



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

Retained Duty System (RDS) Firefighter Recruitment 2017

Candidate Information Booklet

This document is also available in Welsh



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Equal Opportunities

We are fully committed to meeting our duties to matters of equality as set out in current legislation. Fire and Rescue Services cannot make any adjustments to the Person Specification requirements as identified on page 4 or to nationally set Fitness Standards. These requirements and standards have been set to ensure that individuals are safe at work, for their own protection and that of others.

If you have a disability and feel that you are able to meet the essential requirements as detailed in the Job Description and Person Specification, but the assessment process prevents you from fully demonstrating your abilities, reasonable adjustments to the process will be considered. To ensure that the required support is readily available, you are required to bring your specific needs to the attention of the appropriate testing centre in advance.

For more information on equality and diversity please visit:

<http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity>

All of the information required to apply to become an RDS Firefighter is contained within this Information Booklet. If you have any further queries, please contact us via email or telephone: hrdesk@nwales-fireservice.org.uk / 01745 535250

Job Description

Principal Aim: To protect and save people and property from fire and other hazards in the most competent and effective manner to the highest possible standard of care and quality.

RDS Firefighters: To provide evening, daytime or weekend 'on-call' cover to help protect the communities in which they live or work. Also to be actively involved in the prevention of fire, particularly in the home. A key part of the role is to undertake home safety checks, offering free advice to residents on how to eliminate or reduce risks in the home.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Emergencies

- Respond immediately and safely to all emergency calls and requests for assistance.
- Deal with emergencies as directed and work effectively and efficiently as a member of a disciplined team.
- Minimise distress and suffering, including giving first aid care.

Dealing with People

- Establish and maintain the confidence of members of the public.
- Maintain links within the community.
- Be sensitive to the needs of others with regard to fairness and dignity issues.

Fire Safety

- Give general fire safety advice and guidance to people when requested.
- Work to help educate members of the community in the risks and hazards of fire and other emergencies.
- Assist in Service initiatives, programmes and strategies to reduce fire calls.

Health and Safety

- Recognise health and safety issues at work and deal with them to minimise or eliminate the degree of hazard or risk.
- Ensure personal safety and that of others at all times.

Personal Fitness and Hygiene

- Maintain level of physical and medical fitness necessary to carry out the duties of a Firefighter.
- Maintain personal appearance, hygiene and cleanliness of uniform in keeping with a disciplined service.

Equipment

- Maintain all firefighting and emergency equipment in a state of readiness, including cleaning, repairing and testing as required to approved standards and procedures.
- Check firefighting resources provided for Fire and Service use, including hydrants and fixed installations.

Local Geography

- Know the local streets, roads and buildings situated within the Fire Station response area.
- Be aware of the risks, possible hazards and water supplies to be found within the Fire Station area.

Administration

- Complete basic paperwork and routine administration, including recording of information.
- Use information technology as required and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Keep personal records up to date.

Training

- Take part in a continuous training programme by attending lectures, exercises, practice drill sessions and other forms of training to maintain competence levels.
- Attend training courses as directed.

Fire Authority

- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the level of responsibility and expertise as may be required by the Chief Fire Officer.
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Service.

Person Specification

Factor	Evidence	Essential/ Desirable	Evidence
General Ability	Formal qualifications are not required however Numeracy, Literacy and Problem Solving Skills will be tested (tests are set at Essential Skills Level 2)	Essential	WWI
Knowledge/ Experience	Ability to communicate through the medium of Welsh	Desirable	ORA and SI
	Awareness of the role of the Firefighter	Essential	SI
Personal Style	An understanding and respect for people's differences. Committed to adopting a fair approach to others	Essential	ORA and SI
	Ability to maintain confident and resilient attitude in highly challenged situations	Essential	ORA and SI
	Openness to change and the desire to actively seek to support it	Essential	ORA and SI
Intrapersonal	Ability to work effectively with others both within the Fire and Rescue Service and in the community	Essential	ORA and SI
	Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing to a range of different audiences	Essential	ORA and SI
	Commitment to and ability to develop self and others	Essential	ORA and SI
Task	Ability to understand, recall, apply and adapt relevant information in an organized, safe, systematic way	Essential	ORA, WWI and SI
	Ability to maintain an active awareness of the environment to promote safe and effective working	Essential	WWI, PP
	Ability to adopt a conscientious and proactive approach to work to achieve and maintain excellent standards	Essential	ORA, SI
	Ability to maintain a high level of appropriately directed activity – showing determination and the capacity to work hard in a challenging environment	Essential	ORA, PP
	Ability to follow orders and take direction	Essential	ORA
	Appropriate aerobic capacity/fitness	Essential	PP
	Satisfactory eyesight and colour vision	Essential	MED
	Satisfactory hearing	Essential	MED
	Ability to work at heights and in confined spaces	Essential	PP

Evidence Codes

ORA – Online Registration and Assessment

WWI – Working with Information Tests

PP – Physical and Practical Assessments

SI – Selection Interview

MED – Medical

Hours of Work

RDS Firefighters provide 'on call' cover for an agreed number of hours a week (referred to as their 'availability'); they carry a pager and must be able to get to the fire station within 5 minutes of a call during their agreed available hours. Many RDS Firefighters respond to emergency calls from home and others, with agreement from their employers, respond from their place of work.

In addition to providing on-call hours, RDS Firefighters are required to attend drill nights once a week. Drill nights last for three hours and this time is used to develop skills and training.

RDS Firefighters are required to be available to respond to a fire station within 5 minutes of being called and it is only in exceptional circumstances that the Service can extend this response time. One of the factors that would allow the discretionary extension of response times is the current staffing levels in each station and the station location, however, the Service has to consider all risks and resilience options available on an individual basis.

Rates of Pay

In addition to being paid hourly rates for the time worked, RDS Firefighters are also paid annual retaining fees for providing their availability. The annual retaining fee varies depending on the number of agreed available hours.

RDS Firefighters who offer 120 hours or more availability per week are referred to as 'Fully Retained' and RDS Firefighters who offer less than 120 hours availability per week are referred to as 'Semi Retained'.

<i>Rates of pay as at 25/07/17</i>	Trainee Firefighter	Firefighter in Development	Competent Firefighter
Fully Retained Annual Retaining Fee	£2,224	£2,316	£2,964
Semi Retained Annual Retaining Fee	£1,668	£1,737	£2,223
Training & Development Fee (Paid per 3 hours attendance at Drill Night)	£30.45	£31.74	£40.59
Turnout Fee (Paid per turnout for the first 1 hour and 15 minutes of attendance at an incident)	£14.05	£14.48	£17.43
Hourly Rate (Paid in 15 minute blocks after the first 1 hour and 15 minutes of attendance at an incident)	£10.15	£10.58	£13.53
Attendance Fee (Payable for attending the station in an acceptable response time, but not being required to attend an incident)	£8.98	£9.19	£10.67

Do you really want to be an RDS Firefighter?

The following list of questions has been designed to help you decide whether being an RDS Firefighter is really for you. Simply tick YES or NO to each of the following questions.

	Yes	No
Are you aged 18 or over?		
Do you live or work within 5 minutes travelling time of a fire station?		
Do you have a good level of all round fitness?		
Are you looking for an exciting spare time opportunity?		
Are you interested in protecting your community?		
Are you genuinely interested in people?		
Can you get on with people from different backgrounds and cultures?		
Do you have or could you commit to having basic Welsh language courtesy skills? (Full support and training would be provided if needed to achieve this within a probation period should you be successful)		
Do you want to work as part of a close knit team?		
Can you work under pressure?		
Can you think on your feet and solve problems when you know a lot depends on the suggestion you come up with?		
Do you have the sensitivity to deal with members of the public when they are distressed, confused or being obstructive?		
Can you take responsibility for representing the Service when you are at work and when you are not?		
Are you committed to always maintaining and developing your skills?		
Are you prepared to study to develop and expand your skills?		
Are you prepared for the demands of working in a disciplined uniformed service in which you will have to take orders from other people?		
Can you accept the need to keep to rules that tell you what you can and cannot wear?		
Are you committed to maintaining your health and physical fitness?		
Are you a practical person who likes to work with your hands/equipment?		
Do you enjoy making things or finding out how things work?		
Are you someone who can always be relied on to be somewhere on time?		
Are you someone that others see as dependable?		
Are you prepared to work outside in all types of weather, when it is wet and cold?		

If you answered 'Yes' to ALL of the above, and you think that you have what it takes to serve and protect the community you live or work in, read the information provided and apply.

The Recruitment Process

Rather than only seeking interest and application from people when vacancies occur, we want to engage earlier and complete aspects of the recruitment process prior to vacancies occurring. The purpose of this is many fold; we can register people who desire to be an RDS Firefighter at any time, we will have longer to identify people who wish to become an RDS Firefighter rather than through the fairly time limited traditional method of only advertising for a relatively short period of time when vacancies occur, we will potentially have people who we can take through the full process without having to advertise at the specific time of vacancies, by completing aspects of the recruitment process we can potentially shorten the time from the vacancy occurring to having people ready to fill the vacancy, we can undertake positive action activities as needed ahead of vacancies occurring and we can, where appropriate, provide support to people to prepare for the recruitment process. As part of this approach, once registered we will keep in regular contact providing you with personal updates.

Stage 1 – Online Registration

You will need an active email account to complete the Online Registration. The link to the Online Registration portal can be found on our website: www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk .

During the Online Registration process you will be asked to provide your personal details and to complete a Realistic Job Preview which allows you to self-asses your suitability for the role – the results of the Realistic Job Preview are private and for your reference and consideration only. If you choose to proceed, you will then be asked to answer some basic questions to assess your eligibility to apply.

Stage 2 – Eligibility Assessment

Once you have completed the Online Registration we will contact you within 14 days to confirm your eligibility to apply and the next steps. There are a number of factors that have to be considered, such as:

1. Whether you are over the age of 18
2. Whether you have the right to work in the UK (You will need a National Insurance Number to confirm this)
3. Whether you have any unspent convictions that may act as a bar from working as a Firefighter (You are not required to declare 'spent' convictions, but all 'unspent' and pending convictions must be declared; failure to do so will result in your application being withdrawn. The Rehabilitation of Offenders act 1974 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 will be strictly adhered to)
4. Whether you are able to respond to a fire station within a satisfactory response time
5. Whether your availability meets the needs of the fire station you are applying to
6. Whether the fire station you are applying to has current vacancies

If you are not considered eligible to apply for reasons 1 to 3 above, your application will not progress further.

If you are not considered eligible to apply for reasons 4 to 6 above, you will have the opportunity discuss your application further.

If you are considered eligible to apply you will progress to the next stage.

Please note that CVs or any other form of application will not be accepted.

Stage 3 – Online Assessment

Once your eligibility is confirmed, you will be invited via email to complete the full Online Assessment. The Online Assessment process involves completing a Behavioural Styles Questionnaire, which explores your preferred behaviours in a working environment - no revision or additional study is required for this element. You will also complete a Situational Judgement Test which measures your judgement and decision making skills in situations that are typical for the role - no knowledge or experience as a Firefighter is required to complete this test and no prior revision is needed.

Stage 4 – Mental Ability Assessment

Once you have successfully completed the Online Assessment, you will be invited to attend the Working with Information Tests (WWI) at a Fire Service premises. You can access information to assist you in your preparation on our website.

This stage involves completing a series of tests which are detailed below:-

National Firefighter Questionnaire (NFQ)

The National Firefighter Questionnaire (NFQ) is an objective, valid and fair test of some of the personal qualities and attributes needed by Firefighters to do their job effectively.

You will be presented with a series of statements and asked to indicate the extent to which you agree with each. For example, 'Everyone deserves to be treated fairly'. By looking at the responses you give, we can gain an understanding of your style in seven different areas. In order to proceed you will need to demonstrate that you have the required personal qualities and attributes in each of these areas, which include:-

- **Commitment to Diversity and Integrity** – the extent to which you understand and respect diversity and adopt a fair and ethical approach towards others.
- **Openness to Change** – the extent to which you are open to change and actively seek to support it.
- **Working with Others** – the extent to which you work effectively with other people, whether as part of a team or on an individual basis.
- **Situational Awareness** – the extent to which you maintain an active awareness of the environment and promote safe and effective working.
- **Commitment to Excellence** – the extent to which you are conscientious and adopt a proactive approach to your work in order to achieve and maintain excellent standards.
- **Commitment to Development** – the extent to which you invest in developing yourself.

Working with Numbers Test

This test assesses your ability to understand and work with numerical information of the type you are likely to experience as a Firefighter. You will be presented with a series of scenarios using information from graphs, tables, dials and gauges. You will be asked questions relating to each of these. Firefighters need to be able to undertake addition, subtraction, multiplication and division as well as being able to make estimations of numerical data.

Understanding Information Test

This test assesses your ability to read and understand written information of the type you are likely to experience as a Firefighter. You will be presented with a series of scenarios and with information in a variety of different formats (including fire safety information, memos, newsletters and training course manual extracts). You will be asked to answer several questions about each of these.

Situational Awareness and Problem Solving Test

This test looks at your ability to ensure the safety of yourself and others as well as your ability to use information to solve problems. You will be presented with a series of scenarios similar to those you are likely to face in the role of a Firefighter. You will be asked to choose the answer that most closely describes what you would do in each situation – you will have four alternatives to choose from.

Stage 5 – Physical Ability Assessment

If successful at Stage 4, you will be invited to attend the Physical and Practical Assessment day (PP). The tests on this day are designed to assess your level of physical fitness in line with requirements of the role. Details of the physical fitness and healthy weight requirements, along with the physical and practical tests are given below.

If you require more information on how to prepare for the physical and practical tests safely, you can view all of the operational tests as well as download a Preparatory Physical Training Programme from: <http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/about-us/recruitment/retained-duty-system-firefighters/fitness>.

Physical Fitness

Firefighting can be a physically demanding and hazardous activity with potential for exposure to high physiological and environmental thermal loads. To ensure effective and safe operational performance an appropriate level of physical fitness is essential.

Your level of physical fitness will be determined by measuring your performance during a number of physical and practical firefighting tasks. In addition you may be required to perform an 'aerobic' fitness test to predict your aerobic capacity (in $\text{mls/O}_2/\text{kg}/\text{min}$). This allows us to assess your ability to perform exercise for longer periods which is important for safe firefighting. The minimum requirement for candidates at recruitment is 42.3 $\text{mls/O}_2/\text{kg}/\text{min}$ (equivalent to level 8.8 on a bleep test). If you progress to medical you may be required to demonstrate this level of fitness again on a Chester Step test.

Healthy Weight

A healthy weight is important because underweight, overweight, and obesity, can have an adverse effect on firefighting performance, safety and on general health. Height and weight measurements and the calculation of Body Mass Index (BMI) are in the majority of cases a suitable means of confirming the weight category of individuals. The following table identifies the relevant BMI ranges and the associated weight categories.

Classification	BMI (kg/m ²)
Underweight	<18.5
Healthy Weight	18.5 – 25
Overweight	25–30
Obese	>30.0

The recommended BMI for candidates is within the healthy weight range i.e. 18.5-25.0. A small minority of individuals within a BMI in the overweight range may be reclassified as a healthy weight if an assessment of their body composition (by body fat measurement) indicates that the higher BMI is predominantly due to muscle development.

The components of the Physical and Practical Assessment are:

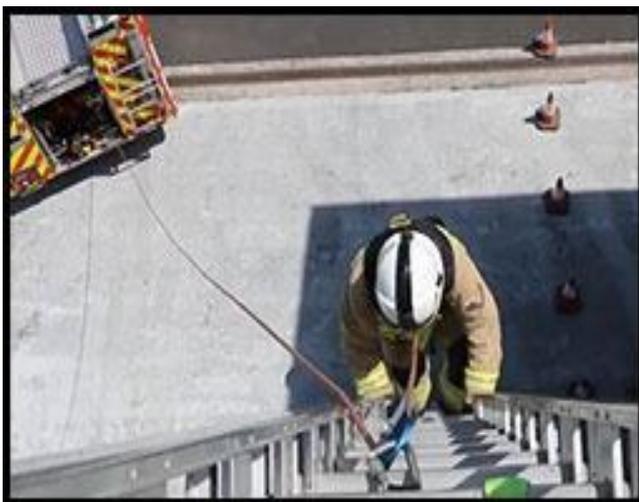


Enclosed Space Test

You will need to combine confidence, agility and flexibility while negotiating a crawl-way to pass the test successfully. There is only one way through the crawl-way, forward, right, left, up or down and there are no doors to open. You will start the test wearing a face mask which allows clear vision. However, on completion of the test, your mask will be obscured and you will be required to return along the same route. You should be able to complete these tests without jeopardising your safety and well-being.

Equipment Assembly Test

This test is designed to assess manual dexterity. You will need to assemble and then disassemble a piece of equipment (a hydraulic tool which is used by the Fire and Rescue Service). Before you commence the test, an Instructor will demonstrate the correct assembly of the equipment. You will also have a diagram illustrating correct assembly.



Ladder Climb

You will be shown how to climb the ladder and how to apply a 'leg lock'. You will then be allowed to practice the leg lock. You will climb the ladder to the specified height. At that point, you will use the leg lock to secure yourself to the ladder, remove your hands from the ladder and lean back, looking over your shoulder to identify an object which is being held by the instructor at ground level. When you have identified the object, you will be told to put your hands back on the ladder and release the leg lock. You will then be instructed to descend the ladder. You will need to show confidence and apply the correct technique to climb the ladder.

Equipment Carry

You will be required to carry standard firefighting equipment over a set 25 metre course for a total distance of 550 metres. You will need to combine aerobic endurance, upper and lower body strength and muscular endurance.



Casualty Evacuation Test

You will be required to drag a 55kg mannequin/dummy simulating a casualty evacuation for a distance of 30 metres.

Ladder Lift Simulator Test

You will need to combine upper and lower body strength and co-ordination to lift a ladder over your head to the required height and lower it safely and under control. The approximate weight of the ladder is 26-30kg.



Stage 6 – Selection Interview and Welsh Assessment

Selection Interview

If successful at Stage 5, you will be invited to attend a Selection Interview (SI). During the interview you will be asked a series of questions which are designed to measure your personal qualities and attributes across four areas:

- **Commitment to Diversity and Integrity** - assessing your approach to issues of diversity and how you adopt a fair and ethical approach to others
- **Working with Others** - assessing your approach to working with others, whether as part of a team or on a one to one basis
- **Commitment to Development** - assessing your approach to developing yourself
- **Commitment to Excellence** - assessing how conscientious and proactive you are in achieving and maintain excellent standards

You will also be asked some questions regarding your knowledge and understanding of the Firefighter role and will be assessed throughout the interview on how effectively you communicate. You can choose to be interviewed in Welsh or English.

Welsh Assessment

The ability to show basic Welsh language courtesy skills are a requirement of this post and ideally candidates will be able to demonstrate Level 2 Welsh on application; however, this is not essential and non Welsh speakers will not be disadvantaged.

Your Welsh language skills will be assessed during the interview process, either by having an interview through the medium of Welsh or by completing a short Welsh language assessment. The results of the Welsh language assessment will then be used by the Training and Development Department to ensure that successful candidates are given the appropriate support and guidance to achieve Level 2 Welsh within their probation period.

Stage 7 – Medical

If successful at Stage 6, you will be invited to attend a Pre-Employment Medical with our Occupational Health Service. Your Medical can only be booked once you have evidenced that you meet the appropriate eyesight standards.

You will be required to have an Eyesight Standards form completed by a qualified optometrist. You may be requested to provide this at an earlier stage of the Recruitment Process to avoid delays and in some cases to avoid disappointment at a late stage should the appropriate eyesight standards not be met.

The main eyesight requirements are:

- A minimum visual acuity of, right eye 6.9, left eye 6.9 (this can be achieved with or without wearing glasses)
- Good colour vision (you will be required to complete colour vision assessments if you have a colour vision impairment)
- If Laser eye surgery has been performed, applications will not be considered for a minimum of 12 months after the date of the procedure.

If you are unsure whether you meet these requirements, you are advised to seek advice from a qualified optometrist as soon as possible. In addition to any preliminary eye sight assessments, detailed eyesight tests may be taken during the medical stage of the process.

Firefighters may be exposed to extreme physical and psychological demands in hostile and dangerous environments. In order to comply with relevant statutory provisions, the medical screening for Firefighters is rigorous. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Fire and Rescue Service must reduce risk so far as is reasonably practicable. This means a medical condition giving rise to reasonably foreseeable occupational risk would not be acceptable. Medical suitability is determined by an individual assessment. For practical reasons, this cannot be undertaken until the later stages of the Recruitment Process. The nature and effect of medical conditions may vary and it is therefore not possible to confirm medical conditions that would be unacceptable prior to an individual medical assessment. However, if you have a medical condition or a history of a medical condition which might present problems, the following general guidance should help you consider your medical suitability before applying.

A medical condition or functional limitation which, despite any reasonable adjustments, gives rise to significantly increased occupational risk of the following is unacceptable:

- Sudden collapse or sudden incapacitation
- Impaired judgement or altered awareness
- Substantial physical or psychological injury/ill health
- Any other effect which would pose a substantial health and safety risk to yourself or others

The individual assessment will involve due consideration of any opinions or medical reports you may wish to submit. However, the decision on the significance of any risks identified will rest with the Fire and Rescue Services.

Stage 8 – Pre-Employment Checks

You will be asked to complete a Basic DBS criminal record check. If the results are unsatisfactory* (*if you have undeclared unspent convictions) you will be withdrawn from the Recruitment Process.

In line with the Service's Core Values and in compliance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Service does not require you to disclose details of any 'spent' convictions for this recruitment. To confirm if a conviction is 'spent' or 'unspent' please visit www.disclosurecalculator.org.uk.

You will also be asked to provide the name and address of two referees, one of which should be your current or most recent employer. If the references received are unsatisfactory, further enquiries may be made before your appointment can be continued.

Stage 9 – Appointment

Should you be successful in the Recruitment Process, any offer of employment will be conditional upon several factors (these factors will be noted within an employment offer letter, but will include the completion of compulsory training courses and the completion of a probationary period). If any of the conditional factors prove unsatisfactory then the offer of employment may be withdrawn.

You will be issued with full uniform and personal protective equipment and it is a requirement that you take care of all items issued to you as per our policies. Should you leave the Service you will be required to return all uniform and equipment issued; charges will be made in relation to any non return of items issued.

You will be required to adhere to all Service policies and procedures and these include areas such as; Service Clothing and Standard of Dress. The Service Administrative Policy & Procedure Order Section 9, Order No 3 requires that:

- All personnel are to ensure that their hair style and length does not adversely affect their work with regards to health and safety
- Operational personnel are reminded that facial hair must not affect the seal of the breathing apparatus face mask (Full beards are not permitted for this reason)

You will be issued with a contract of employment and access to our intranet where all Service Administrative Policy & Procedure Orders can be accessed for reference and adherence.

You will be required to ensure that you take all reasonable steps you can to maintain a level of physical fitness necessary to carry out your operational duties throughout your career with the Service.

Stage 10 – Probation

A probationary period represents part of the offer of employment made, during which performance in the role is formally assessed. At the end of the probationary period the Service may either confirm the appointment or terminate the employment contract under due process. The probationary period for new employees commences on the start date laid down in their employment contract.

There are several elements that will be assessed within the probation period, including conduct, capability and the completion of compulsory training.

The RDS Firefighter role requires in-depth training, some of which will require attendance at residential training courses – further details will be provided in due course and the Service will be as flexible as possible to accommodate outside commitments when arranging courses.

Positive Action

Our aim is to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community we serve, and in turn improve the service we deliver to the community. To support this aim, where needed, Positive Action events will be organised to help those currently under represented within the role to apply. This currently includes women and people from LGBT, black and ethnic minority groups.

All applicants must go through the same Recruitment Process and must achieve the same level in any tests/assessments. Any offer of employment must be made on merit. Positive Action does not guarantee employment to those involved.

If you would like to be involved with Positive Action please contact us, you can email hrdesk@nwales-fireservice.org.uk or call 01745 535281.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success.



WE VALUE

Service to the community
People
Diversity
Improvement

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

We value service to the community by

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

PEOPLE

We value all our employees by practising and promoting

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Cooperative and inclusive working

DIVERSITY

We value diversity in the Service and the community by

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the Service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

IMPROVEMENT

We value improvement at all levels of the Service by accepting responsibility for our performance by

- Being open minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

CORE VALUES