

# WHOLETIME DUTY SYSTEM FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Information Pack 2026



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## Disclaimer

The guidance provided at the start Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service recruitment process is accurate at the time of issue. However, the process may be amended without prior notice to reflect organisational priorities, operational requirement or changes in policy.

Any significant changes will be communicated to all applicants to ensure the process remains fair, consistent and transparent.

## Equal Opportunities

At Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, we want you to bring your whole self to work.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service values your individuality, your diversity and your dignity. All are welcome here. Inclusion, diversity and equality are principles which guide our decisions and will be visible throughout the Service, and we will continually work to improve in these areas.

We are committed to creating an inclusive culture of dignity and trust where everyone feels safe and comfortable to bring their whole self to work.

Simply: The communities we serve are varied and diverse, we should be too.

All applications are considered on merit alone. We are a Disability Confident Leader – if you meet the essential criteria of the role, you will be guaranteed an interview if you choose to opt into the Disability Confident Scheme (formerly known as the Guaranteed Interview Scheme).

To find out more: <https://www.rbfrs.co.uk/your-service/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>



## Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment Campaign

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service would like to encourage individuals to consider the challenging and highly rewarding career of a Wholetime Firefighter Apprentice. Details of how to apply will be made [available on our website](#) prior to the commencement of any Wholetime Firefighter recruitment process.

The communities in Royal Berkshire value the services that we offer and need to feel confident in the highly skilled teams and the role they play in reducing risks as well as dealing with emergencies. We are continually evolving and improving how we operate whilst maintaining the highest standards. Appointing the right people is essential in helping us to achieve our ambitions for the future.

### Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Wholetime Stations

- Caversham Road, Reading
- Wokingham Road, Reading
- Newbury
- Wokingham
- Bracknell / Ascot
- Slough
- Langley
- Maidenhead /Windsor
- Whitley Wood, Reading
- Theale, Reading

This document has been written to provide you with details of each stage of the Wholetime Firefighter recruitment process. It is important that you are aware of how you will be assessed and what you can expect at each stage. Additional details will be provided on our website during each campaign.



**For more information visit:**

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

[rbfrs.co.uk/careers/wholetime-firefighter](http://rbfrs.co.uk/careers/wholetime-firefighter)

## Firefighter Job Profile

**Main Purpose of the Job:**

To protect and serve the community by working with and within the community to prevent emergencies occurring, and minimise their impact by providing professional operational firefighting, rescue and humanitarian services.

<b>Main Duties and Responsibilities:</b>	
FF1. Inform and educate your community to improve awareness of safety matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participate in special events designed to promote fire safety, both on RBFRS premises and in the community.</li><li>• Distribute safety information, either in response to requests or through leaflet drops.</li><li>• Facilitate learning by demonstrating fire safety, first-aid firefighting, calling Emergency Services and fire survival methods</li><li>• Help raise the role and profile of the Fire Service in the local community</li><li>• Host and guide members of the public visiting Fire Service premises</li></ul>
FF2. Take responsibility for effective performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take responsibility for personal performance, including your own health and fitness</li><li>• Continually improve your performance through self-assessment and action to address your development needs.</li><li>• Establish and maintain effective working relationships with people within the organisation and externally</li><li>• Maintain standards of dress and personal appearance in keeping with the image of a professional service</li></ul>
FF3. Save and preserve endangered life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct searches to locate life involved in incidents</li><li>• Rescue life involved in incidents, including animal life</li><li>• Provide treatment to casualties</li><li>• Instigate protective measures to safeguard members of the public from hazards resulting from dangerous buildings or structures.</li></ul>
FF4. Resolve operational incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Control and extinguish fires</li><li>• Respond to a range of emergency and non-emergency incidents other than those which involve fire or</li></ul>



	<p>hazardous materials (eg lock-outs, pump-outs, emergency provision of water)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give physical and emotional support to people directly and indirectly involved in incidents</li><li>• Liaise with other agencies to maintain security at the scene and resolve the incident.</li></ul>
FF5. Protect the environment from the effects of hazardous materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mitigate actual and potential damage to the environment from hazardous materials</li><li>• Decontaminate people and property affected by hazardous materials</li><li>• Support individuals and other agencies involved in hazardous materials incidents</li></ul>
FF6. Support the effectiveness of operational response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collect information from a range of sources on actual and potential life, property and process risks in your community</li><li>• Collect information on operational resource availability in your community</li><li>• Check, test and conduct routine maintenance on internal resources (eg appliances &amp; equipment, PPE)</li></ul>
FF7. Support the development of colleagues in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate your own skills and knowledge to colleagues to improve their understanding and performance</li><li>• Support development of colleagues by using instruction and demonstration to help them develop skills and competence</li></ul>
FF8. Contribute to fire safety solutions to minimize risks to your community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inspect premises, individually and as part of a team, to minimise risks to people, property and the environment</li><li>• Prepare and produce written and verbal reports on Fire Safety inspections, to specified deadlines</li></ul>
F9. Drive, manoeuvre and redeploy fire service vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drive vehicles safely to incidents in optimum response time dealing with contingencies which may arise enroute</li><li>• Site your vehicle at a safe location at events and return your vehicle safely to its next appointed location</li></ul>

### Rates of pay

Rates of pay for Operational Wholetime Duty System (WDS) Firefighters can be found on our website: <https://www.rbfrs.co.uk/careers/wholetime-firefighter/wholetime-pay-scales/>

### Hours of Work

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service operate a 2/2/4 rota system consisting of two day shifts (9am-6pm), two night shifts (6pm-9pm) followed by four days off. Wholetime Firefighters are required to work anti-social hours, weekends and public holidays.



## Do you really want to be a Firefighter?

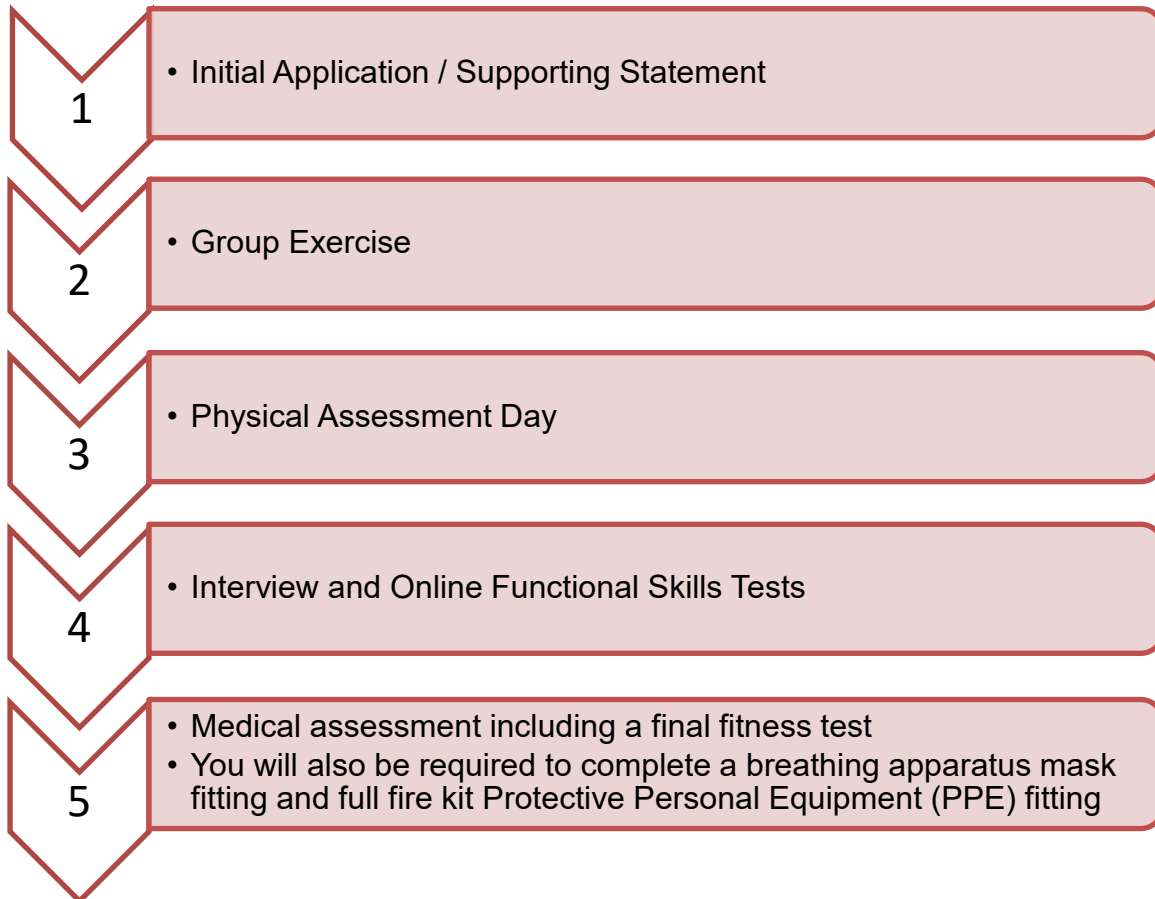
The following list of questions has been designed to help you decide whether being a Firefighter is really for you. Simply tick YES or NO to each of the following questions.	Yes	No
Are you genuinely interested in people?		
Can you get on with people from different backgrounds and cultures?		
Do you want to work as part of a close knit team?		
Can you work under pressure?		
Can you think on your feet and solve problems when you know a lot depends on the suggestion you come up with?		
Do you have the sensitivity to deal with members of the public when they are distressed, confused or being obstructive?		
Can you take responsibility for representing the Service when you are at work and when you are not?		
Are you committed to always maintaining and developing your skills?		
Are you prepared to study to develop and expand your knowledge and skills?		
Are you prepared for the demands of working in a disciplined uniformed service in which you will have to take orders from other people?		
Can you accept the need to keep to rules that tell you what you can and cannot wear?		
Are you committed to maintaining your overall health and wellbeing (both physical and mental)?		
Is regular exercise and maintaining your physical fitness part of your everyday life?		
Are you a practical person who likes to work with your hands/equipment?		
Do you enjoy making things or finding out how things work?		
Are you someone who can always be relied on to be somewhere on time?		
Are you someone that others see as dependable?		
Are you confident in water?		
Are you prepared to work outside in all types of weather, when it is wet and cold?		

If you answered 'Yes' to ALL of the above, and you think that you have what it takes to serve and protect the community you live and work in, read the information provided and join our recruitment campaign.



## The Recruitment Process

The following notes are designed to give you an indication of the Recruitment Process, what to expect and what will be required of you. There are five stages:



In the event that you encounter any access to technology, technical or log in issues for any of the online aspects of the process it is essential to let us know prior to any associated deadline by emailing [recruitment@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@rbfrs.co.uk). Failure to do so will terminate your application process.

We are a Level Three Disability Confident Leader and member of the Business Disability Forum, as such we are committed to making our recruitment process as inclusive as possible for all applicants. If you have a disability or long-term health condition and feel that you are able to meet the essential requirements of an Operational Firefighter Apprentice, but any stage of the recruitment process prevents you from fully demonstrating your abilities, adjustments to the process will be considered. Any information you provide will remain confidential. Please contact [recruitment@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@rbfrs.co.uk) if you would like to discuss what adjustments are available.



## Stage 1 – Initial Online Application / Supporting Statement

The start of the recruitment process involves completing an Application / Supporting Statement. This requires you to complete an online application form that will include:

- Your personal details such as full address, contact details and National Insurance number
- Your education and employment history
- Equality monitoring data

You will also be asked some basic questions to ensure that you are eligible to apply for the role. As part of your eligibility assessment, we will identify:

- Whether you are over the age of 17 years and six months.
- Whether you have the right to work in the UK.
- Whether you have any unspent criminal convictions. You will be required to declare any spent or unspent convictions (including cautions) under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and associated amendments or any charges pending, including any Driving Convictions. If this is the case you will be contacted during the recruitment process. If you are unsure about whether your conviction is spent or unspent, please visit [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk) for more information. Appointment for this role is conditional upon undertaking a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check which will detail both spent and unspent convictions (including cautions). The level of check will be commensurate with the requirements of the role.
- Whether you live within a 40-mile radius of the centre of Reading, **please see Appendix 1 at the end of this document for a list of eligible postcodes.**
- Whether you have been ill-health retired from another fire and rescue service.
- Whether you are currently employed as a member of the police force.
- If you have any previous experience as a firefighter.

Within your initial application you will also be required to submit a supporting statement. Within your supporting statement you will be required to evidence how your knowledge, skills and behaviours meet the criteria in the job profile.

At the end of this stage, you will be advised as to whether you are eligible to continue with your application.

It is important to note that you can complete this, or any of the online stages, at any time during day (i.e. day or night). Please complete your application before any advertised deadlines. It is important that you check that you know your correct e-mail address as you will require this to register. The system will communicate with you using the e-mail address that you provide during the registration. If you



provide an incorrect e-mail address, the system will be unable to provide you with relevant information regarding your application. If you do not complete the Application / Supporting Statement you will not be able to progress within the campaign.

**You will only be able to register with us once during a recruitment campaign so please ensure the details you give are correct. Please do not register again with another email as we can only accept one application per person, if you do make an error in your application it is important to contact us as soon as possible. Do not resubmit another application.**

Access to the Application / Supporting Statement will be available on the vacancy page of our website: [rbfrs.co.uk/careers/vacancies](http://rbfrs.co.uk/careers/vacancies).

Please note that CVs or any other form of application will not be required or accepted, unless an adjustment is agreed.

### **Stage 2 – Group Exercise**

If you meet the requirements at Stage 1 and are shortlisted following the Initial Online Application / Supporting Statement you will be invited to complete a Group Exercise. This will be a face to face event where you will be part of a small group and made up of 3 activities:

- A welcome and overview of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. This will not be assessed but will instead allow you to get to know the Service and meet other candidates before the assessed part of the Group Exercise commences.
- An assessed Group Exercise based on a scenario task that will require you to work with the other candidates, demonstrating both your individual behaviours and skills and how you work as part of a team.
- Following the Group Exercise your assessors will conduct a professional discussion based on your own and team performance, allowing you to reflect and feedback.

### **Stage 3 – Physical Assessment Day**

If successful following the interview and online skills tests, you will be invited to attend a physical assessment day at our Training Centre, Whitley Wood Road, RG2 8SF whereby you will undergo a number of physical tests as detailed below. Please note due to resource requirements we will run a limited number of physical assessment days, therefore it is important that you make yourself available to attend



one of the physical assessment dates when they are advertised as we will be unable to provide alternative dates.

More information about the physical tests, including videos can be found on our website [rbfrs.co.uk/careers/wholetime-firefighter/step-three-physical-tests](https://rbfrs.co.uk/careers/wholetime-firefighter/step-three-physical-tests).

### **Ladder Climb**

Candidates wear a safety harness and ascend two-thirds of the way up a 13.5-metre ladder and take a leg-lock. They are then asked to lean backwards and outstretch their arms to the sides, and then whilst looking over their shoulder they are to say out loud what symbol is being shown by the assessor at ground level. This will test confidence at heights.

### **Confined Space Exercise**

Candidates put on a facemask with un-obscured vision although this will be in a dark environment. They will make their way through a crawl and walkway. Once inside the crawl/walkway, they have their vision obscured and return to the start. This will test confidence, agility and stamina.

### **Equipment Assembly**

Candidates are given a demonstration of the test before having to assemble and disassemble a number of components to make an item of equipment which will test manual dexterity.

### **Drill Ground Assessment**

Candidates are required to complete a series of tasks that simulate firefighting activities such as carrying equipment, running out hose and casualty evacuation, within a set time. This is a test of physical fitness.

The tests on this day are designed to assess your level of physical fitness in line with requirements of the role.

### **Shoulder Press**

Candidates are required to simulate lifting the ladder onto the appliance by lifting a 25kg bar overhead from chest height using a strict shoulder press movement, i.e. without bending your legs. You will be given a practice at 15kg and the weight will then be increased to 25kg.



### Physical Fitness

Firefighting can be a physically demanding and hazardous activity. To ensure effective and safe operational performance an appropriate level of physical fitness is essential.

Your level of physical fitness will be determined by measuring your performance during a number of physical and practical firefighting tasks. You will be required to perform an 'aerobic' fitness test to predict your aerobic capacity (in  $\text{mlsO}_2/\text{kg}/\text{min}$ ). This allows us to assess your ability to perform exercise for longer periods which is important for safe firefighting. The minimum requirement for candidates at recruitment is **42.3**  $\text{mls}/\text{O}_2/\text{kg}/\text{min}$ , by achieving a time of 11 minutes, 11 seconds or under in the drill ground assessment. If you progress to medical, you will be required to demonstrate this level of fitness again on a treadmill walk test to ensure that you have maintained the appropriate level of fitness. Achieving Level 8, Shuttle 8 on the standard bleep test would provide an indication of fitness but is not a guarantee.

### Behaviours

During the physical testing sessions, our assessors will in addition to observing your ability to complete the tests observe your behaviours to ensure you meet the standards required for safe and effective performance in an operational environment. These factors are important as the firefighter role requires continuous focus, accurate adherence to instruction and consistent situational awareness to ensure personal and team safety.



## Stage 4 – Interview and Functional Skill Tests

Candidates who successfully complete the Group Exercise and satisfactorily passed the physical testing will be invited to an interview.

The main aim of the interview is to find out about you and your motivation to become a firefighter. The interview will be conducted by two people who will take it in turns to ask you questions about you and your experience, taking a set of notes to ensure a record is kept of the examples you give.

Interview questions will be competency (role) based and during the interview you will be asked to give examples of when and how you have demonstrated our Behaviour Competencies Behaviours (BCF) and competencies that are important for potential firefighters. You should answer based on your personal experience and more information about the interview structure and how to prepare will be sent to those invited for interview.

During this stage of the process you will also be invited to complete an online in person functional skills testing event at our Headquarters that will enable you to demonstrate your knowledge and skills applicable to the role (e.g. English and Maths).

## Stage 5 – The Medical

Firefighters may be exposed to extreme physical and psychological demands in hostile and dangerous environments. Candidates reaching this stage of the process will be required to attend a medical.

Candidate must meet the minimum eyesight standards. 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 for the worse. There is an upper hypermetropic (long-sighted) limit of +3.00, and colour vision must reach the required standard.

Prior to attending a medical appointment candidates will be required to visit an opticians for a full eyesight test, bringing the results to their medical appointment. We must stress that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service will be unable to reimburse any costs that may be incurred by booking and attending this appointment.

Hearing and lung function will also be tested during the medical and candidates will undergo screening for use of illegal drugs and alcohol misuse.



If you have any of the following conditions you should consider carefully whether the nature of the work and the attendance pattern, (which includes the possibility of very long hours at major incidents), would be detrimental to your health:

- Significant joint injury or disease, especially if it affects the back or knees.
- A chronic respiratory problem, e.g. asthma.
- A history of hypertension, diabetes, epilepsy, cardiac or circulatory disease.
- Contact dermatitis, psoriasis or eczema.
- Vertigo, claustrophobia or acrophobia (fear of heights).

Your medical records from your General Practitioner may be required, for which you will be asked to give consent at the appropriate time.

More detailed information regarding the medical will be available to candidates later in the recruitment process.

You will also be required to undergo a Treadmill Walk Test. The Treadmill Walk Test is a 12 minute graded, treadmill walk test designed to assess whether or not a candidate can achieve the firefighter fitness standard of 42mls O<sub>2</sub> /kg/min.

You will also be required to complete a Breathing Apparatus (BA) Mask fitting and a Fire Kit PPE fitting.

**We would like to thank you for your interest in the role of Wholetime Firefighter Apprentice.**

If you have any queries, you are invited to email: [recruitment@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@rbfrs.co.uk)





AL1	AL10	AL2	AL3	AL4	AL5	AL6	AL7	AL8	AL9
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BR3
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CR0	CR2	CR3	CR4	CR5	CR6	CR7	CR8
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E1 0	E1 1	E1 2	E1 3	E1 4	E1 5	E1 6	E1 7	E1 8	E1W
E2 0	E2 6	E2 7	E2 8	E2 9	E5 8	E5 9	E8 1	E8 2	E8 3
E8 4	E9 6	E9 7	EC1A	EC1M	EC1N	EC1R	EC1V	EC1Y	EC2A
EC2M	EC2N	EC2R	EC2V	EC2Y	EC3A	EC3M	EC3N	EC3R	EC3V
EC4A	EC4M	EC4N	EC4R	EC4V	EC4Y	EN2	EN4	EN5	EN6

GL54	GL7	GU1	GU10	GU11	GU12	GU14	GU15	GU16	GU17
GU18	GU19	GU2	GU20	GU21	GU22	GU23	GU24	GU25	GU26
GU27	GU28	GU29	GU3	GU30	GU31	GU32	GU33	GU34	GU35
GU4	GU46	GU47	GU5	GU51	GU52	GU6	GU7	GU8	GU9

HA0	HA1	HA2	HA3	HA4	HA5	HA6	HA7	HA8	HA9
HP1	HP10	HP11	HP12	HP13	HP14	HP15	HP16	HP17	HP18
HP19	HP2	HP20	HP21	HP22	HP23	HP27	HP3	HP4	HP5
HP6	HP7	HP8	HP9						

KT1	KT10	KT11	KT12	KT13	KT14	KT15	KT16	KT17	KT18
KT19	KT2	KT20	KT21	KT22	KT23	KT24	KT3	KT4	KT5
KT6	KT7	KT8	KT9	KT6					



**Wholetime Duty System Firefighter Recruitment**

LU1	LU2	LU3	LU4	LU5	LU6	LU7
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MK1	MK13	MK17	MK18	MK19	MK2	MK3	MK4	MK5	MK6
MK7	MK8								

N1 0	N1 1	N1 2	N1 3	N1 4	N1 5	N1 6	N1 7	N1 8
N10	N11	N12	N13	N14	N15	N16	N17	N18
N1C	N2 0	N2 8	N2 9	N20	N21	N22	N3 1	N3 2
N4 1	N4 2	N4 3	N4 4	N5 1	N5 2	N6 4	N6 5	N6 6
N7 6	N7 7	N7 8	N7 9	N8 0	N8 7	N8 8	N8 9	N9 9
NN13	NW1	NW10	NW11	NW2	NW3	NW4	NW5	NW6
NW7	NW8	NW9						

OX1	OX10	OX11	OX12	OX13	OX14	OX15	OX17	OX18	OX2
OX20	OX25	OX26	OX27	OX28	OX29	OX3	OX33	OX39	OX4
OX44	OX49	OX5	OX7	OX9					

PO10	PO17	PO18	PO7	PO8	PO9
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RG1	RG10	RG12	RG14	RG17	RG18	RG19	RG2	RG20	RG21
RG22	RG23	RG24	RG25	RG26	RG27	RG28	RG29	RG30	RG31
RG4	RG40	RG41	RG42	RG45	RG5	RG6	RG7	RG8	RG9
RH1	RH11	RH12	RH13	RH14	RH2	RH20	RH3	RH4	RH5
RH6									



**Wholetime Duty System Firefighter Recruitment**

SE1	SE11	SE14	SE15	SE16	SE17	SE19	SE20	SE21	SE22
SE23	SE24	SE25	SE26	SE27	SE4	SE5	SE8	SG13	SG4
SL0	SL1	SL2	SL3	SL4	SL5	SL6	SL7	SL8	SL9
SM1	SM2	SM3	SM4	SM5	SM6	SM7	SN1	SN10	SN11
SN2	SN25	SN26	SN3	SN38	SN4	SN5	SN6	SN7	SN8
SN9	SO16	SO18	SO20	SO21	SO22	SO23	SO24	SO30	SO32
SO50	SO51	SO52	SO53	SP10	SP11	SP3	SP4	SP5	SP9
SW10	SW11	SW12	SW13	SW14	SW15	SW16	SW17	SW18	SW19
SW1A	SW1E	SW1H	SW1P	SW1V	SW1W	SW1X	SW1Y	SW2	SW20
SW3	SW4	SW5	SW6	SW7	SW8	SW9			

TW1	TW10	TW11	TW12	TW13	TW14	TW15	TW16	TW17	TW18
TW19	TW2	TW20	TW3	TW4	TW5	TW6	TW7	TW8	TW9

UB1	UB10	UB11	UB2	UB3	UB4	UB5	UB6	UB7	UB8
UB9									

W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	W1B	W1C	W1D	W1F	W1G
W1H	W1J	W1K	W1S	W1T	W1U	W1W	W2 1	W2 2	W2 3
W2 4	W2 5	W2 6	W3 0	W3 6	W3 7	W3 8	W3 9	W4 1	W4 2
W4 3	W4 4	W4 5	W5 1	W5 2	W5 3	W5 4	W5 5	W6 0	W6 7
W6 8	W6 9	W7 1	W7 2	W7 3	W8 4	W8 5	W8 6	W8 7	W9 1
W9 2	W9 3	WC1A	WC1B	WC1E	WC1H	WC1N	WC1R	WC1V	WC1X
WC2A	WC2B	WC2E	WC2H	WC2N	WC2R	WD17	WD18	WD19	WD23
WD24	WD25	WD3	WD4	WD5	WD6	WD7			

