

# **National Firefighter Questionnaire**

## **PREPARATION AND PRACTICE BOOKLET**

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# Section One: Introduction

## About this booklet

This booklet has been developed to help you prepare for the National Firefighter Questionnaire (NFQ) which is part of our selection process for Firefighters. The booklet is divided into the following sections:

- **Introduction** – this section introduces the NFQ and provides you with a brief description of what it is.
- **Preparing for the NFQ** – this section provides you with some general advice on preparing to take the NFQ.
- **Frequently asked Questions** – this section provides you with answers to some of the frequently asked questions regarding the NFQ
- **Practice Questions** – this section contains the instructions and some practice questions for the questionnaire.

The practice questions have been provided solely for you to familiarise yourself with the style of the NFQ questions. Answers to these questions have not been provided.

We strongly recommend you set aside some time to read through this booklet and answer the practice questions prior to your assessment day.

## The National Firefighter Questionnaire (NFQ)

The National Firefighter Questionnaire (NFQ) is being used as it provides objective, fair and relevant information on the key skills, attributes and personal qualities needed to become a successful Firefighter. The NFQ has been fully trialled and tested and your performance will be compared to a large comparison group of Firefighter applicants.

You will be given full instructions on how to complete the NFQ before you complete it. To help you prepare, the 'Practice Questions' section of this booklet shows the instructions. An Administrator will also be present during your assessment and will guide you at each stage of the process. The NFQ includes some example questions which you will have an opportunity to complete on the day to check that you have understood the instructions.

The NFQ explores several of the Firefighter personal qualities and attributes (PQAs). There is no time limit for completion of this questionnaire, but most people complete it in around 40 minutes. You will be presented with a series of statements, such as "I am only ever satisfied by excellent results" and asked to indicate how much you agree with that statement, by the use of a five point scale that ranges from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'.

# Section Two: Preparing for the NFQ

There are several things you can do to help you prepare to take the NFQ. We suggest you set aside some time to undertake the preparation described below.

## General Preparation

Ensure that you are comfortable with the administrative arrangements that have been made for the assessment session and if not, raise any concerns with [contact name, address and telephone number]

In particular, check that you know:

- the date, time and location of the assessment session (these will be listed in your invitation letter); and
- the time it will take for you to get to the venue and the travel arrangements you need to make.

If you have any special requirements, please ensure that you have informed [contact name, contact details and telephone number] in plenty of time prior to the event (e.g. for dyslexia).

## Complete the practice questions

In the latter section of this booklet there are practice questions for the NFQ. These are examples of the sort of questions that you will be asked. They will give you a realistic preview of what you will encounter during the actual NFQ.

Remember:

- These questions are for practice only – they are not the questions you will be asked during the real NFQ.
- Have a go at each practice question – this will help you become familiar with the process and format of the questions.
- You may try them as often as you like.
- Your 'results' will not be collected or used by anyone – they are for your information only.

## The day before

- Try not to dwell on the NFQ or become anxious about it – stay relaxed and keep yourself occupied.
- Remind yourself of the time and location of the assessment session.
- Get plenty of rest and get a good night's sleep.

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### On the day

- Allow plenty of time to get to the test venue – try to arrive at least 10 minutes early, as you will not be allowed to enter the test room if you arrive once testing has started.
- You do not need to bring paper, pencils, or any other equipment as everything you need will be provided for you.
- Remember to wear your reading glasses or hearing aid if you normally use them.
- If you suffer from back complaints, you may like to bring a cushion with you, as you will be sitting still for a fairly long period of time.
- Wear comfortable and non-restrictive clothing.
- Do not drink alcohol or take any strong medication prior to the assessment session.
- Make sure that you are physically comfortable before the assessment session starts (e.g. visit the toilet, have a drink of water, make sure that you have eaten something etc.).

### During the testing session

- The session will run for about three hours in total. The NFQ is one of the assessments you will sit during the testing session and NFQ itself is likely to take you around 40 minutes to complete. The other assessments are the National Firefighter Ability Tests. There is a separate Practice Booklet for these assessments.
- You will be provided with breaks between the assessments.
- Ensure that you can see and hear the Administrator comfortably and if not, tell him/her.
- Inform the Administrator of anything personally significant, for example if you feel ill, are dizzy or have any concerns before or during the test session.
- Listen carefully to the Administrator as he/she explains the assessment procedure.
- Any instructions you need will be given by the Administrator.
- Do not proceed until you have been instructed to do so, and you are clear about what you are doing.
- At the start of the session you will be given some example questions. Follow the instructions for these as they will be good practice for the assessment itself.
- If you are having trouble with the example questions, ask the Administrator for help – ensure that you understand what he/she says as you will not be able to ask for help once the actual assessment begins.
- If at any time you are unsure about what you should be doing Before the assessment begins, ask!

## Section Three: Frequently asked questions

Some of the most frequently asked questions about the NFQ and their answers are given below.

**Q: What will happen at the event?**

A: On arrival at the assessment venue, you will be greeted by the Administrator. You will be at the event session with a group of people, although during the NFQ you will be working on your own. For the NFQ, you will be seated at a table or desk. You will be provided with blank paper and a pencil, which you can use if you wish to.

The Administrator will explain the procedure for the NFQ. The Administrator will read standardised instructions to you for the NFQ. These may sound very 'formal' but need to be read the same way at each session to ensure fairness for all candidates.

Following the example questions, the Administrator will announce the start of the NFQ itself.

Once the NFQ begins, you will not be able to talk, ask for help or leave the room. Therefore, ensure that you fully understand the process, are physically comfortable and have asked any questions you need to before the NFQ begins.

**Q: Who will administer the NFQ?**

A: Only fully trained people are allowed to administer the NFQ. Your Administrator will have completed this training.

**Q: How is the NFQ scored?**

A: The NFQ has been designed to measure several of the personal qualities and attributes (PQAs) required to be a Firefighter. Different questions measure different PQAs. Your responses to the questions will be scored and grouped according to the PQAs, and you will receive feedback against those PQA areas.

**Q: Will I get feedback on my results?**

A: Yes. Following your test session you will receive a letter informing you of whether you have been successful at this stage of the process or not. Regardless of whether you have been accepted onto the next stage of the process you will also receive written feedback. This will explain what the NFQ was measuring, provide you with an indication of how you performed and what this means in terms of your strengths and potential areas for development.

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**Q: Can I discuss my results with someone?**

A: The written feedback will be very comprehensive and should not require further elaboration. However, if you have any questions or concerns about your results, you may put these in writing.

**Q: Who will see my results?**

A: Your results will be seen only by those people directly involved in firefighter selection or in quality assuring the selection process and will not be released to any other party at any time. They will be stored on computer in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

**Q: Can I try again if I do badly on the NFQ?**

A: No, although you will be free to re-apply to a FRS in three months if it is accepting applications. Your performance next time will be treated as a 'clean slate' – i.e. your results from this occasion will be ignored.

## Section Four: Practice questions

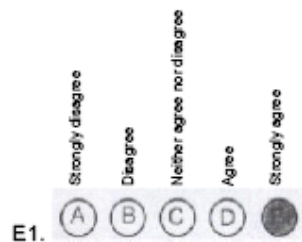
This section contains the instructions and practice questions for the NFQ. The instructions are shown as they will actually be presented to you. The practice questions are realistic examples of the sorts of questions you will be asked. They have been provided for you to familiarise yourself with the style of NFQ questions.

The NFQ is designed to provide information about your personal style and behaviour. Your responses to the questionnaire will be considered alongside other information from the selection process to help us decide if you are suited to becoming a Firefighter.

Each question in the questionnaire consists of a statement together with a rating scale on the accompanying answer sheet. You are asked to decide how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement by filling the entire circle that corresponds to your answer pressing down hard on the paper to make as dark a mark as possible.

- **a** if you strongly disagree with a statement;
- **b** if you disagree;
- **c** if you neither agree nor disagree;
- **d** if you agree; or
- **e** if you strongly agree. Look at the example below.

**E1. I try to check that I have completed tasks properly**



In the example, the person has **strongly agreed** with the statement “I try to check that I have completed tasks properly”

If you make a mistake or change your mind and decide on another option please erase the mistake and fill the circle that corresponds to your revised answer.



Please remember the following when you are completing the questionnaire:

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- You should answer the questions honestly and give the response that describes you best.
- Answer the questions in order and make sure you don't miss any out.
- Don't spend too long thinking about any one question – give the response that feels natural to you.
- When answering the questions you should try not to use the middle circle 'c' unless you have to.

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### Practice Questions

1. It gives me pleasure to work with other people.

Strongly disagree  
Disagree  
Neither agree nor disagree  
Agree  
Strongly agree

A B C D E

2. I am uncomfortable when people are treated unfairly.

A B C D E

3. I tend not to get distracted when I am faced with a tight deadline.

A B C D E

4. I would be as diligent about mopping a floor as I would be about putting out a fire.

A B C D E

5. If I've been unsuccessful at something, I try to forget about it.

A B C D E

6. Others would probably say I don't pick up on what's going on around me.

A B C D E

7. I don't see a need for the Fire and Rescue Service to change.

A B C D E

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