

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Wholetime Firefighter – Frequently Asked Questions

How old do I need to be to join the Fire Service?

You may apply at the age of 17 years and 6 months but you have to be at least 18 years of age to be appointed. There is no upper age limit.

How fit do I need to be a Firefighter?

You will be required to have a good level of all-round fitness. Details of the physical test are available in Recruitment Process section on this website.

How long does the recruitment process take?

The process on average takes 6 months from the date the application is issued to the date of commencing the training course. We will endeavour to keep candidates updated at each stage of the selection process.

If I'm unsuccessful at any stage will I be able to obtain feedback?

Unfortunately, due to the volume of candidates that apply it is not possible to provide feedback on individual applications.

I have a conviction may I still apply?

With the exception of minor driving offences, if you are subject to a criminal conviction, not considered spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, your application would be rejected.

I am colour blind, can I still apply?

Individuals with protanopia, deuteranopia, monochromatism and tritanopia/tritanomaly are unfit for service as a firefighter. Individuals with protanomaly rarely meet the required standards while deuteronomalous individuals should be safe for firefighting. Whilst diagnosis of the defect is an important part of the assessment, subsequent confirmation of severity is essential to determine whether they are colour safe. Should you wish to discuss this further please contact the recruitment department by emailing recruitment@rbfrs.co.uk

How long is the training?

You will normally spend one week (non-residential) initially at our training centre in Whitley Wood Road, Reading for an induction. You will then spend approximately 13 weeks residential training at Devon Fire & Rescue Service, although this location is subject to change. This is followed by an additional 1 – 2 weeks (non-residential) training back at our training centre before being posted to a Station within Berkshire.

What are working hours / shifts?

The shift pattern is 2 day shifts, followed by 2 night shifts then 4 days off duty. This cycle is then repeated. The day shifts are 0900 hours to 1800 hours and the night shifts are 1800 hours to 0900 hours.

The only exception is Wokingham Fire Station whereby the hours are 0700 – 18.15 4 days per week followed by 4 days off, and 1 extra day worked per month

Can I choose which Fire Station I am posted to?

You will be asked for your preference of which station you would like to be posted to, but, whilst every effort is made to place trainees at their preferred station the final decision will be based on the operational needs of the service.

Where can I get more information?

All the information should be available on our website, however, should you have any further queries please email recruitment@rbfrs.co.uk.

Why is the application form so long?

The application form has been designed to ask only relevant questions as determined by stakeholders, up to date employment law, as well as Fire & Rescue Services HR practice. It does take some time for applicants to complete the whole form, though this commitment is minor in relation to a career as a firefighter.

The PQA section of the application form is too detailed

The personal quality and attributes (PQA) referred to in section 7 of the application form are what is required to be an effective firefighter. In this section of the application form, we ask you to tell us about your skills and experience in relation to various personal qualities and attributes (PQAs) and this information is used to assist us in identifying whether you are suitable for the role of a Firefighter. A breakdown of the PQA's are sent out with all applications.