



**NORTH YORKSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

Retained (on call) Firefighter Information Pack

Contents

Section 1	Guidance on Completing the Application Pack
Section 2	Selection Tests and Interview
Section 3	Main Conditions of Service
Section 4	Equality/Fairness at Work Policy Statement
Section 5	Frequently Asked Medical Questions

This information pack is designed to assist you in your application for the role of retained (on call) firefighter. Please read it carefully.

Section 1 Guidance on Completing the Application Pack

The information you provide in your application pack is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will progress to the next stage. We do not take into account any previous applications or prior knowledge of you, even if you already work for the Fire Authority.

As part of the Equality Policy, we seek to ensure that information about candidates is provided in the same format and, all applicants are therefore asked to complete the Service's standard application form. Curriculum Vitae (CVs) are not accepted. If a CV is received from you, it will not be considered. You are required to complete the standard application form.

Completing the application pack

You might want to print several copies/make photocopies of the application form to practice on. Check spelling and punctuation and get a friend or colleague to double check it for you. Once you are happy with your draft copy then you can complete the original form neatly before returning it.

Complete all the forms in the application pack. If you think some parts do not apply to you write N/A (not applicable) in the spaces provided for your answer. Please ensure you complete the name and address sections on each form as the forms are separated out.

Check with your referees that they are happy for us to contact them as this saves time should you be successful in being called for interview.

You may wish to take a photocopy of your completed application form before you return it to us.

Ensure that you return the application form with the correct postage as we are not responsible for forms that are not delivered due to underpaid postage.

Age

Applicants must be 18 years of age or over at the commencement of training. You may apply to be a firefighter if you are aged between 17 years 6 months and 18 years old as long as you are 18 years old once you commence training. Your date of birth is verified as part of the process.

Qualifications

If you are in receipt of relevant qualifications as detailed in the application pack, ensure that copies of the original qualification document are sent with your application. **Please do not send originals.** If you are successful at application form sift stage these qualifications may result in you being exempt from the written tests and allow you to proceed straight to the physical testing stage.

Identification

As an employer we need to ensure all prospective employees have the right to work in the United Kingdom, therefore at every stage of the recruitment process, after the initial application, you will be asked to provide some form of photographic identification e.g. passport, driving licence, any other relevant documentation and a work permit if applicable.

Eligibility to work in the UK

As an employer, the Fire Authority is subject to the provisions of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. It could be guilty of committing a criminal offence if it employed someone who does not have permission to be in or to work in the United Kingdom. The Fire Authority reserves the right therefore, to request relevant

documentation from all those offered employment to satisfy its obligations in this respect. For more information you may find these websites useful: www.workpermit.com or <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

Equality Act

In line with the Equality Act 2010 fire and rescue authorities are required to assess each applicant on an individual basis with regard to their suitability to perform the role of a retained (on call) firefighter.

Declaration of offences

If you have a previous criminal record, this will not necessarily disqualify you from employment. All applications are considered strictly on their merit and in particular whether the offence has a bearing on your suitability for employment having regard to the duties of a firefighter. However, you are required to declare any offence for which the conviction is not yet spent within the meaning of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Any offer of employment is subject to you providing North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service with the correct information. **You must declare any charges that are pending;** a subsequent conviction could lead to you being discharged from the Service.

Generally speaking, there are fixed rehabilitation periods for specific offences. Further guidance on the Act can be found in Home Office booklet "A Guide to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974" which can be accessed on the <https://www.gov.uk/> website. If you are in any doubt about your declaration, you should seek independent legal advice.

Following submission of the application form, should you subsequently receive a conviction, this must be declared at the earliest opportunity.

Section 2 Selection Tests and Interview

If you progress to the next stage after completing the application form, you will need to undertake a number of selection tests, some of these may take place at our Training Centre in Easingwold. You will be given information about the tests, the order and detail of each test before you are assessed.

This section gives you an idea of what to expect from our selection tests, what tests you will be asked to do and why we perform these tests. In doing these selection tests you will gain an insight into the nature and demands of the role of a retained (on call) firefighter. This will hopefully help you decide if it is a career you wish to follow.

Written Tests

Short listed candidates that have no proof of relevant qualifications will be required to undergo a series of written ability tests designed to assess levels of literacy and numeracy. These written tests are role related and measure your potential to become a retained (on call) firefighter.

The tests are conducted under strict conditions to enable a fair selection process.

You will be asked to undertake three written tests which enable us to assess a wide range of abilities. You do not need any prior technical knowledge to complete these tests.

Working With Numbers Test

- This test assesses problem solving. It lasts 45 minutes and there are 32 questions.

Understanding Information Test

- This scenario based test assesses problem solving and effective communication. It lasts 30 minutes and there are 25 questions.

Situational Awareness and Problem Solving Test

- This test assesses problem solving and situational awareness. It lasts 35 minutes and there are 30 questions.

There are numerous publications available to help you prepare for the tests including:-

- “How to Pass the Firefighter Selection Process” author Mike Bryon
- “How to Master Psychometric Tests” author Mark Parkinson

You may also find the following website useful: www.fireservice.co.uk/recruitment

Please note that North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service does not endorse or recommend these publications and using them will not guarantee success in the selection procedure.

Physical Tests

Applicants who pass the written tests, or those exempt from the written tests, will be required to perform a series of practical and physical tests designed to assess physical skills, fitness and manual dexterity related to the role of a retained (on call) firefighter.

Each physical test will involve physical effort. In some cases this will be at a high level over a short period. It is advisable not to eat or drink one hour prior to your test. For applicants who have not done much physical fitness work for some time, it is recommended that you seek advice from your doctor before taking part in the assessments. In this way you can assist in looking after your own safety.

You should also look at the firefighter fitness booklet which is available on the retained (on call) firefighter recruitment page of our website (www.northyorksfire.gov.uk) and provides guidance on helping you to improve your fitness level.

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service considers personal safety very seriously and the equipment you will use during the tests will have been examined, tested and maintained. Applicants should expect to perform tests in controlled surroundings.

Before the physical tests you will be given a demonstration by North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service staff. All tests are supervised, assessed and marked.

Chester Step Test

What will you be required to do?

During this test you will be asked to step on to and off, a 30cm step at a rate set by an audio beat. Every two minutes your heart rate (HR) and exertion levels will be checked by the test administrator and the stepping rate will be increased slightly. The test will continue in this progressive manner for a maximum of ten minutes.

What is being tested?

The CST is a sub-maximal, multistage, VO_{2max} test designed to measure cardiovascular capacity.

Reason for test

We use this test to ensure that applicant's have what has been deemed the safe minimum standard of aerobic fitness. Outcomes are measured in units of: millilitres of oxygen, per kilogram of bodyweight, per minute ($ml \cdot kg^{-1} \cdot min^{-1}$).

Ladder Climb Test

What will you be required to do?

You will be required to climb a fire service ladder to two-thirds of its height; this point of the ladder will be marked. You will then be required to take a leg lock through the ladder and release your hands from the ladder, arms outstretched to the side and look down to identify a symbol. For the purpose of the ladder climb test, applicants will be secured to a safety device.

What is being tested?

Your aptitude, confidence, co-ordination and balance at height.

Reason for test

This test demonstrates an ability to tolerate working at heights together with the need to remain calm and confident in this situation and the ability to follow instructions.

Ladder Lift Test

What will you be required to do?

You will be required to lift a 15kg ladder bar with an underhand grip with palms upwards through to a wrist changeover pushing ladder up to 182 cm and then under control lower the bar back to its resting position.

What is being tested?

Your hand grip and strength.

Reason for test

This test exactly simulates lifting a 13.5 metre ladder on to a fire appliance which all retained (on call) firefighters must be able to do.

Casualty Evacuation Test

What will you be required to do?

You will be required to drag a dummy person from a starting point, walking backwards along a 30m route to

a finish line.

What is being tested?

Your explosive strength and leg and back pull strength.

Reason for test

This test simulates the type of strength you will require to lift and manoeuvre an individual to safety.

Enclosed Space Test

What will you be required to do?

Wearing a breathing apparatus face mask with clear vision you will crawl/walk through a pre-determined route through a training environment, negotiating obstacles and restricted access. When you reach the other end your face mask will be obscured and you will be required to return along the same route.

What is being tested?

Your ability to remain calm and move around in a confined space with obscured vision.

Reason for test

Retained (on call) firefighters have to wear breathing apparatus in dark and dangerous conditions and rescue casualties from collapsed structures. This test mirrors those conditions.

Equipment Assembly Test

What will you be required to do?

You will be required to assemble and disassemble pieces of equipment under timed conditions.

What is being tested?

Your ability to work with pieces of equipment under pressure situation

Reason for the test

Retained (on call) firefighters are required to assemble pieces of equipment accurately and under pressure in their daily work. This test mirrors that type of activity.

Equipment Carry Test

What will you be required to do?

You will be require to run/jog whilst carrying pieces of fire service equipment along a 25 metre course under timed conditions. You will be required to carry other pieces of equipment whilst walking and also run up and down the course without equipment.

What is being tested?

Your endurance combined with upper and lower body strength and co-ordination.

Reason for the test

Firefighters are required to carry a variety of equipment over a range of distances under time pressure

References

References will be taken up at this stage.

Interview

Candidates who pass the physical tests will be invited for an interview. The interview gives local managers a chance to ask the applicant questions based upon the role of a retained (on call) firefighter and it allows the applicant to ask questions about the role.

Eye sight check and medical examination

Prior to the medical you will be sent a Certificate of Visual Acuity Form which you must take to an Optician

to complete to check your eyesight. Please note that we do not reimburse any expenses incurred in connection with the completion of this form. You will also be required to undertake a full medical examination by the Service's Occupational Health Advisor. Please be aware that should your eyesight or medical examination not meet the required standard your application will not proceed any further.

An applicant must satisfy the Service's Occupational Health Advisor at a medical examination that he/she is:

- (a) Fit to undertake firefighting duties.
- (b) Has no physical abnormality or any disease which would incapacitate him/her temporarily or permanently from performing firefighting duties. Certain medical standards have been set.

It will be a matter for the Service's Occupational Health Advisor to consider whether any physical or mental impairment is incompatible with the duties of a retained (on call) firefighter.

- (c) Has a satisfactory lung function, assessed by the measurement of the forced expiratory volume in one second and the forced vital capacity.
- (d) Has a high standard of physical fitness, strength and stamina.
- (e) The visual acuity and fields of vision of each candidate will be assessed on an individual basis to determine if the candidate is safe to undertake firefighting duties, given the risks involved. Eyesight will be tested thoroughly by a separate eyesight examination undertaken by a qualified optometrist. Any costs incurred for these tests will be paid for by the candidate.
- (f) Has good unaided hearing. Hearing will be tested.

All medicals are reviewed by the Service Medical Advisor/Occupational Health Physician

Appointment and training

Trainee retained (on call) firefighters will attend four training nights on station and one pre-course learning day before completing a two week Retained Firefighter Course at our Training Centre in Easingwold.

If you are appointed as a trainee retained (on call) firefighter you will have to attend a two week (optional residential) Retained Firefighter course at the Service's Training Centre in Easingwold. Your progress during the training course will be continually monitored by written, oral and practical assessments. You must pass this course for your appointment as a retained (on call) firefighter to be confirmed but you will be given lots of encouragement and support by the training centre staff; their aim is to help you to pass.

Section 3 Main Conditions of Service

Age and height requirements

There are no height limits within the fire service. However, applicants must be 18 years of age or over at the commencement of training. You may apply to be a firefighter if you are aged between 17 years 6 months and 18 years old as long as you are 18 years old once you commence training. Your date of birth is verified as part of the application process.

Annual Leave Entitlement

Subject to local conditions, annual leave entitlement is 4 weeks for less than 5 years service rising to 5 weeks for more than 5 years continuous service. Public Holidays are paid for and not taken as leave.

Health and Safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Service as an employer, has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees. Employees have a duty of care for their own health and safety and that of others who could be affected by their acts of negligence.

In addition, they are required to co-operate with their employer to carry out or comply with any duty imposed under statutory provisions. The Service endeavours to fulfil its obligations under the Act and it expects its employees to do likewise.

Maternity leave and pay

All women are entitled to maternity leave. All pregnant employees are entitled to 26 weeks ordinary maternity leave followed by 26 weeks additional maternity leave. This is regardless of the number of hours worked or the length of service.

An employee with less than a year's continuous local government service at the beginning of the 11th week before the expected week of confinement is entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). An employee who has completed at least a year's continuous local government service at the eleventh week before the expected week of confinement, and declares an intention to return to work, is entitled to NYFRS enhanced maternity pay.

Paternity Support Leave

An employee who has less than 26 weeks' continuous local government service by the end of the 15th week before the baby is due, can take one week's paid maternity support leave. This leave cannot be taken as separate days.

An employee who has 26 weeks' continuous local government service by the end of the 15th week before the baby is due, can choose to take either one or two consecutive weeks' paid maternity support leave. One week equates to seven consecutive days free from duty.

Pension Scheme

From the date of commencement of your employment you will be contractually enrolled into the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015. You may, however, opt out of membership to this scheme by completion of the appropriate documentation.

The principle benefits are an annual pension payable on retirement and the option to commute part of the pension, to receive a lump sum payment (at present tax free). Benefits are payable at retirement on age grounds, or an earlier retirement because of ill-health. The amount of pension and lump sum depends on length of service and is based on final pensionable pay usually averaged over the last 12 months of service.

Dependent pensions for spouses, partners and children maybe payable in the event of death during service and in retirement. Special awards are payable if death is caused through execution of duty.

Salary

Payment is made by monthly direct credit to your bank or building society account. The rate of pay for retained (on call) firefighters is dependant on your availability and will be reviewed in July each year. Full information on salaries is available on our website under the retained (on call) recruitment page.

www.northyorksfire.gov.uk

Additional Payments

- Annual Drill Night Fees
- Turnout Fees
- Training Course Fees

Trainee Firefighter Rate

This is when a retained (on call) firefighters joins their station to complete their four weeks pre-course learning. Retained (on call) firefighters remain on this pay scale until they have successfully completed their initial training course at training centre.

Development Firefighter Rate

Once they have successfully completed their initial trainee course, retained (on call) firefighters are placed on the development pay scale. They will remain on this scale until they have completed the remaining core development courses and have proved their competence.

Competent Development Rate

Once our Development Team have verified the evidence as meeting the standards, they will inform payroll who will make the necessary arrangements to pay individuals at the competent rate of pay.

Sickness

You are entitled, when on sick leave, to pay, subject to National Joint Councils Conditions of Service.

Training

Effective and regular training will be essential for the proper performance of your duties. Some training courses that you will undertake are compulsory and training venues can be within or outside the station area. Additionally a wide range of opportunities exist which include assistance with study for promotion and also sponsorship for qualifications, which are relevant to your work.

Union Membership

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service recognises three unions in the representation of retained personnel, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Fire Officers Association (FOA) and the Retained Firefighters Union (RFU).

Uniform

Uniform is provided and must be worn while you are on duty.

Section 4 Equality/Fairness at Work Policy Statement

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority aims to ensure that at all times an individual, or group of people, will be treated on an individual basis.

Equality and diversity are key issues for North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority. Our commitment to our core values supports the way we treat our customers and each other, how we interact with the diverse communities we serve and how we deliver our services to those communities.

We will not discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, disability, nationality, religion, age, sexual orientation, family status or any other irrelevant factor and aims to build a culture that values openness, fairness and transparency.

The Authority is committed to incorporating into all aspects of its Service the statutory equality duties, as well as the various Codes of Practice, issued from time to time.

This means that in providing a service to the community, in recruitment and selection, in the policies and procedures for managing workers, (whether employees or agency staff) or in the hiring of contractors, we are committed to a policy of preventing discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, beliefs, marital/parental status, sexual orientation or any other reason which can not be shown to be justified.

All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated.

The policy is applicable to all employees, whether permanent or temporary and applies to all processes that impact on the communities we serve, employment and training and the contractors with whom we do business.

All employees and potential employees of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service will be given, equal opportunities in all aspects of employment, terms and conditions, facilities, benefits and training irrespective of:

Gender	Age	Race
Nationality	Marital status	Colour
Ethnicity	Spent criminal convictions	National origin
Sexual orientation	Social background	Or any other reason
Disability	Religion/Belief	

Although the responsibility for achieving and providing equality of opportunity lies with the employer, employees at every level have a responsibility to promote this policy. Eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity depends upon personal commitment and all members of the Service, without exception, must observe the requirements of the Equality Policy and apply its principles.

Section 5 Frequently asked Medical questions

I have a medical history of Asthma. Can I still apply?

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service will consider your application, provided you have had no symptoms for 4 years (have not needed to use prescribed Ventolin inhaler during this period).

A GP report may be requested, stating the following:-

- When was the condition diagnosed?
- How severe was it –
 - Number of hospital admissions
 - Use of oral steroids
 - Time off work/school.
- Were you referred to a specialist?
- Complete medical record of asthma prescriptions over last 5 years.

I am a diabetic. Can I still apply?

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service will consider your application, however we will need a report from your Specialist Consultant requesting the following information:-

- Category of Diabetes (Type 1 or 2)
- Evidence of stability of control
- Evidence of blood sugar levels over significant period of time (Most recent period).

I wear glasses/contact lenses, Can I still apply?

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service will consider your application provided you are safe for operational duties and meet the required standards. These are:-

- Corrected visual acuity = 6/9 binocularly and a minimum of 6/12 in the worse eye
- Uncorrected vision = 6/18 in better eye and 6/24 in worse eye.
- Vision must be binocular (both eyes used)
- Be able to read N12 at 30cms unaided with both eyes open (applicants aged 25 and over)
- Be able to read N6 at 30cms unaided with both eyes open (applicants under 25 years of age).

The wearing of contact lenses is permitted, provided they are **soft** lenses and safe on the fire ground.

Normal binocular field of vision is required.

Eye Disease

Any history of ocular disease will be individually assessed and outcomes will be supported with ophthalmologist evidence. You must have no history of night blindness.

Refractive Surgery / Laser surgery

If you have had recent laser surgery to the eye, we require a post operative period of 1 year to allow for recovery and adjustment to have taken place before acceptance.

Colour vision

Ishihara testing plates will be used initially. Failure to recognise the test plates will necessitate a further test using the Farnsworth D15 test. Failure to recognise the elements of this test may require a functional assessment to be carried out.

These tests are designed to establish the degree of risk that may be involved if exposed to operational duties during emergency/hazardous conditions. Recruitment decisions will be subject to risk assessment

outcome, taking into consideration the degree of risk involved.

You may wish to take this information to your optician when you have your eye test as part of the application process. The optician will test your vision and advise you as to whether you meet the required standards before applying.

I have recently had an operation, can I still apply?

This will depend on the diagnosis of the condition that required surgery.

An appropriate period of recovery will need to have been observed, and evidence of this may be required in the form of a letter from your GP.

Each application will be considered on an individual basis, and based on the information provided on the application form, a decision as to fitness will be determined.

I have an existing medical condition that requires on - going treatment. Can I still apply?

Each application will be considered on an individual basis. Your case will be reviewed by a member of the Occupational Health team, who may wish to see you personally before making a decision.

If you have any questions that have not been covered in this fact sheet, feel free to contact Occupational Health on 01609 788529 during office hours.

Please note that North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service will not be responsible for any cost incurred in obtaining medical reports for the purpose of recruitment.