot guarantee that we will be able to offer you another opportunity to undertake the assessment/stage. If this is the case your application will unfortunately have to be withdrawn from the process.



## MAP OF SYFR SERVICE BOUNDARY



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