



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE



Control Staff

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Who we are

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) is the largest non-metropolitan fire and rescue service in England. We are here to make the counties of Devon and Somerset a safer place to live and work in and visit. We have 85 fire stations, the second largest number in England and over 2,000 staff consisting of a mix of wholetime, on-call and volunteer firefighters, control staff and professional support staff.

Every person employed by DSFRS does their best for the common goal of saving lives through reducing risk from fire and other emergencies and protecting property and the environment through proactively working together to keep things safer.





We do so much more than putting out fires, we:

- carry out community safety prevention work including home fire safety checks
- work with partners to influence young drivers to try and prevent people being killed or injured on our roads
- engage young people in diversionary activities to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime
- provide specialist rescue such as rope rescue, swift water rescue and rescue at height
- have the largest number of fire appliances outside of London equipped to deal with the after effects of terrorism such as major transportation incidents, public decontamination and collapsed structures
- work with businesses and organisations to ensure they comply with fire safety legislation
- work to reduce the number of operational incidents we attend through our prevention work and this will continue to be our priority.

Should all our prevention efforts not work, we are on hand 24/7 to respond to emergencies. There are many different roles that make up Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service but everyone works together to try to deliver our service to the public as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Ordinary people doing extraordinary work... saving lives every day.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and diversity in employment and welcome applications from all sectors of the community and we aim to recruit a diverse workforce that reflects the people that we serve.



Core values

Our core values were brought together and agreed by our employees across the service area through discussions and list the behaviours and ways of working we try to honour. As a service and as individuals we value:

- **honesty, clarity and accountability**
- **respect for each other**
- **working together to improve**
- **a 'can do' attitude.**

We are working hard to ensure that these important principles underpin everything we do and the way we operate.

Core Values Behavioural Framework

If you are applying for a vacancy with the Service, it is important that you read and understand the Core Values Behavioural Framework. During the application process you will be asked to commit to practicing and actively promoting the values, along with the ideal and expected behaviours and ways of working.

Read the framework here [Core Values Behavioural Framework](#)

Control Staff

Our control staff are the first point of contact for your emergency and are on hand to answer your 999 calls. Based at the Exeter control room, the control staff answer calls 24 hours a day and are skilled to ensure the required resources are mobilised to an incident. This can be a fire at a residential property, a road traffic collision or another life endangering situation. All fire control staff are trained to proactively gather the relevant information required and provide reassurance and safety advice to callers.



The control room is responsible for:

- acceptance of emergency and non-emergency calls from a range of sources
- mobilising of resources. i.e firefighters and equipment
- maintaining communication throughout an incident
- mobilising additional resources as required
- maintaining a database of information on fire and rescue service operational resources
- liaising with other emergency and non-emergency agencies. For example, Police, Ambulance or the Environment Agency
- completing administration tasks such as Health & Safety records and providing information to the press.

Fire control work a shift based system as with the wholetime firefighters of two days on and two nights on and then four days off. In the control room there are four watches with each watch consisting of one watch manager, two crew managers and firefighter (control) operators. There is also a training team responsible for new recruits and ongoing fire control training, and a data team responsible for keeping the mobilising system and databases up to date.

Initial recruit training consists of working Monday – Friday day shifts, combined with spending time with the duty watches. Initial training consists of learning about the service resources and equipment, call handling, how to use the mobilising system and apply policy and procedures. Following initial training, there is a period of

development which consolidates and applies the learning. The development period will continue for approximately two years with progress reviews throughout. At the end of the development period a final review will be undertaken and if successful be deemed competent in role.

The fire control room covers Devon and Somerset counties, and assists its neighbours of Cornwall, Avon, Dorset and Wiltshire when required. We are currently working in partnership with Dorset and Wiltshire, and Hampshire fire and rescue services on a networked fire control system. This provides an increased level of resilience and fallback procedures. We have been live on the new system since April 2016 and by using the networked system, Devon and Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire and Hampshire are able to handle calls for each other and mobilise each other's resources. This provides resilience in situations where there is an influx of calls such as wide scale flooding.



Do you really want to be a member of our control staff?

Find out how suited you might be to a career in the fire service control room by answering the following questions.

If you can answer yes to all of them, and have good examples to back up your answers, then a career as control staff might well be for you.



Examples of the type of person we're looking for.

- **Have you got good computer knowledge and understanding?**
- **Are you a team player?**
- **Do you have courage and compassion?**
- **Do you have the ability to give intense and sustained focus?**
- **Are you able to listen and give directions in stressful emergency situations?**
- **Are you able to use your own initiative when working alone?**
- **Do you have respect for diversity and are you fair and ethical to others?**

Selection process

1

Application

This is an online application form managed through an e-recruitment system called 'Talentlink' and it is operated by our Recruitment Administrators. The system will send automated emails at certain points in the recruitment process to keep applicants updated on their status.

CV's are not accepted.

2

Assessment

Candidates who are successfully short listed will attend a selection process which includes an interview and some or all of the following tests (depending on the role):

typing test – 30 words per minute with 90% accuracy required. Tested by playing audio containing fire service relevant info

aptitude test – This is a multi-tasking designed to test your ability to recall information and input information simultaneously.

pre learning test – You will be provided with a suite of pre learning prior to starting your training. The pre learning will be tested using online systems and will test your ability to learn and retain information.

online verbal reasoning Test – In this ability test questions will be presented as short passages of information about a specific topic. You will be asked whether certain statements can be deemed true, false or not possible to say, based solely on the information provided. All prior knowledge should be disregarded for the purpose of these questions, as they aim to assess your innate ability to interpret and evaluate verbal information. Questions will be timed.

practical assessment – This will utilise the fire service mobilising system to provide a broad range practical test. You will be provided with scenarios and expected to following instructions and complete tasks and recall information in conjunction with problem solving and quick thinking.

3

Interview

A structured interview is part of all selection processes. It will be conducted by a panel of three Service employees, normally including a line manager and a Human Resources representative. Candidates are asked specific questions to determine their suitability for the role.

4

Medical and references

Appointment is subject to proof of Nationality, eligibility to work in the United Kingdom, obtaining satisfactory references, including your most recent employer, and completion of a medical questionnaire.

A medical may be conducted by our Occupational Health provider.

Benefits of working for us

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) embraces all new members of staff and welcome you into our work community. We pride ourselves on having a 'family' feel to our Service, and offer many benefits to help and support you during your employment in the Service.

Schemes and incentives

Child Care Vouchers

We have opted into the Child Care Voucher Scheme, which can be accessed tax-free and used to help towards your child care costs you could claim up to £50 per week, which will be paid to you with your salary each month. The amount you require can be adjusted to suit your needs. You will need to check your eligibility to apply for the child care voucher scheme and that your child care provider accepts these vouchers.

Coaching & Mentoring Scheme

We have an internal coaching and mentoring programme. Employees are able to request a coach/mentor to support their development needs.

Pension Scheme

We offer pension schemes which attract an employer's contribution. Information is provided upon your starting with the Service about the levels of contribution and the benefits that this attracts.

Staff Discount Scheme

As a member of DFRS's staff you can receive discounts in shops and/or on-line services. On production of your ID card some shops give as much as 20% discount. This benefit can range from holidays, outdoor activities stores, jewellers and much more.

Fire Fighters Charity

The Fire Fighters Charity is the UK's leading provider of services that enhance quality of life for serving and retired fire service personnel and their families. They are available for all members of the fire service community during their times of need, assisting thousands of individuals every year by providing pioneering treatment and support services. The Charity has three centres in Devon, Cumbria and West Sussex that offer rehabilitation programmes to eligible beneficiaries of the fire service community, as well as recuperation breaks that provide the chance to relax in peaceful and tranquil surroundings, which can aid emotional recovery following illness, injury, or other problems.

Trade Unions

Trade Unions are there to support you in your work life and they all offer a range of services and support.

For more informations

FBU - www.fbu.org.uk

Facilities

Staff Car Park Car

parking facilities are provided at all of our sites, these are generally on first come first served basis.

Gym Facilities

All of our sites have access to on-site gyms or other types of exercise facilities and you are encouraged to keep fit and stay active in many ways.

All sites have shower facilities to use after your fitness session. We have Fitness Advisors who can provide you with health and fitness guidance and support, and an exercise regime/plan if required.

Fitness Training Advice
from Neil and Paul

Annual Leave Entitlement

Control staff are allocated five blocks of leave per year. Three of the blocks are for one tour of duty (one tour of duty is two days and two nights). The further two blocks of leave per year consist of two tours of duty.

They are also allowed to book an allocated amount floating leave days.

Welfare and Counselling Support

At different times in our lives, we may require access to other forms of support. We have a team of Staff Supporters who can be accessed confidentially to provide guidance and support, about an issue that could be personal or work related.

Maternity

We acknowledge the importance of supporting you to balance personal and work requirements throughout your pregnancy especially around the time your baby is due and immediately afterwards. We have procedures for maternity and if you have any queries please let us know.

Paternity - We aim to give partners the opportunity to support the mother of a child during the period immediately following the birth of a baby and to assist in building a relationship with the child.

Professional development

Training - When you join you will have access to training and support from our Training Centre at Service Training Centre in Plympton and Severn Park which are purpose built facilities to train you in many activities, such as operational incidents on the fire ground and leadership and management development programmes. Our own internally trained assessors and trainers have a wealth of experience, but we also access external trainers to build on the skills, knowledge and understanding for the benefit of all staff.

Sports and social

Community/social - DSFRS prides itself on our family feel and our approach to how we conduct ourselves as a Service and support our staff with procedures that accommodate flexible working. We also have an internal Sports Association which supports sporting and recreational activities. You can join a variety of sporting activities, take part in their monthly lottery, all for a small fee.



Support networks

Fire Pride

The Service is committed to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality and, through initiatives such as the Fire Pride network and attendance at Pride festivals, aims to create the right working environment for LGBT colleagues to feel able to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity at work, if they choose. People are more able to be relaxed, creative and productive at work if they can be open and honest about who they are and do not feel under pressure to censor their lives.

DSFRS has signed up to Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme which provides us with advice, support and networking aimed at improving and promoting diversity in the workplace. For three consecutive years we submitted evidence for Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index and achieved a position in the prestigious top 100 employers in the index, demonstrating that the Service is continuing to create an inclusive working

If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or if you are interested in this equality issue, please join us.



Wands

This is our womens network and identifies, and provides solutions for, the barriers faced by women in recruitment, retention and progression. In carrying out this role, the network supports the service's aim to become an excellent organisation and enable all employees to reach their full potential.

The network brings women together to provide mutual support and encouragement and the opportunity to discuss and resolve issues of concern. It aims to empower women, to give them a voice and the confidence to speak up.

Staff Supporters

We have a team of volunteers throughout the Service who are confidentially available to support members of staff who may be experiencing difficulties whether at home or at work. They aim to be a support where possible and signpost to other agencies and counselling services.

The mental health of our staff is as important as any other part of their health and we have made a commitment through Mind's Blue Light programme to make sure we support our staff in all areas of well being. We have signed the Blue Light pledge and this means we are working towards improving our ability to support our employees mental health.

Dyslexia Support

The Service is committed to providing support for dyslexic employees to reduce the barriers they face in the workplace and enable them to be fully productive in their roles. This also means increasing awareness amongst all employees about what being dyslexic means, both the positive and the more challenging aspects.



Download library

[Core Values Behavioural Framework](#)

[Visual Standards](#)

[Vacancies](#)

Fire Service related frequently asked questions

[Recruitment FAQs](#)

[PQAs](#)

[Interview preparation document](#)

[On-call Firefighter fees](#)

www.sfjuk.com/sectors/fire-rescue/working-in-fire-and-rescue/