

UK Firefighter Selection Checklist

Entry requirements, every selection stage and what to prepare · firefighterpay.co.uk

1. Check you are eligible

- ☐ Aged 18 or over (many services set the date you must be 18 by)
- ☐ GCSE English and maths at grade 4 (C) or above, or an equivalent
- ☐ Able to meet the fitness standard and pass a medical
- ☐ Clear to pass enhanced background checks
- ☐ Any local rules: driving licence, where you live, response time (on-call)

2. The selection stages

A typical wholetime campaign. The order varies: some services test fitness first.

1	Register for alerts	Pick the services you can realistically join. Each recruits on its own; there is no national intake.	☐
2	Application form	Use real, specific examples of teamwork, communication, reliability and community involvement.	☐
3	Online tests	Numerical, verbal or situational judgement tests. Pass marks are set locally.	☐
4	Fitness assessment	Commonly the 20m bleep test (often level 8.8) or the Chester treadmill test. Check which yours uses.	☐
5	Practical tests	Ladder climb and lift, casualty drag, enclosed-space crawl in a BA mask, equipment assembly and carry.	☐
6	Interview	Competency-based. Prepare stories in the STAR format and know the service's area and priorities.	☐
7	Conditional offer and checks	Medical, references and background checks before a confirmed start date.	☐
8	Initial training	You start as a development firefighter on £31,539 a year (NJC rate from 1 July 2026).	☐

3. Start preparing before applications open

- ☐ Find out the fitness test format and start training now
- ☐ Write 6-8 STAR examples before the form opens
- ☐ Read the service's published risk plan and priorities
- ☐ Track your bleep-test level each week
- ☐ Visit or contact a station if the service allows it
- ☐ Keep certificates and ID ready for checks

Pay once you are in: £31,539 in development, £40,358 when competent

Free tools to help you prepare: [bleep test calculator firefighterpay.co.uk/tools/bleep-test-calculator/](https://firefighterpay.co.uk/tools/bleep-test-calculator/) and [fitness readiness check firefighterpay.co.uk/tools/firefighter-fitness-readiness/](https://firefighterpay.co.uk/tools/firefighter-fitness-readiness/)

Sources: National Careers Service firefighter profile, NFCC on-call guidance, published fire and rescue service recruitment pages, and NJC circular NJC/2/26 for pay. Requirements, stages and pass marks are set by each service, so always check the campaign you apply to. Full guide: firefighterpay.co.uk/guides/become-a-firefighter-uk/