

Frequently Asked Questions

Information prior to applying

How old do I need to be to join the fire service?

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

How long does the recruitment process take?

The process can take between 3 to 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.

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.

How long is the training?

This may vary and details of which will be provided at the time of the recruitment process. On some occasions individuals have spent one week (non-residential) initially at our training centre in Whitley Wood Road, Reading for an induction then this has been followed by approximately 13 weeks residential training at an alternative location (this could be outside the Berkshire area). An additional 1 – 2 weeks (non-residential) training will be completed back at our training centre before being posted to a Station within Berkshire. We have also run our own in-house training which is held within the Berkshire area and would be non-residential held during the week. This will be for approximately 15 weeks.

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.

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.

What are PQA's?

This stands for Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQAs). A list of the PQA's that are required as a firefighter will be in the application pack. The key for you is to be able to demonstrate that you have these qualities and attributes. That means being able to write or talk about times when you have actually used them, so you need to really understand what it is that we are looking for.

The focus should be on you – even if the situation involved a group, we want to know what was your specific role in achieving the desired result. If you use the word 'we' in your answer, look at it again.