



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

Firefighter
Personal Qualities &
Attributes (PQA's)

Introduction

The Firefighter application form will ask you to tell us about your skills and experiences in relation to various *Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQAs)* that are important as a Firefighter; these help us to determine whether you have the qualities we look for in a Firefighter.

As a firefighter, you would expect to:

- Work in the community, meeting new people, being in new situations and meeting new challenges.
- Work as part of a team.
- Be mentally strong enough to deal with highly stressful situations in a positive and professional manner, helping people in distress and giving them first aid

The application form is split into six main areas which ask you to tell us about an occasion when you can demonstrate the PQAs required for a Firefighter.

These six PQAs are described on the following pages.

You may draw on any of your experiences to answer the questions; from home life, leisure activities, work (paid or unpaid) or education. Whatever the situation you use it must be recent (within the last 2-3 years).

When completing the application form, write your answer using the **STAR** approach:-

- **S** -Describe a **specific** situation about which you have had experience. For each question, you should develop a short 'story' (maximum 150 words) that best describes your experience in relation to the activities mentioned.
- **T** - Be specific about **one task**/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.
- **A** -Describe what you did, what **actions** you took and why you did it.
- **R** - What happened as a **result** of your actions, what were the outcomes and importantly what was the feedback you received?

Commitment to Diversity and Integrity – understands and respects diversity and adopts a fair and ethical approach to others - *Think of a situation where you have worked or interacted with people who are different from you in terms of age, background or gender.*

You might like to consider the importance of including people who are different from you e.g. age, gender and background in different activities and the need to treat people with respect and consideration.

- Is concerned to treat people fairly and ethically e.g. completes work according to same high standards regardless of individual differences
- Recognises the importance of an awareness of the community and understands its needs e.g. is aware and respectful of differing cultures and backgrounds
- Recognises and has respect for others' backgrounds, views, values and beliefs (including religious beliefs)
- Maintains an open approach with others, taking account of, and accepting, individual differences such as age, ethnicity, gender religious beliefs, social background, disability, sexual orientation and physical appearance
- Is committed to the Fire and Rescue Service values and actively promotes them e.g. challenges inappropriate behaviour
- Is honest when working with others and accepts accountability for own actions e.g. quickly takes responsibility for own mistakes, respects the need for confidentiality where appropriate

Working with Others – works effectively with others both within the Fire and Rescue Service and in the community - *Think of a situation where you have had to work closely with others as part of a team in completing a given task.*

You might like to consider how you work with different team members and what you personally did to ensure the team worked well and met the intended outcomes.

- Works effectively with all team members according to defined role e.g. in teams of between 2 and 20 members, adjusting his/her role in accordance with instructions and changing circumstances
- Proactively generates positive working relationships, building rapport with a range of people both internally e.g. attempts to get to know everyone in working environment and externally e.g. liaises with those outside the group or team environment
- Concerned about the wider team and aware of shared objectives, as well as those of his/her immediate work team
- Sensitive to the feelings and well-being of others and takes action to support them
- Presents an approachable and positive image of self

Commitment to Development – committed to and able to develop self and others - *Think of a situation where you have taken steps to improve your skills and learn new things.*

You might like to consider how you highlighted a need to learn something new and the skills it gave you, how long did the learning process take and did you encourage others to develop their skills?

- Proactively reviews own performance using a variety of sources including seeking feedback from others
- Identifies development needs in own knowledge, skills and understanding and takes action to improve e.g. requests specific training as appropriate; makes a point of keeping up to date with changes in technology/procedures
- Learns from a wide range of situations experienced by self or others
- Able to learn and retain a large amount of job relevant information, delivered both verbally and in writing, as part of an initial training course and on-going development e.g. operating procedures and standards
- Actively encourages and supports others to continuously improve e.g. updates colleagues concerning new information
- Motivates self to keep relevant knowledge up to date

Confidence and Resilience – maintains a confident and resilient attitude in highly challenging situations - *Think of a situation where you have had to remain calm and controlled in a stressful situation.*

You might like to consider how you remained in control and any assistance you may have needed to give other people on the scene.

- Remains in control of own emotions during emergency situations, e.g. does not panic and considers others
- Concentrates on the task despite pressure e.g. pressure of time, noise, conflicting information and tasks and concerns for casualties
- Challenges or questions others constructively to achieve more effective outcomes
- Retains confidence in own ability or convictions despite setbacks

Commitment to Excellence – Adopts a conscientious and proactive approach to work to achieve and maintain excellent standards -

Think of a situation where you have had to work on your own in accordance with guidelines to complete a given task successfully.

You might like to consider the standards that you needed to complete the work to, whether you received any feedback as a result of the work and if you can see any ways to improve the way the task is completed.

- Continually looks to improve standards of working and offers suggestions as necessary, e.g. provides feedback concerning new or existing work practices to influence change or improve customer service
- Approaches work proactively and efficiently both with routine tasks and in exceptional circumstances
- Adopts a conscientious approach to work, e.g. checks work to ensure all tasks are completed correctly and with due attention to detail.
- Completes work using appropriate procedures e.g. refrains from taking unsafe short-cuts
- Completes work as instructed without being reminded constantly
- Is clear about his/her role and operates within agreed levels of authority and accountability e.g. does not take action outside own level of control without seeking confirmation

Openness to Change – is open to change and actively seeks to support it - *Think of a situation where you have had to change the way you do something following a change imposed by someone in authority.*

You might like to consider how you accepted the change being imposed on you, were you positive about changing the way you carried out the task?

- Demonstrates an understanding of the need for progress within the example situation e.g. explains the reasons for the new working practices to colleagues absent from briefings
- Accepts change within their role in the example situation and adapts effectively
- Is aware of the impact of changes within the example provided on their role, e.g. understands changes to working practices
- Identifies ways within the situation of supporting change and takes action where possible, e.g. is proactive in learning new tasks or ways of working