



# On-Call Firefighter



Employees Guide





# Welcome

**Thank you for showing an interest in joining our team of on-call firefighters across Norfolk. Each member of staff brings something different to the service, but works together for the safety of our county.**

So what are we looking for? There isn't a particular type of person we are seeking, our on-call staff arrive with individual knowledge and life experiences which make them perfect to complement their colleagues and protect Norfolk.

If you care about your community, have a compassion for people, a drive to succeed and a determination to make the world that bit better, you are just what we are looking for.

This document will give you all the basic details, and our teams are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

We want the right people for the job, and that could be you. If you have a reasonable level of fitness and a team spirit, we can't wait to meet you and find out more about how you can support our work, and how we can support you.

Stuart Ruff  
**Chief Fire Officer**  
**Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service.**

# On-call Firefighter Employees Guide

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# What are on-call firefighters?

**On-call firefighters live or work within five minutes of their allocated fire station. They are fully trained firefighters who are called into service when they are needed rather than staffing the fire stations on a full time basis.**

Most on-call firefighters have other employment and take on the role as a second job; however you do not need to be in work to become an on-call firefighter. In Norfolk we employ a range of people as on-call firefighters, from consultants, stay at home parents, engineers to shop workers.

We are committed to achieving fairness and equality in employment and service and welcome suitably skilled applicants from all, ages, races, genders and backgrounds. However we do have minimum requirements to be able to become an on-call firefighter.

## **You need to:**

- Be 18 years old or over
- Have a reasonable level of personal fitness
- Live or work within five minutes of the fire station you provide cover to
- Be able to provide over 50 hours of weekly cover
- Have permission to be released from your main employment to attend emergency incidents
- Have the ability to operate at heights and confined spaces
- Keep calm under pressure
- Work well in a team
- Have the ability to develop your skills and work independently

As an on-call firefighter you would also need to have good communication skills and courage, together with qualities such as understanding, reliability, flexibility, determination, self-motivation, commitment and enthusiasm.

You would need to be able to reflect the service's values at all times and above all, the role requires a real desire to serve the local community.

While on duty the use of make-up or hair preparations, such as gel or hair spray, is not allowed. Also hair (including facial hair) must not impair the seal of the breathing apparatus face mask and your vision or hearing.

## **There are some myths about being an on-call firefighter that we also want to dispel:**

- There is no maximum or minimum height
- There is no upper age limit
- No previous experience and/or formal qualifications are required due to the comprehensive training programme on-call firefighters receive

## **Please also be aware:**

- Fire and Rescue Services are required to assess applicants on an individual basis with regard to their suitability to perform the role of a Firefighter, in accordance with the Equality Act (2010). This means that Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service will consider what reasonable adjustments could be made to enable you to proceed with your application provided any such adjustments do not contravene Health and Safety legislation.
- You are obliged to declare details of any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not protected as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013).



# How often would you be needed?

Once you have completed the two week induction training and become an on-call firefighter, you would be required to attend an evening session for three hours each week (known as a training or drill night). In addition, part of your role would be to encourage safer communities, therefore you may be asked to attend community events to discuss fire prevention and emergency situations.

You would be contracted to work certain hours based on your availability, during which, you would need to keep a pager with you. As we can't predict when you will be called out, you would need to be flexible in your work or home based activities.

You would arrange which hours you cover; it could be days, nights, weekends or a combination of these. How often you are called out depends on which station you are based at. Sometimes we have more on-call firefighters available than needed for each incident, so you would not necessarily be required to attend every call out.

As an on-call firefighter you would be entitled to 28 days annual leave and after you have completed five years continuous service you would also receive an extra seven days leave.



**“ I am proud to be part of a highly regarded service.”**

Norfolk on-call firefighter

# What would you get out of being an on-call firefighter?

Firefighting is not like any other job. It can be unpredictable, exciting and rewarding, coupled with the satisfaction and respect that comes with providing a crucial service to the local community.

As well as learning firefighting techniques, you would learn other skills such as, how to wear breathing apparatus, road traffic collision procedures, fire prevention and protection, first aid, team management skills and there is the opportunity to learn how to drive a fire engine.

You would receive an annual salary, plus an hourly rate, for the hours when you attend an incident or a training night. There is also a disturbance fee which is paid out when you are called out to an incident.

From the start of employment, you would be able to contribute to the new firefighter's pension scheme and you would be entitled to sick pay that is subject to national terms and conditions. You would be issued with a uniform and personal protective equipment which would be kept at the station.

We also offer a range of additional benefits including; shopping vouchers and discounts, public transport discounts, tax free bike schemes, childcare vouchers and a health, wellbeing and lifestyle support scheme.



The annual salary reflects the amount of hours that you are able to provide and falls into two bands:

**100% salary – 120 hours or more per week**

**75% salary – less than 120 hours per week**

For the most up to date rates of pay visit:  
[www.norfolk.gov.uk/oncall](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/oncall)

# What training would you receive?

Full training is provided and you would be trained to deal with the same situations and incidents as your full time colleagues. This includes how to use the latest equipment and techniques to undertake a wide range of duties from firefighting to animal rescues and from floods to road traffic collisions.

To become fully trained you will need to go through a development training package, some of which will take place during training nights and some will need to be undertaken at our training and development centre in Bowthorpe.

This takes three years to complete. After successfully completing your development you will have the opportunity to undertake courses, both internally and externally, to broaden your existing knowledge of firefighting and rescue.

You will also receive training throughout your career to ensure that you are competent and kept up to date with the latest technology and equipment.



**“It means I can feel proud and safe that I am doing an integral part of protecting the local community.”**

Norfolk on-call firefighter



# What would your career prospects be?

**Within the service there is a clear career progression route, as follows:**

- Trainee Firefighter (after nine weeks of service)
- Development Firefighter (after successful completion of Induction course)
- Competent Firefighter (after three years of service)
- Crew Manager
- Watch Manager

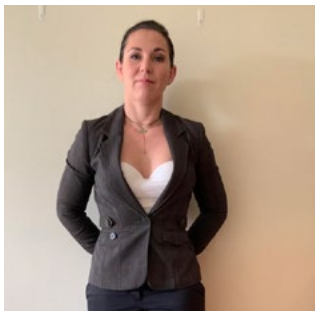
In Norfolk we support the progression of on-call firefighters into full time roles, therefore career progression into many other roles is possible.





# Case Studies

## Natalie Kibgilka: Sandringham Fire Station



For Natalie, from Sandringham, it was only ever a matter of time before she joined Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service. She first showed interest as a school leaver 20 years ago, but other careers called.

Having worked in the tea rooms at Sandringham House as a student, a job at Buckingham Palace beckoned and Natalie found herself moving to London and working as a lady's maid, taking care of apartments and clothing and travelling to royal homes around the UK.

Following this, she enjoyed many successful years travelling the world on cruise ships, assisting with ship safety and working in the hospitality industry - training large teams on behalf of an American spa company. She supported teams to ensure guests of many leading cruise liners had wonderful experiences.

A few years ago, Natalie returned to Sandringham and managed a team of 700 staff remotely, co-ordinating visa and travel arrangements for others from her Norfolk home.

"Something was missing. I had stopped travelling and was working from home, not seeing anyone anymore. It was a big change and I really missed being part of a team and the excitement of work that didn't involve looking at a computer all day. I went back to the fire station at Sandringham and spoke to the watch manager."

It took nearly a year for Natalie to pass the fitness tests, as while some were easy, she struggled to develop enough upper body strength so this was something the crew supported her to achieve and helped her to work on. She gained enough strength to pass the test and was enrolled on the on-call recruitment course in August 2019.

"Being part of a team again is so rewarding and it feels like a family. I was accepted straight away and my gender has never been an issue. I get to spend time in a jovial atmosphere and our weekly training nights help to keep the fitness levels up in a supportive environment too, which is a bonus."

Natalie's employers were flexible, meaning she could offer 100% cover to the fire service, so she was on call at all times for the Sandringham community.

"I would say to anyone thinking about a career in the fire service, absolutely do it. I love it, it's so exciting to be a part of the team and know that we are making a real difference in our community."

Natalie is currently supporting a potential new recruit to improve her fitness levels, with a view to joining the service. Support is available for potential new recruits, to support them to pass the entry fitness tests required.

## Case Studies

### Sanjay Markland: Outwell Fire Station



Sanjay was always interested in the armed forces, and having had several jobs in manufacturing and logistics, he moved to Norfolk and considered applying to be a firefighter within the RAF.

Then his partner saw an advert seeking on-call firefighters at his local fire station in Outwell, and he immediately wanted to apply.

"I never thought I would be accepted into the fire service, as I had heard it was difficult with lots of people applying, but even so I had to give it a go - and I got in!" Sanjay likes new challenges and the ability to learn new skills and meet new people.

Sanjay also works as a supermarket delivery driver working varied shifts, and so is used to meeting people in the community.

"Prior to joining I was worried about asking my employers about what I wanted to do and that I would need to attend weekly training nights. But once I had a chat with my boss, I was soon able to swap from working on a Wednesday evening to another day. So it was all ok meaning I could apply."

"From the first time I met and was welcomed by my future Watch Manager, he explained what would happen at each stage. I was informed of what I needed to do to prepare and what was expected. It was clear from the start that all crew would be there to help and support me throughout the process. I soon learnt that by following instructions and with support I was able to progress through the assessments easier than I expected, which also helped my confidence."

"I enjoy all the varied training and development. If I look back at whom I was and what I knew at the start of my enrolment to where I am now, I could never have imagined how much I could learn in this short space of time. The on station training is very team focused to learn and maintain skills. The off station training is the same, but you also get to meet and work with members of other crews, I've already made some good friends. We not only work and train together, but also our families get together as well. It's like one big family."

"My most memorable moment so far has to be my first real working job. You never forget your first job, the first time you get hands on equipment with the crew, getting dirty and stuck in, helping people."

"Working as a firefighter is an amazing experience and I would encourage anybody thinking about it to go for it, and see where it takes you. You never know what is possible until you try. I am both amazed and proud of what can be accomplished by firefighters for their communities."



## Peter Oxford: Downham Market Fire Station



While Peter was working as a mechanic, he chatted to a colleague who was also an on-call firefighter at Downham Market. As an enthusiastic 21-year-old, it sounded like an exciting prospect and Peter went to find out more.

He's now been a firefighter in the service for 30 years and is currently a watch manager. He still works for the same town employer but for the last 17 years has been an electrician, having retrained.

"Responding to people in their time of need is really rewarding and it's great to feel part of a team that is constantly adapting and learning as demands on the service change."

Peter cites learning first aid skills and people management as two key areas from his fire service work that has been useful in his everyday life.

"If anyone is interested in joining, I'd say definitely have a chat locally and find out a bit more and then apply."

**"Now we are able to use mobile phones to give our availability, it's easy for me to tell the service when I am available for duty and when I'm not. This means that I can be really flexible depending on what is happening with my working day, and my colleagues and employer are supportive if I need to go. Equally, I am flexible too and if I have been out on a fire call, I'll stay a bit later to get my work finished."**



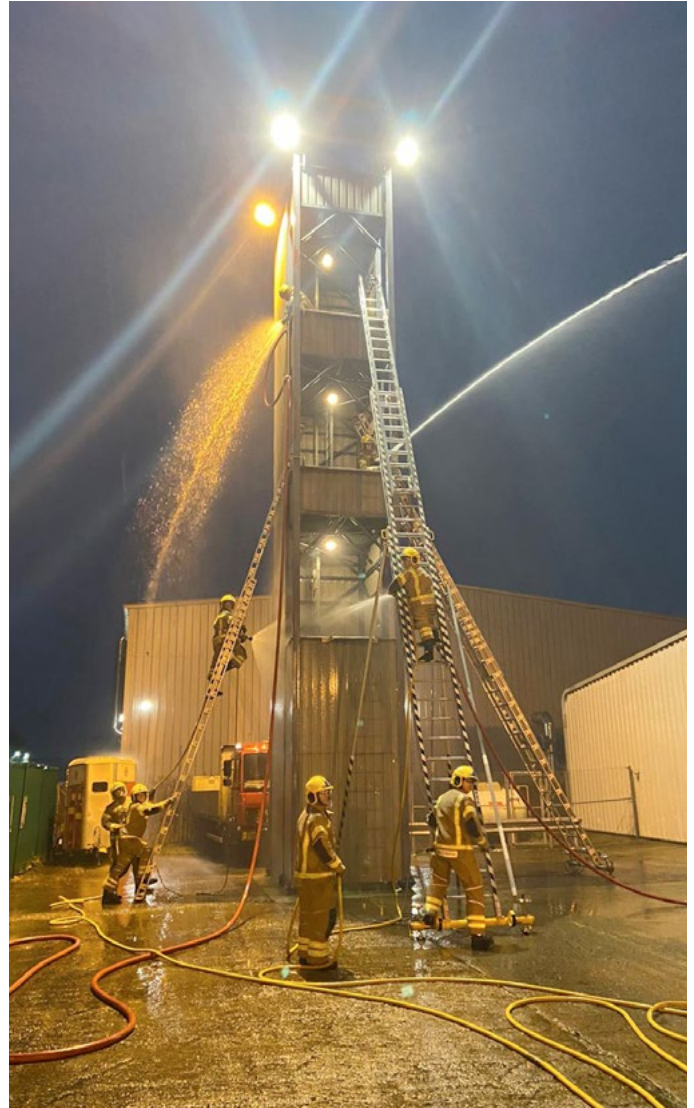
# Information for employers

If responding to incidents while at work you must have the permission of your main employer. It is important that employers understand what this involves so please ensure that they receive the employer information booklet, available on our website [www.norfolk.gov.uk/oncall](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/oncall).

Employers will also need to sign a form confirming that you can be released from work. This can be found as part of the application.

If you are not available to be released from your main employment to attend incidents this will not prevent you from still applying.

Unfortunately we are unable to accept applications from people who have a contract of employment with an employer that requires them to be moved from their normal place of work for periods of more than two weeks or periods of more than four weeks in a calendar year; with less than one month's notice being given.



**“It means I can protect and help people where I live when they need it the most”**

Norfolk on-call firefighter





# Information for families

It is important that as an on-call firefighter you have the support and encouragement of your family. Occasionally the lives of families can be affected and it is important to explain to them the requirements of the role.

## When considering becoming an on-call firefighter bear in mind:

- Difficulty in planning spur of the moment activities
- Unsociable call outs
- Not being able to be relied upon to be the sole-carer when on call. Alternative child or dependant care arrangements need to be made in case of the need to respond to an emergency quickly

However, we believe there are many advantages of becoming an on-call firefighter.

## On-call firefighters benefit from:

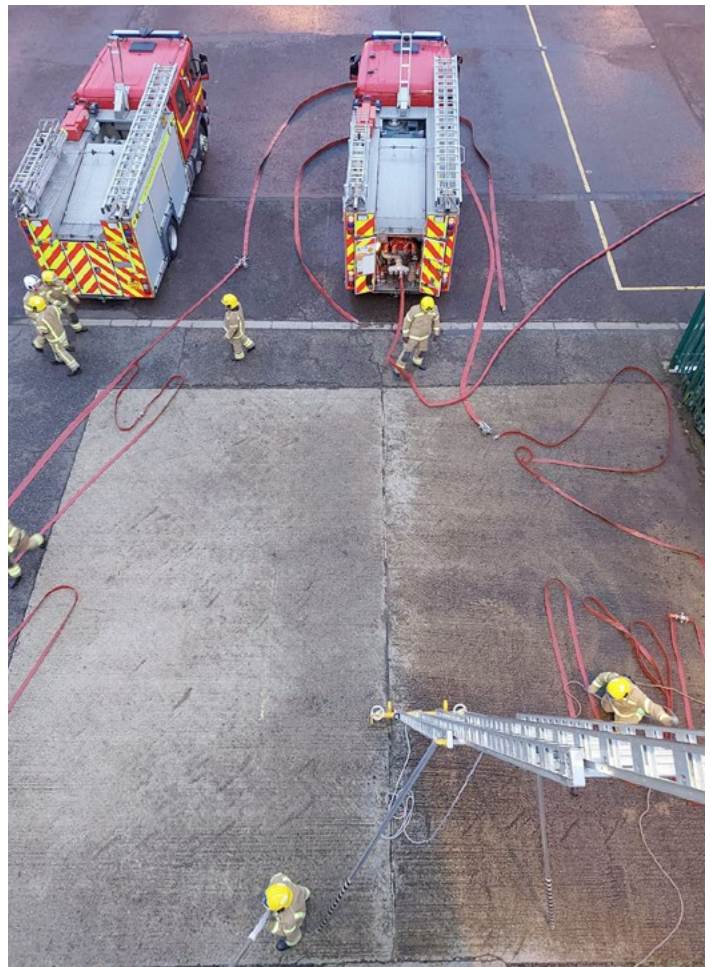
- Being able to protect their local community
- Financial reward
- Being able to carry out fire risk assessments of the home and other buildings
- Driving large goods vehicles and receiving leadership and other training such as first aid
- Being a positive role model
- Entitled to 28 days annual leave, rising to 35 days leave after 5 years' service
- Advanced first aid(IEC) which will benefit life skills and for the family.

# What is the selection process?

The recruitment and selection of on-call firefighters is dependent upon you living or working within five minutes of one of the service's fire stations.

We have a seven stage process - the length of time it takes to complete the process varies, but it may take up to seven months from the initial application.

The successful completion of any stage of the recruitment process does not guarantee a role with us. In addition, all roles are determined by the availability you are able to offer your station and what availability they need at that time.



**“It means I can feel proud and safe that I am doing an integral part of protecting the local community”**

Norfolk on-call firefighter





# Stage one: Apply

**An online application, with your availability, employers consent and equality and inclusion monitoring form need to be submitted to [humanresources@fire.norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:humanresources@fire.norfolk.gov.uk)**

These are available on the recruitment pages of our website: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/oncall](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/oncall)

## **Application form**

This contains your personal details and will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

If you are employed and you have permission to be released by your employer, they must give written consent once you have been offered a contract of employment.

You tell us what hours you will be available to be on-call. You will be expected to maintain this availability if you are successful in being offered a post as an on-call firefighter. Your availability will be assessed to ensure there are vacancies at your local fire station during the hours you have

indicated. If your availability does not match the station's requirements at the time of applying, your details will be added to a recruitment pool for your chosen station.

## **Equality and inclusion monitoring form**

This helps us ensure we are as accessible as possible to all groups in the community. The data is held in accordance with the GDPR and is not used to assist or make selection decisions.

## **Open evening to your station, with the Watch Manager and Crew Manager**

Once you have submitted your application you will be contacted and be invited to attend an open evening to discuss the job and your availability in more detail.



# Stage two: Interview

The interview will assess your general aptitude for the role of an on-call Firefighter and we will discuss your availability and your understanding of the commitment and the fitness levels required to undertake the role of an on-call firefighter.

You will be required to give examples about experiences you have had that relate to the qualities and behaviours we expect of an on-call firefighter.







# Stage three: Written and Practical tests

If successful at stage two, you will be invited to attend the written tests.

## Written tests

The written tests will be arranged at a central location to the station you are applying for, you will be contacted to arrange these.

These tests consist of a series of multiple choice questions designed to assess your abilities and aptitude for becoming an on-call firefighter.

The tests are conducted in a classroom style environment and take approximately 90 minutes to complete (including breaks). If a candidate has dyslexia additional support can be provided.

**They consist of three tests which need to be completed in a set time and include:**

- Situational Awareness
- Working with numbers
- Understanding information


If successful at the written tests you move onto the physical tests known as point of entry selection tests.

## Physical tests

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

**There are eight tests designed to reflect operational practice and include:**

1. Ladder Climb
2. Ladder Extension
3. Ladder extend to lower
4. Breathing Apparatus Enclosed Space
5. Equipment Carry
6. Equipment assembly
7. Casualty evacuation
8. Simulated Ladder lift.



For further information on written tests, and physical tests, visit:

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/oncall](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/oncall)

# Stage four: Medical and Fitness

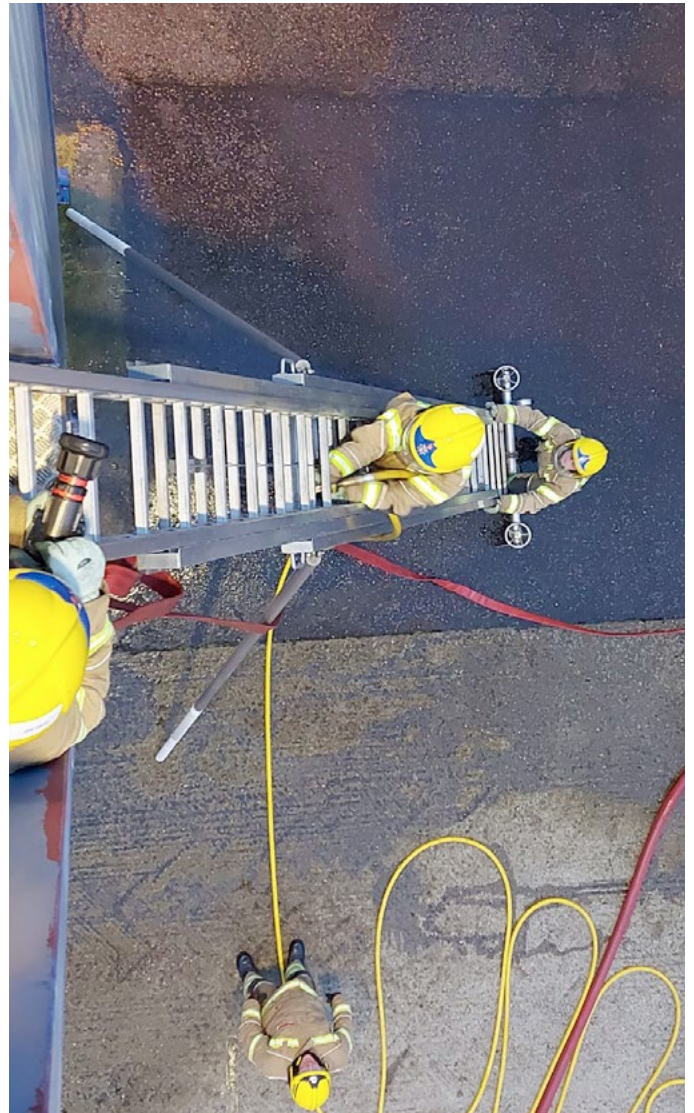
## Online Medical Portal

In preparation to receiving dates and instructions to your medical and fitness tests, you will be required to complete some online health questionnaires to allow you to declare any relevant medical information, this is so our Occupational Health provider can best ensure your safety and provide guidance if required. If you do not have access to an online system to complete the Portal medical information and you are unable to make alternative arrangements, please contact Human Resources for assistance.

## Medical and Fitness Test

During your medical assessment you will be required to undertake a treadmill fitness assessment with our personal trainer.

The object of the test is to measure the aerobic fitness, which is the ability to carry out activities in all aspects of your social and occupational life without causing undue fatigue.



**“It means I can protect and help people where I live when they need it the most”**

Norfolk on-call firefighter

# Stage five: Offer of employment

All offers made are subject to confirmation of your legal right to work in the UK, receipt of references satisfactory to the service and medical fitness (including an eye sight examination) appropriate to the job and consistent with our equality policy.

Subject to us receiving the above, you will receive your uniform and be required to attend an enrolment day and receive your development folder and personal protective equipment (PPE). You will then start on station and complete four to six training nights of initial training prior to attending your 2 week induction course at our training and development centre in Bowthorpe.





# Stage six: Enrolment Day

## Enrolment Day

The enrolment day is required to give all candidates the information and practical skills to begin their learning process when they start attending their stations duties.

### The day consists of the following:

- Introductions & Administration
- Equality and inclusion
- Incident command (Fireground Understanding)
- Health and Safety
- Drill yard discipline
- Drill yard practical input (Hose running)

In addition you should receive your uniform and development folder allowing you to then proceed with 4-6 training evenings on your own station, in preparation for your two week induction course.



# Stage seven: 2 Week Induction Course

## Two week induction

You will begin your two week induction recruit's course at our Bowthorpe training and development centre. Where you will develop your skills in more detail on how to use our equipment safely and effectively for the various types of incidents we attend.

The course is constructed with modular training on subjects set out in the schedule you'll receive at the beginning of your course. As you proceed various assessments both written and practical are carried out to ensure that the candidate is developing their new skills.

After successfully passing your two week induction, you will become a development firefighter which will last for approximately three years, where you will cover various assessments, known as Gateway assessments.





# Further information

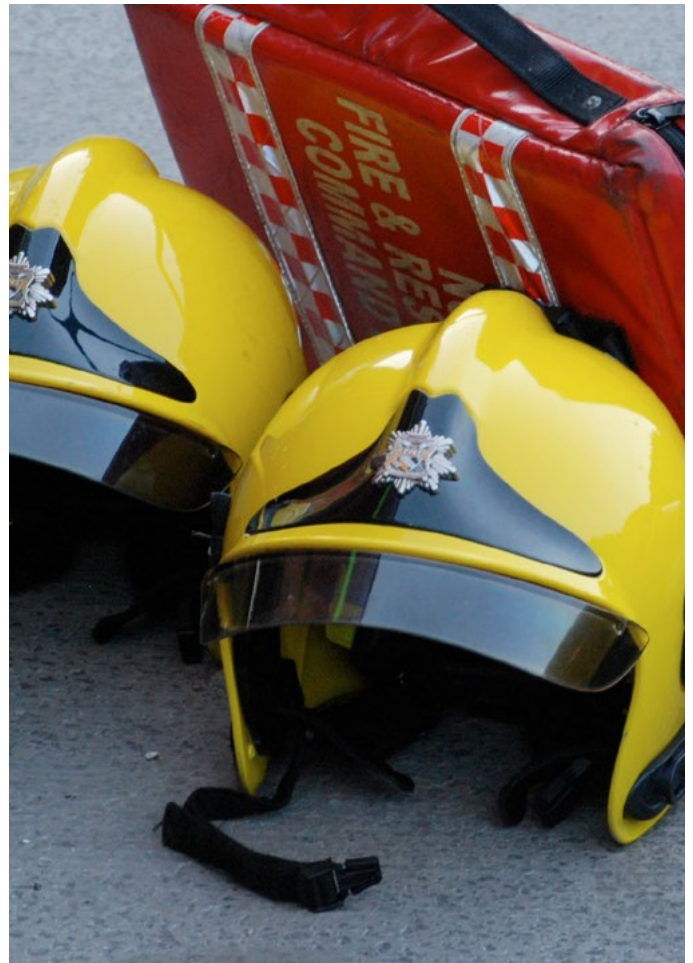
**If you would like to apply to become an on-call firefighter, we would encourage you to visit your local station on a training night.**

At a training night you will be able to talk to oncall firefighters about what the role is really like. They will also be able to talk through the current needs of the station and assist with the completion of any forms.

For further information and details about training nights, and recruitment visit:  
**[www.norfolk.gov.uk/safety/norfolk-fire-and-rescue-service/recruitment](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/safety/norfolk-fire-and-rescue-service/recruitment)**.

Call back request email  
**[CallBackRequests@fire.norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:CallBackRequests@fire.norfolk.gov.uk)**

To speak to a member of our dedicated On-call Support team please send an email to our call back request on  
**[callbackrequest@fire.norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:callbackrequest@fire.norfolk.gov.uk)**.



**“I am very proud to be a firefighter. I love the fact that I can help people in my community”**

Norfolk on-call firefighter





# Norfolk County Council - values and behaviours

**Our Cultural Framework sets out the values and behaviours that we expect everyone to adopt and role model whilst working for Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. They are the values and behaviours that underpin the culture of our organisation.**

Our organisational values have been drawn directly from the principles agreed by Norfolk County Council (NCC).

**Our values are:**

- **Take accountability**  
Do what we say we will
  - **Make strategy happen**  
Make action which makes Norfolk a better place
  - **Be evidence based**  
Target our work to make the biggest difference
  - **Be business-like**  
Think smarter to ensure value for money
  - **Be collaborative**  
Better working together
- 

Our organisational behaviours reflect the common goals and principles agreed by Norfolk County Council (NCC) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). Importantly, however, our organisational behaviours have been developed in direct consultation with representatives from across our workforce to ensure that they reflect the type of organisation that our staff, want Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service to be.

**Our behaviours are:**

- **Supportive and understanding.**  
We are one professional team, working together to achieve our common goals. We will listen effectively and help each other. We will be observant, empathetic and mindful of other people's concerns.
- **Reliable and flexible.**  
We will be trusted to do our work and be open, honest and transparent in how we go about our jobs. We will be open to change and new ways of working.
- **Proud and positive.**  
We will be passionate about being part of a committed service that delivers for Norfolk. We will adopt a positive mind-set, being ambitious yet realistic. We will strive for excellence, celebrate our successes and always try our best.
- **Respectful and inclusive.**  
We will treat others appropriately and will be fair, kind and consistent to all. We will ensure everyone feels valued within our service.



Norfolk County Council



If you would like this information in large print or in an alternative version, please contact us on 0344 800 8020 and we will do our best to provide it.



[www.norfolk.gov.uk/fire](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/fire)