

Frequently asked questions

Can anyone be a Retained Duty System firefighter?

Provided you meet the entry criteria and meet the conditions of living/working in the required area to respond to a Fire Station.

If I joined as a Retained Duty System firefighter can I automatically transfer to become a Wholetime firefighter?

At present no, although there is likely to be greater transferability of roles in the future.

What hours would I be expected to work?

This depends on the needs of the station and the cover you can provide and whether you are able to respond from work or home. Most staff provide either full cover which is 120 hours or more per week or part cover which is less than 120 hours.

If your employer has agreed that you may be released from work, we have an employers' section within our information pack should you need to discuss the details with them. It is recommended that one of our Station Managers meet with your employer to explain the system.

Our biggest difficulty, and therefore the area with most vacancies, is finding staff that can provide cover Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. We welcome applications from people who can provide cover for this period even if breaks in cover are required, for example to collect children from school.

What could I earn?

A fully trained Retained Duty System firefighter will receive a regular retaining fee of around £2,650 a year (around £220 a month). Additional payments for attending incidents, drill nights and community safety events vary from station to station. It is not uncommon for an RDS firefighter to earn more than £6000 per year.

What training is involved?

On the successful completion of the recruitment stage you will be allocated a place on one of our training courses.

The training course currently takes just two weeks Monday to Friday and subject to an assessment you could be attending fires and incidents immediately after your course. Additional training will also be given on road traffic collisions, breathing apparatus, driving and fire safety.

You will be required to attend a weekly evening training session of two hours every week and occasional weekend training to further your skills. Any training sessions you attend you will receive payment for.

How will I know when to respond to an incident?

You will be issued with a pager and you would be required to get to the fire station promptly but safely. You will need to live or work within approximately five minutes of the fire station.

What benefits are there for me?

You will work as part of a team and will be well trained in a wide variety of skills including firefighting, first aid and community safety advice.

You will be encouraged to work as part of a team, and to act in a safe and responsible manner. These skills will also benefit your primary employment as there will be many transferable areas.

What do I need to do to join, are there any tests?

Following an informal discussion to determine the cover you can provide, you will be asked to fill in an application form. Once your application has been approved you will then undertake a number of physical and written tests, Once again guidance will be available throughout the process. Following an interview you will be asked to undertake a medical to ensure you have no underlying medical conditions that may affect you undertaking the role of a firefighter.

Throughout the process there will be help on hand to ensure any questions you have are answered.

What career opportunities are there?

All Retained stations need managers to run the station and to take charge of the incidents they attend. Managers are selected from station staff so there is the opportunity for all to progress. We use Assessment and Development Centres, to select for promotion and develop individuals.

I am a full-time firefighter; can I also join the Retained Duty System?

Yes you can. However it is dependant on vacancies and your ability to provide relevant cover. Whole-time firefighters from any local authority Fire and Rescue Service can apply if they live within the relevant response area and meet the cover needs for the Station.

Need more information?

If you are interested in joining the Retained please e-mail rdsrecruitment@bedsfire.com or telephone 01234 351081 Ext.5527.