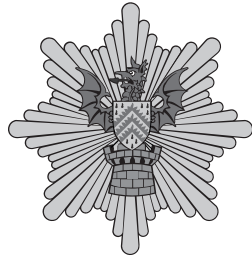


**South Wales**  
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
**De Cymru**

# **Firefighter** Information Pack

# JOB DESCRIPTION

## RANK

Firefighter

## LOCATION

As directed by the Chief Fire Officer

## PRINCIPAL AIM

To protect and save people and property from fire and other hazards in the most competent and effective manner to the highest possible standard of care and quality.

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Emergencies

- Respond immediately and safely to all emergency calls and requests for assistance.
- Deal with emergencies as directed and work effectively and efficiently as a member of a disciplined team.
- Minimise distress and suffering, including giving first aid care.

### Dealing with People

- Establish and maintain the confidence of members of the public.
- Maintain links within the community
- Be sensitive to the needs of others, particularly with regard to fairness and dignity issues.

### Fire Safety

- Give general fire safety advice and guidance to people when requested.
- Work to help educate members of the community in the risks and hazards of fire.
- Assist in Service initiatives, programmes and strategies to reduce fire calls.

### Health and Safety

- Recognise health and safety issues at work and deal with them to minimise or eliminate the degree of hazard or risk.
- Ensure personal safety and that of others at all times.

### Personal Fitness and Hygiene

- Maintain a level of physical and medical fitness necessary to carry out all the duties of a firefighter.
- Maintain personal appearance, hygiene and cleanliness of uniform in keeping with a disciplined service.

### Equipment

- Maintain all firefighting and emergency equipment in a state of readiness, including cleaning, repairing and testing as required to approved standards and procedures.
- Check firefighting resources provided for fire service use, including hydrants and fixed installations.

### Local Geography

- Know the local streets, roads and buildings situated around the fire station area.
- Be aware of the risks, possible hazards and water supplies to be found within the fire station area.

### Administration

- Complete basic paperwork and routine administration, including recording of information.
- Use information technology as required and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Keep personal records up to date.

### Training

- Take part in a continuous training programme by attending lectures, exercises, practice drill sessions and other forms of training to maintain competence levels.
- Attend training courses as directed.
- Undertake Level 3 – Emergency Fire Service Operations (NVQ)

### Fire Authority

Undertake such other duties commensurate with the level of responsibility and expertise as may be required by the Chief Fire Officer from time to time. To adhere to the policies and procedures of the Service.

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

<b>Job Criteria</b>				
	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
<b>Skills</b>	Good communication skills Practical/manual ability Logical approach to problems Ability to follow instructions	AF/WWI PA PA PA/WWI/INT WHOLE PROCESS	Previous practical work experience Ability to work under pressure	AF/INT PA/WWI/INT
<b>Knowledge</b>	Awareness of elements of job Awareness of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Role of the Fire Service in the community Elements of teamwork	INT  INT INT AF		
<b>Experience</b>	Successful contribution to teamwork Contact with members of the public through work or other capacity	AF/INT AF/INT	Work related to community service Team working within a disciplined environment	AF/INT AF/INT
<b>Qualifications</b>			Current first aid certificate Life saving	AF AF
<b>Equal Opportunities</b>	Commitment to equality/fairness at work	INT	Undertake paid or voluntary work in the community	AF/INT
<b>Other Requirements</b>	Physically fit/good aerobic capacity (as per OPDM recommendations) Satisfactory unaided eyesight and colour vision (as per OPDM recommendations) Commitment to the service and care to the community Satisfactory hearing Ability to work at heights Ability to work in confined spaces	PA/M  PA/M  AF/INT PA/M PA PA		

**Evidence Codes**

**AF: Application Form PA: Physical Assessment INT: Interview WWI: Working with Information Tests M: Medical Examination**

# THE SELECTION PROCESS

The following information outlines the process to become a firefighter within South Wales Fire and Rescue Service for whole time or retained duty system.

The application process can take up to six months from start to finish as it consists of several stages.

## PHASE ONE - APPLICATION

The application form plays a key role in the shortlisting phase, it is important that the form is completed in full and accurately.

The information you provide in your application form is the only information that we use in deciding whether or not you will progress to the next stage. We don't make assumptions or form opinions on any candidate, even if have previously applied, or if you are already working for the Fire and Rescue Service.

## PHASE TWO - SHORTLISTING

The information provided will determine whether or not you proceed to the next phase. Provide as much information as you can, in the space provided regarding your skills, abilities and experiences. If you don't tell us we won't know!

In this section, we ask you to tell us about your skills and experience in relation to the various Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQAs), (more information on PQAs are below), that are required as a firefighter. You may draw on any of your experiences to answer the questions from home life, leisure activities, work (paid or unpaid) voluntary work or education.

Please remember the following general points when completing this section:

- It is important that you answer every question.
- Write your answers neatly and legibly.
- Each question asks you to describe a specific situation about which you have had experience. For each of the 6 questions you should write a short paragraph (maximum of 150 words) that best describes your experiences in relation to the activities mentioned.

- Be specific about one activity that you do at the moment or have done, rather than writing in general terms.
- Use a specific example for each question where you have demonstrated the activity more than once.
- For each question describe what you did, why you did it and what happened as a result.
- Please use fairly recent examples of what you have done.
- It is a good idea to write out your answers in rough before you copy the final version on to the application form.
- Your answers must describe what you have done. If you provide false information your application will be rejected.

An example answer is shown below.

### EXAMPLE QUESTION

*Building working relationships and working as a supportive team member*

*Please describe a situation where you have had to work closely with others as part of a team:*

*What you did: When I worked in a fast food restaurant I noticed that a new member of the team was having difficulty with the fast pace of work. I asked the person how I could help and said that he did not know how to replenish the stock. I showed him how to do this and gave him encouragement. I also realised that new starters were not getting enough information so talked to my manager about providing more information to new people joining the team.*

*Why: The new team member was struggling and looked uncomfortable. His tasks also affected other people's work and so the team's performance.*

*What happened as a result: By helping and encouraging him, his performance improved, he felt happier about his job, and the team worked well together. The next time a person joined the team they knew more about how to do their job and so were better able to cope.*

Due to the vast amount of applications received it is not possible to provide individual feedback,

## PHASE THREE - WORKING WITH INFORMATION TESTS

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### NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER ABILITY TEST

If you pass the initial sift phase you will be invited to attend the written assessment. You will be sent an information booklet to assist you in your preparation for the test.

#### National Firefighter Questionnaire (NFQ)

The National Firefighter Questionnaire (NFQ) has been specially designed as part of the firefighter selection process and is used as an objective, valid and fair test of some of the personal qualities and attributes (PQAs) needed by firefighters to do their job effectively.

You will be presented with a series of statements and asked to indicate the extent to which you agreed with each, for example "Everyone deserves to be treated fairly". By looking at the responses you gave we can gain an understanding of your style in seven different areas. In order to be selected as a trainee firefighter you will need to demonstrate that you have the required personal qualities in each of these areas.

These areas include:

- Commitment to Diversity i.e. the extent to which you understand and respect diversity and adopt a fair and ethical approach towards others.
- Openness to Change i.e. the extent to which you are open to change and actively seek to support change.
- Confidence and Resilience i.e. the extent to which you maintain a confident and resilient approach in highly challenging situations.
- Working with Others i.e. the extent to which you work effectively with other people.
- Situational Awareness i.e. the extent to which you maintain an active awareness of the environment to promote safe and effective working.
- Commitment to Excellence i.e. the extent to which you are conscientious and adopt a proactive approach to your work in order to achieve and maintain excellent standards.

### NFA Working with Numbers Test

The NFA Working with Numbers Test assesses your ability to understand and work with numerical information of the type that you are likely to experience as a firefighter. You will be presented with a series of scenarios, using information from graphs, tables, dials and gauges and asked questions relating to each of these. Firefighters need to be able to undertake addition, subtraction, multiplication and division as well as estimations of numerical data.

### NFA Understanding Information Test

The NFA Understanding Information Test assesses your ability to read and understand written information of the type you are likely to experience as a firefighter. You were presented with a series of scenarios, with information in a variety of formats including fire safety information. Memos, newsletters and training course manual extracts and asked several questions about each of these. Firefighters typically are required to read and understand a variety of written information in their role and be able to extract vital and relevant information.

### NFA Situational Awareness and Problem Solving Test

The NFA Situational Awareness and Problem Solving Test looks at your ability to ensure the safety of yourself and others and your ability to use information to solve problems. You were presented with a series of scenarios similar to those you may face when working as a firefighter. You were asked to choose, from four alternatives, the answer that most closely described what you would do in each situation.

### Dyslexia

Candidates with dyslexia will be given additional time to sit the test, this will be subject to receipt of a written assessment by an appropriate professional.

## PHASE FOUR

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### PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

If successful at the written assessment you will be invited to attend the physical assessment. This is designed to assess your level of physical fitness and ability to become a wholetime firefighter. If successful you will be invited to attend an interview.

#### The physical assessment will consist of:

##### Ladder Climb

To complete the test successfully you will need to show confidence and apply the correct technique to climb the ladder.

You will be shown how to climb the ladder and how to apply the leg lock. You will then be allowed to practice the leg-lock.

You will climb the ladder until you are approximately 19 metres from ground level.

At that point you will use a leg-lock to secure yourself to the ladder then remove your hands from the ladder and lean back, looking over your shoulder to identify an object which is being held by an instructor at ground level.

When you have identified the object, you will be told to put your hands back on the ladder and release the leg-lock.

You will then be instructed to descend the ladder.

##### Casualty Evacuation Test

To complete the test successfully you will need to combine upper and lower body strength and co-ordination. You will be required to drag a mannequin/dummy for a distance of 30 metres.

Firmly grasp the carrying hand at the back of the dummy's head with both hands.

Keeping your body upright and your back straight pick up the dummy.

Drag the dummy from the start cone, walking backwards along the 30 metre route to the finish line.

The assessor will guide you so there is no need to turn around to look for the corner.

The assessor will tell you when to turn.

##### Ladder Lift Simulator Test

To complete the test successfully you will need to combine upper and lower body strength and co-ordination to lift the ladder to the required height and lower it safely under control. The weight added to the lifting bar is 15kg.

Start the lift with an underhand grip and your palms upward.

Lift and drive that bar through the wrist changeover zone, pushing the ladder up to reach the mark at 182 cm.

Then under control, lower the bar back to its resting position keep your hands inside the lifting area of the bar.

You must not squat down to start the lift.

You must wear gloves.

##### Enclosed Space Test

To complete the test successfully you will need to combine confidence, agility and strength to negotiate the crawl way. You will be required to negotiate a crawl way.

You will start the test wearing a BA face mask with clear vision.

Make your way through the crawl way until you reach the assessor at the opposite end of the unit, there is only one way through the run; forward, left, right or up, down and there are no doors to open.

When you reach the other end, an assessor will stop you, place an obscuration cover over your face mask, turn you around and tell you to return along the route you have just taken.

You should complete the test without jeopardising your safety and wellbeing.

Your time will start as soon as you enter the crawl way and will stop when you exit.

The assessor tapping you on the shoulder and saying STOP will indicate the finish.

You may withdraw yourself from the test at any time or if the safety officers think you are suffering unduly you will be withdrawn from the test.

## Equipment Assembly Test

To complete the test successfully you will need to assemble and then disassemble the equipment in the manner described within. The items of equipment make up a hydraulic tool used by the Fire and Rescue Service.

Once the unit has been assembled completely and correctly as per the instructions and diagram your total assembly time will be noted.

You will then start disassembling the unit in the reversing order, placing each item back on the board in the designated position. Once you have completed the disassembly you will be told to "STOP" and your time will be recorded.

If you do anything wrong, you will be told STOP and referred to the pictures on the wall.

An instructor will demonstrate the assembly and disassembly of the unit providing a commentary as they go.

## Equipment Carry Test

To complete the test successfully you will need to combine endurance, upper and lower body strength and co-ordination.

You will be carrying equipment over the length of the course, moving around the two cones which cover a distance of 25 metres.

The items are laid out on the start/finish line in the order that they are to be used.

You will start level with this line holding the hose-reel at waist height.

Run the hose to the second cone and place it down.

Run/jog back to the start and pick up the two coils of red hose by the handles.

Carry them up and down the course of 4 lengths, then place one down back in the marked space.

Pick up the other by the centre lugs and carry at chest height down to the second cone and place it down, then jog three lengths back to the start.

Pick up and carry the straight silver hose and basket up and down the course for 4 lengths and place back in the marked space.

Then run/jog up and down the course 4 lengths.

Then pick up and carry the barbell up and down the course 4 lengths.

You do not have to remember the sequence of events as the assessor will guide you. You must not run with equipment other than the hose-reel at the start, though you may run or jog when not carrying equipment.

## PHASE FIVE - THE INTERVIEW

If successful at the physical assessment you will be invited to attend an interview.

The interview will be based upon five Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQA) outlined below, this will be an opportunity for you to inform the panel of your skills, abilities and experiences.

### Commitment to Diversity and Integrity

Understands and respects diversity and adopts a fair and ethical approach to others.

### Working with Others

Work effectively with others both within the Fire and Rescue Service and in the community.

### Effective Communication

Communicates effectively both orally and in writing.

### Commitment to Development

Commitment to and able to develop self and others.

### Commitment to Excellence

Adopts a conscientious and proactive approach to work to achieve and maintain excellent standards.

Development feedback will be given. If successful at the interview stage you will be required to attend a medical.

## THE MEDICAL

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If successful you will be required to undertake a medical assessment. Firefighters are exposed to physical and psychological demands in sometimes dangerous and hostile environments. Therefore it is your responsibility to maintain your fitness levels throughout your career with the Fire and Rescue Service.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are committed to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and can make reasonable adjustments, however adjustments to the essential requirements identified in the job description cannot be adjusted.

The Fire and Rescue Service nationally have reviewed the role and have taken into account our responsibilities under the DDA.

The Medical Assessment will include the following tests:

- Complete a Health and Lifestyle Questionnaire.
- Visual Acuity.
- Audiometry.
- Blood Pressure Screening.
- Height and Weight Measured.
- Urinalysis.
- Lung Function Test.
- Chester Step Test.
- Doctor's medical examination including general medical check plus
  - Body Fat Percentage Test.
  - Grip Strength Test.
  - Back and Leg Strength Test.

## Colour Blind

Eyesight examination, comments on colour vision standard for entry

Operational firefighters must have an appropriate level of colour perception. Individuals with either normal colour vision or slightly abnormal green colour vision are suitable for appointment to the Fire and Rescue Service. The recommended test procedure uses the Ishihara test as the initial screen with two additional tests, the Farnsworth D15 and Nagel anomaloscope, to determine both the severity and type of colour deficiency. All applicants will be tested using Ishihara plates. Those who pass (having made no more than two errors in plate identification) have normal colour vision. Those who fail should be tested by Farnsworth D15, which will determine the severity of their colour defect. Applicants who fail Farnsworth D15 will be rejected as unsuitable. Those who pass should be offered the opportunity to take the third stage test, the Nagel anomaloscope, to distinguish whether the individual has slight red or slight green colour deficiency.

## APPOINTMENT

If successful at all stages of the selection process an offer of employment will be made as and when a vacancy arises, and subject to organisational needs and requirements. If the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service don't have a vacancy, your details will be placed on a reserve list and this will be looked at when a vacancy arises. As the selection tests are only valid for a period the reserve list is only valid for a period of 12 months.

An offer of employment is conditional on satisfactory references, should South Wales Fire and Rescue Service receive unsatisfactory references or checks the offer of employment will be withdrawn.

You will commence on the Trainee Course. Once you have completed the course you will be posted to one of our wholetime stations, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service cannot guarantee at which station you will be posted to, therefore you must be prepared to serve anywhere in South Wales.