

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
De Cymru



South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service

# BE MORE



AR-ALWAD  
ON-CALL

| FIREFIGHTER  
INFORMATION BOOKLET

This document is also available in Welsh



This Information Booklet will give you an insight into the role of an On-Call Firefighter working a Retained Duty System.\* You will be made aware of the types of activity you can expect to be involved in during your career with us. You will also find details about the current recruitment process. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) is committed to the development and promotion of equal opportunities and fairness at work.

\* Retained Duty System = Part-time System

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# INTRODUCTION

The South Wales Service area is served by 47 Fire and Rescue Stations. These are made up of 11 Wholetime Duty Systems (WDS), 27 On-Call and 9 Wholetime/On-Call.

On-Call Firefighters work a Retained Duty System and must live or work in the local community of the station they're responding to. Every On-Call Firefighter carries an 'alerter' at all times whilst on duty, so they can respond to their Station when required, within a set time of a call. They can respond from their home during leisure time or, in some cases, from their place of work if their employer permits.

On-Call Fire and Rescue Stations are crewed only when an incident occurs and during the weekly two hour drill session.



# WHAT IS AN **ON-CALL** FIREFIGHTER?

**On-Call Firefighters can be anyone and can come from all walks of life. For example, they are builders, consultants, stay-at-home parents, administrators, factory workers, care workers, students or people not currently employed.**

They are people who are able to give their time to assist the Fire and Rescue Service in return for a salary. On-Call Firefighters provide cover during the day, night and weekends.

They could be working for themselves or perhaps for a company that is prepared to let them have time off.

They must be able to stop whatever it is they are doing the moment their alerter sounds and respond straight to the Fire and Rescue Station.

We ask all On-Call Firefighters to commit to providing a specified number of hours of cover a week. There are a number of contract types available depending on the hours an individual can commit to.

The function of the Fire and Rescue Service has changed considerably in the last ten years and the work undertaken by Firefighters in the community has to reflect the new demands made on the Service. Today's Firefighter is required to be even more adaptable.

We train all our Firefighters to deal with a broad range of situations and incidents. On-Call Firefighters are required to attend an evening training session each week (known as drill night).

This is held at their local Fire and Rescue Station for training and maintenance of essential equipment. Working as part of an effective team, they use the latest equipment, methods and techniques to perform a wide range of duties.

These include:

- Tackling property fires
- Grass and farmland fires
- Road traffic collisions (RTC)
- Chemical spills
- Animal rescues
- Water rescue
- Floods
- Medical emergencies

Firefighters are able to switch from this reactive role to a more preventative one which involves the education of our communities.

This requires the ability to communicate with the varying groups within their communities, delivering informative talks regarding a number of topics such as:

- Home Fire Safety
- Road Safety Awareness
- Community Engagement
- Youth Education

Joining the Fire and Rescue Service is a great way of meeting new people – both the people you work with and those in the community who you help. There's a special kind of bond amongst Firefighters. It comes from working together as a team in conditions that are sometimes dangerous or emotive. That helps bind you together as few jobs could.







# WHY ARE ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS **NEEDED**?

On-Call Firefighters are a vital part of today’s Fire and Rescue Service. They provide an efficient, effective service that gives emergency cover to more than 90% of the UK.

In South Wales, On-Call Firefighters make up approximately a third of our operational workforce and are generally located in rural communities, small towns and villages.

# **HOW OFTEN** WOULD YOU BE NEEDED?

The number of incidents that an On-Call Firefighter attends varies between Fire and Rescue Stations. For further information, contact your local Fire and Rescue Station. We need people to provide cover around the clock, particularly during daytime hours on weekdays and weekends.

We do appreciate that everyone needs to balance their working life with their private life and that means being able to enjoy some quality time off. On-Call Firefighters get between 4 to 5 weeks annual leave, depending on length of continuous employment.

# WHAT WILL YOU **GET OUT OF IT**?

Other than the rewarding salary, firefighting is not like any other job. It can be unpredictable, exciting and fulfilling. Satisfaction and respect comes with providing a crucial service to the local community. As well as learning firefighting techniques, On-Call Firefighters gain other skills, such as;

- Road traffic collision procedures
- Fire safety
- Community safety
- Working at height and confined spaces
- First aid
- Health and Safety
- Leadership skills
- Driving Large Goods Vehicles (LGV)



# WHAT WILL YOU **BE PAID?**

Once an offer of employment has been made you will start on the trainee rate of pay on a 42 hour per week contract. Following an induction and a short period of pre-course learning, you will be expected to attend your basic initial training course held at one of our Training and Development Venues.

On successful completion of the course you will be paid at development rate on a 42 hour per week contract, however Station requirements may allow you take up a 63 hour per week contract on a temporary basis.

Salaries are paid monthly by Direct Bank Credit Transfer on the 15th day of the month.

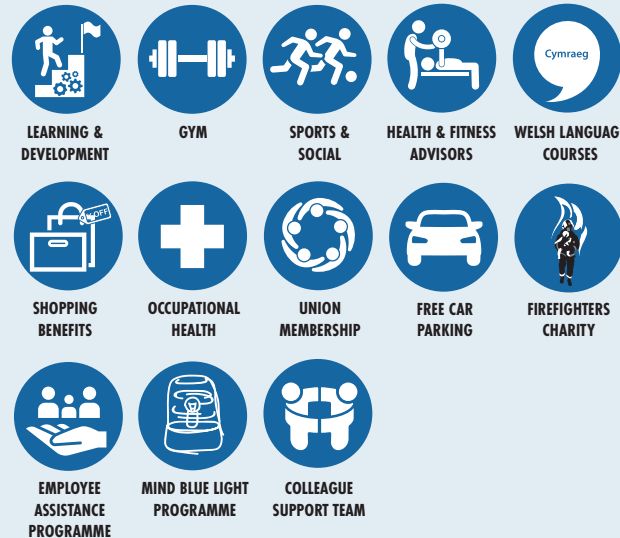
On successful completion of your Breathing Apparatus course all contracts will be available to you, however these will be awarded on the individual needs of the station.

The average time for a development Firefighter to achieve competence in role is between 18 and 24 months.

\*All payments for courses will be in addition to your contracted salary.

## OTHER **BENEFITS**

- Additional recognised qualifications and training
- Paid leave
- Transferable skills
- Free access to gym & fitness training facilities
- Develop long term friendships
- A satisfying, rewarding career







**“I see things from a different perspective now and feel I’m a more rounded individual.”**

**Name:** David Thomas  
**Station:** Cowbridge

Like many young people, I had always dreamed of becoming a Firefighter, but got distracted and followed a different path.

Then when I thought it was no longer possible, a chance encounter with a local Firefighter introduced me to the possibility of becoming an On-Call (Retained Duty System - RDS) Firefighter in Cowbridge, my local station. Age proved no barrier and despite being a challenge I passed all the requirement tests.

Once I joined the team in Cowbridge I very quickly formed a close bond with my colleagues, both in work and socially. The variety of work really surprised me, and I take great satisfaction and pride from serving the community I grew up in, not just the emergency calls but helping in all sorts of ways. From attending wildfires to medical emergencies, Road Traffic Collisions, house fires and community safety work.

I was then lucky enough to pass the tests to become a Full-time (Wholetime Duty System) Firefighter whilst still continuing as RDS. This probably wouldn’t have happened if I hadn’t first joined my local Station On-Call first. The job has challenged me and without doubt changed me, I see things from a different perspective now and feel I’m a more rounded individual. I still love my role, am proud of what I have achieved and how I have helped my town and South Wales.

**“It’s very rewarding when you contribute to helping people in your own community.”**

**Name:** Sam Middle  
**Station:** Pontyclun

Having spent most of my life working with horses as a dressage rider and trainer, I had never really considered pursuing anything else. Struggling to fund my competitive career with a myriad of other jobs around my training meant my CV looked a bit sketchy and as I hit my late 30s I started to realise I might have to let go of my dream. It was my mother who noticed the “Be More” campaign outside our local fire station and suggested I look into it. At first I thought she was crazy but the more I researched the more I realised it was right up my street.

I was initially concerned that my age might put me out of the running but after an informal chat with the Watch Manager he assured me this wouldn’t be an issue. I had practical skills and a good level of fitness from kickboxing.

I underwent my initial training during Covid and I can genuinely say it changed my life. My only regret is that I didn’t come to it sooner. I really feel like I’ve found my place and I love being part of a close knit team. They are like a second family.

It’s very rewarding when you contribute to helping people in your own community and you feel like you are really making a difference. The role is so varied that no two days are the same and there will always be something that you haven’t seen so we are constantly learning.

A lot of people say being a firefighter is the best job in the world. Most of them are firefighters and I have to say they are not wrong!





# EQUALITY AND INCLUSION AT WORK

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is a community service. It is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to giving the highest level of service to our diverse communities throughout South Wales. Our aim and commitment is to ensure that no employee or candidate receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Identity / Reassignment
- Marital status
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- or, is disadvantaged by requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable

In delivering services, we ensure that members of the public are treated with dignity and respect regardless of culture, background or lifestyle. We are committed to listening to the varied needs of our diverse communities and to provide services appropriately to them.

We expect the same commitment from any agencies/partners who work on our behalf. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and consideration at work. This extends to the right to work in a safe and healthy environment free from harassment, bullying and discrimination or intimidation either directly or indirectly by other employees.





# DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our principal aim is 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.

## 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 a Skills for Justice accredited Firefighter Development Programme and Level 3 diploma in Emergency Fire Service Operations in the Community.

## 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 and Service use, including hydrants and fixed installations.

## LOCAL GEOGRAPHY

Know the local streets, roads and buildings situated within the Fire and Rescue Station response area. Be aware of the risks, possible hazards and water supplies to be found within the Fire and Rescue Station area.

## 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. Drive, manoeuvre and redeploy fire service vehicles.

## ADMINISTRATION

Complete basic paperwork and routine administration, including recording of information.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

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 and other emergencies. Assist in Service initiatives, programmes and strategies to reduce fire calls.

## PERSONAL FITNESS AND HYGIENE

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

## 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.





# ORGANISATIONAL CORE VALUES



PROFESSIONAL | CARING | RESPECTFUL | DEDICATED | TRUSTWORTHY | DYNAMIC | DISCIPLINED | RESILIENT





## STANDARDS OF APPEARANCE FOR FIREFIGHTERS

As a public Service it is very important that the Fire and Rescue Service projects itself in a positive image within the communities it serves.

All Firefighters are required to wear our uniform with pride and ensure we maintain our safety whilst on operational duty.

## JEWELLERY AND PIERCINGS

All jewellery and exposed piercings should be removed before the commencement of duty or training. This is to prevent injury and is a requirement under the Service's Health and Safety policy.

## HAIR

This should be clean, neat and tidy and should not compromise the fit of the fire helmet or breathing apparatus mask. Long hair should be kept up off the collar and kept beneath the fire helmet when participating training or on operational duty.

## FACIAL HAIR

This should not be grown in such a way that it would impair the seal of the breathing apparatus mask. Moustaches and short goatie design beards may be acceptable within certain criteria.

## BODY ART

Any body art that can be construed as being discriminatory, derogatory, violent, intimidating, rude, crude, racist, sexist, sectarian, homophobic or violent will be deemed unacceptable with the values of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service and may prevent your application from being processed.





# HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES?



1

Are you disciplined?

2

Can you work as part of a close knit team?

3

Are you a practical person who likes to work with a wide range of equipment?

4

Do you have the sensitivity to deal with members of the public when they are distressed?

5

Are you reliable and punctual?

6

Are you committed to maintaining your health and physical fitness?

7

Can you communicate with people from different cultures and backgrounds?

8

Are you committed to always maintaining and developing your skills?



# PARTNERS AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Without the support and encouragement of partners and families, On-Call Firefighters would struggle to carry out their role. The main challenges to being an On-Call Firefighter are:

- The difficulty in planning spur of the moment activities
- Calls in the middle of the night
- Cannot commit to be the sole-carer when On-Call

Alternative child or dependent care arrangements also need to be made because of the need to respond to an emergency.

Having an On-Call Firefighter within the family has the advantages of:

- Contributing to the community in which they live
- Financial reward
- Competent in performing risk assessments within the home
- Qualified in first aid
- Being a positive role model
- Other valuable skills

# “The role has given me the confidence to do anything.”

**Name:** Elizabeth Sharpe

**Station:** Monmouth

I’m a single parent and wanted to show my kids what can be achieved through hard work and dedication. The role has given me the confidence to do anything.

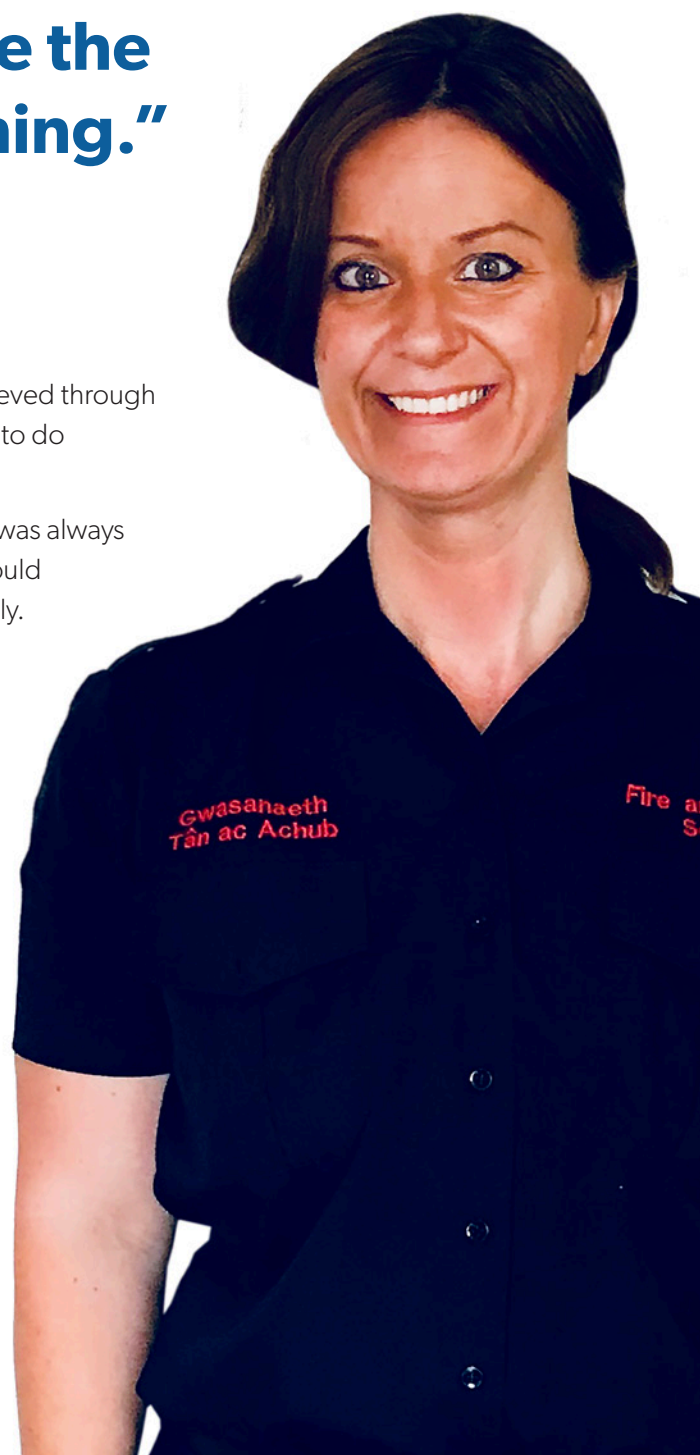
I was encouraged to apply by members of my local community, I was always involved in festivals etc and I’d always be the person everyone would come to for advice. I disciplined myself and got fit enough to apply. I’m proud of my achievements.

Being an On-Call Firefighter fits around my primary employment, children and normal life. I can’t speak for everyone but fitting this job around others has been extremely easy. I have found my employers to be very understanding.

There’s an extremely strong bond between us all at the station, we are like family. You look out for each other because you work so closely together. When you first start you can feel a bit apprehensive as you don’t know what you are going into, but you are part of a team.

Incidents are challenging but you learn from each and every one, the good and the bad. I have found the role makes you think more, and for me, think more about my own safety. I’ve found I’ve grown up, even though I didn’t start the job till I was 37!

I would encourage anyone to consider becoming an On-Call Firefighter, the role really is open to anyone.





# WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

## APPLICATION

Register your details and apply using the link found at [www.southwales-fire.gov.uk](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk).  
You will be asked some basic questions to ensure that you are eligible to apply, such as;

- Whether you are over the age of 17 years and 6 months
- Whether you have the right to work in the UK
- Whether you have any unspent convictions. If you are unsure whether a conviction is spent, please contact NACRO for advice [www.nacro.org.uk](http://www.nacro.org.uk).

## SUITABILITY INTERVIEW

On receipt of a suitable application, an invitation to attend a Suitability Interview will be offered to discuss the commitment and expectations that the role of an On-Call Firefighter demands.

## IDENTIFICATION

Photographic Identification is required each time you visit one of our premises.

## PROOF OF ADDRESS

You are also required to provide proof of address with a document to be dated within the last three months.

## ABILITY ASSESSMENT

This stage involves measuring your ability to understand and evaluate numerical information, your practical problem solving and to highlight what you understand about what is being communicated within passages.

## PHYSICAL AND PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT

Prior to commencing the tests you will receive a health and fitness assessment as these tests reflect operational practice.

The aim is to assess your level of fitness, strength and manual dexterity as well as your level of confidence in simulated exercises.

## JOB INTERVIEW

During the job interview you will be asked a series of questions which are designed to measure your professional qualities and attributes.

## REFERENCES

Employer and Character reference enquiries will be required to cover a minimum period of **three years**.

## MEDICAL

Firefighters may be exposed to extreme physical and psychological demands in hostile and dangerous environments. In order to comply with relevant statutory provisions, the medical screening for Firefighters is rigorous. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Fire and Rescue Service must reduce risk so far as is reasonably practicable. This means a medical condition giving rise to reasonably foreseeable occupational risk would not be acceptable.

The individual assessment will involve due consideration of any opinions or medical reports you may wish to submit. However, the decision on the significance of any risks identified will rest with the Fire and Rescue Services.

More information is available on [www.southwales-fire.gov.uk](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk).



## APPOINTMENT

If you are successful at all stages of the selection process, an offer of employment will be made subject to organisational need and requirements.

## INDUCTION AND PRE-COURSE LEARNING

This provides an opportunity for the Service to welcome you, help you settle in and ensure you have the knowledge and support you need to perform your role and will prepare you for the Initial Training course.

## ON-CALL FIREFIGHTER INITIAL TRAINING COURSE

You will be required to undertake a two week, non-residential (Monday to Friday) training course at one of our Training facilities. During the training programme, you will be taught the basic skills of a Firefighter including the use of hose, pumps, ladders and basic firefighting.

The course will require you to absorb a considerable amount of learning of both theoretical and practical material. You will also be required to study and revise in your own time as well as in the classroom.

You are advised to prepare yourself to a high level of fitness prior to the course and also maintain this fitness during the course itself.

All trainees are required to complete a Skills for Justice approved Firefighter Development Programme and a Level 3 diploma in Emergency Fire Service Operations in the Community during their development period.

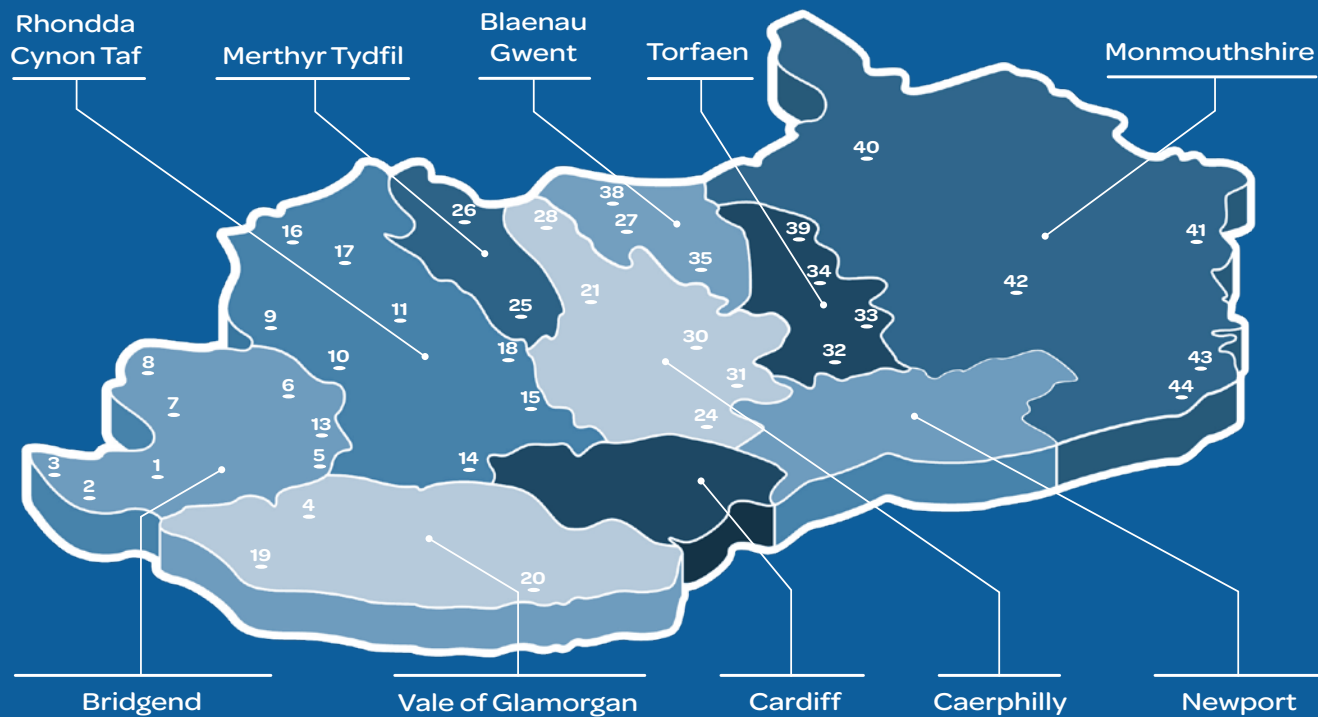
The development period will last between 18-24 months.





# COME AND VISIT US AT STATION

We encourage people to visit their local Station on its drill night, which take place for 2 hours every week. The days vary from Station to Station and are generally run between the hours of 18:30 – 20:30. This is a valuable opportunity to talk to the On-Call Firefighters about what the role is like. You will be able to find out if the hours of cover you can provide matches the need of the Station.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday			
2 - Porthcawl	6 - Ogmore Vale	1 - Bridgend	14 - Pontyclun	28 - Rhymney	31 - Risca
3 - Kenfig Hill	7 - Pontycymer	4 - Cowbridge	17 - Aberdare	34 - Abersychan	39 - Blaenavon
9 - Treorchy	18 - Abercynon	5 - Pencoed	19 - Llantwit Major	38 - Brynmawr	
15 - Pontypridd	25 - Treharris	8 - Maesteg	20 - Barry	40 - Abergavenny	
16 - Hirwaun	30 - Abercarn	10 - Tonypany	21 - Aberbargoed	42 - Usk	
26 - Merthyr Tydfil	35 - Abertillery	11 - Ferndale	24 - Caerphilly	44 - Caldicot	
	41 - Monmouth	13 - Gilfach Goch	27 - Tredegar		
	43 - Chepstow				

## Here at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service we are waiting to welcome you to our team.

Being an On-Call Firefighter takes commitment from you but in return we can promise you great opportunities to train and grow.

We can also promise you that no two calls will ever be the same in this job, so if you like a challenge as much as we do, now is the time to apply.

Our team is on hand to offer you all the guidance and advice you might need about the job, the selection process or the training you will need to join.

You can call us, write to us or take a look on our website for details.

Alternatively, if you prefer a chat, you can pop into your local Fire and Rescue Station.

Our staff are very friendly and will be happy to talk about the job or point you in the right direction for any other advice you might need.

Take the first step on your new career path today.



# CONTACT US

## South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Recruitment and Resourcing Team  
Fire Service Headquarters  
Forest View Business Park  
Llantrisant  
CF72 8LX

Recruitment Line - 01443 232200  
[personnel@southwales-fire.gov.uk](mailto:personnel@southwales-fire.gov.uk)



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South Wales  
Fire and Rescue Service



AR-ALWAD  
ON-CALL



South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

[www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/working-with-us/  
firefighter-role/on-call-firefighters](http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/working-with-us/firefighter-role/on-call-firefighters)



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