



PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS, the Service) has a legal duty of care to its workforce and stakeholders to maintain a safe, secure and professional operating environment. Accordingly, pre-employment referencing is an integral part of the due diligence in the Service's recruitment process, providing assurance of candidates' suitability, as well as supporting safe and informed appointment decisions.

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT IN A FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

All applicants are required to disclose any previous employment in a Fire and Rescue Service. As part of the pre-employment screening process, NWFRS will obtain an employment reference from any Fire and Rescue Service(s) at which the applicant has previously been employed.

This reference must be satisfactory if an offer of employment is to be made.

REFERENCES AND QUALIFICATIONS

With the exception of internal candidates, all applicants must provide professional references that cover their **last five years of employment**. One reference must be provided by the candidate's immediate supervisor at their most recent employer. Current employers will not be contacted for a reference until applicants:

- are offered a position with the Service;
- confirm that the Service may contact their employer.

By providing this consent, applicants are giving their agreement for the Service:

- to obtain references from:
 - their previous employer(s);
 - their present employer;
 - any other Fire and Rescue Service(s) for which the candidate has worked;
 - any personal referees;
- to make any other reference checks that it may consider appropriate.

The receipt of unsatisfactory references or the failure to receive satisfactory references may lead to the withdrawal of a conditional offer of employment.

Applicants will be asked to provide documents and certificates to demonstrate that they possess the qualifications and professional memberships as stated on their application form, if these are essential requirements for the role for which they have applied. These documents and certificates will be checked for their validity and the issuing bodies' verification may be sought if required; copies will be held in individuals' personal record files.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE AND VETTING CHECKS

All new employees will be required to complete a Standard Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check as a minimum requirement prior to employment with the Service, as described in the [Disclosure and Barring Service Policy – click here](#). If it is identified as being necessary for relevant roles, an Enhanced DBS Check or Security Vetting will be undertaken.

Regardless of the level of check being carried out, no candidates will be allowed to start work in their role until satisfactory results from the check(s) have been received and confirmation provided in the form of a certificate or confirmation email as appropriate.

Any failure to disclose relevant or unspent convictions that are revealed in a DBS or security-vetting return may lead to the withdrawal of a conditional offer of employment. Applicants must also inform the Service if they are currently under investigation by the police and must equally advise about any ongoing actions.

Unspent convictions noted on the returned DBS certificate or vetting documents should be brought to the attention of the Head of Human Resources by the recruiting Line Manager for consideration, as not all criminal convictions (such as motoring offences) will be a bar to employment.

Should a positive disclosure (either spent or unspent) be received, a risk-based approach on managing the information will be adopted by the Service and a reasonable and proportionate decision will then be made. Further information can be found in the National Fire Chiefs' Council document [Positive Disclosure Risk Assessment Guidance - click here](#).

RENEWAL OF DBS AND VETTING CHECKS

All DBS checks and Security Vetting will be renewed every three years. However, any level of clearance may be renewed at an earlier stage if adverse information comes to light relating to the subject's clearance, or there is a material change in individual personal circumstances. Deliberate and unreasonable refusal to carry out and / or to comply with this contractual obligation will lead to disciplinary action being taken by the Service, and this may result in dismissal.

If at any time the Security Vetting expires, becomes invalid or is varied or revoked so that an employee no longer has the required clearance to undertake the role, the Service reserves the right to terminate employment.

ROLES INVOLVING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

For roles which involve working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, protection and safeguarding is the Service's primary concern, and it will not, as a rule, confirm conditional offers of employment for those who do not provide a satisfactory DBS or vetting check at the appropriate level.

The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has a significant duty of care in the way in which it delivers services to children and vulnerable adults; thus, it must ensure that Service employees who might come into any kind of contact with these groups of people have not been convicted of criminal offences which might affect whether it is appropriate for that employee to have any contact with them. There are certain facts that employees are obliged to report to their Line Manager within two days of their being notified. These include if employees:

- are under investigation by the police;
- are arrested (even if this does not lead to a conviction);
- are charged with a criminal offence (this requirement does not apply to criminal offences which are dealt with by way of a fixed penalty in place of a court appearance);
- are convicted of a criminal offence;
- are issued with a caution (given in place of a summons to appear before a court);
- drive Service vehicles and are awarded a fine such that their cumulative total reaches nine penalty points or above;
- drive Service vehicles and are disqualified from driving or are found guilty of any other driving offence.

If employees fail to report such matters, this inaction may also result in disciplinary action which could ultimately lead to dismissal.

SAFER RECRUITMENT PRINCIPLES

This is a set of practices which help to ensure that employees and volunteers are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. These practices will ensure that employees and volunteers are recruited safely and fairly, and that the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults is considered at every stage of the recruitment process. For further information see the [Safer Recruitment Procedure – click here](#).

The job description and person specification for roles which involve working with children, young people and vulnerable adults will specify:

- the duties that are to be undertaken relating to these groups of people;
- any safeguarding responsibilities which may arise;
- the level of DBS check and / or vetting to be carried out.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE

All conditional offers of employment are subject to satisfactory medical clearance being approved or declined in consultation with the Service's Occupational Health provision. Depending upon the role, medical consultation will be in the form of:

- the completion of a health questionnaire;
- a telephone consultation;
- face-to-face medical and fitness testing.

The Service does not operate a 'blanket ban' on the employment of people with certain health conditions or disabilities, but considers each applicant individually, taking into account its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The Service may take advice from its Occupational Health provision so as to ensure that any reasonable adjustments considered are both reasonable and appropriate to the employee.

It is important that any medical conditions which may affect the ability of the individual to undertake the tasks as set out in the job description are disclosed to the Service when the medical assessment is being tackled. If relevant medical information is not disclosed and the facts subsequently emerge, an individual's continued employment may be at risk.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

As part of the pre-employment checking process, the Service will require candidates to undergo drug and alcohol testing for all roles. Any testing will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Service policies and procedures, and will be conducted by an appropriately qualified testing provider.

Candidates will be required to provide a sample for testing. If the test produces a non-negative or positive result, or if it otherwise indicates the presence of drugs or alcohol above the applicable testing threshold, the candidate will not normally be progressed further through the recruitment process and any conditional offer of employment will be withdrawn.

Candidates are required to declare and provide medical evidence of any prescribed medication that they may be taking prior to starting the test, as any medication (both prescribed and unprescribed) could affect the outcome of the test. If a candidate has made such a declaration and the initial test produces a non-negative result, the sample will be referred to an appropriate laboratory for further analysis.

The laboratory analysis will be used to determine whether the result is consistent with the medication as declared by the candidate. If the result is confirmed as being consistent with the specified medication, the candidate will not be treated as having failed the drug test on that basis, and the recruitment and onboarding process may continue, subject to the satisfactory completion of all other pre-employment checks. Any failure to declare relevant medication prior to testing may result in the candidate being treated in accordance with the standard drug and alcohol testing process.

RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UNITED KINGDOM CHECKS

It is the policy of the Service to comply with all of its legal obligations in relation to the employment of its employees. The Service will not employ individuals unless they have a legal right to work in the United Kingdom (UK). All employers in the UK have a responsibility to prevent illegal working and must conduct right to work checks before employing individuals in order to ensure that people are not disqualified from working by reason of their immigration status.

All offers of employment are conditional upon applicants providing documents to enable the Service to verify that they have the right to work in the UK. The Service is responsible for carrying out checks on the appropriate documentation so as to verify that the individual has the continuing right to work in the UK; details are available in the [Right to Work Checks Procedure – click here](#).

Candidates will be asked to bring the relevant original documentation to their interview so that checks may be carried out; copies of all documents will be held in employees' Personal Record Files as evidence of their continuing right to work in the UK, and will also provide the Service with the statutory defence that checking has been undertaken.

The requirement to provide evidence as to the right to work in the UK will apply to all appointees, regardless of their race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

If successful candidates are unable to provide acceptable evidence as to their right to work in the UK, and a Home Office online check (as applicable) fails to confirm their right to do the work in question, the Service will withdraw the offer of employment.

In the event that individuals have time-limited permission to live and work in the UK, they will be required to provide evidence of their renewed right to live and work in the UK prior to the appropriate renewal dates and at the Service's request.

If the Service becomes aware during the course of individuals' employment that they do not have the right to work in the UK, the organisation will investigate the circumstances in the first instance. If it is established that employees do not have or cannot provide the appropriate evidence to demonstrate their right to work in the UK, the Service may terminate their employment with immediate effect.

This document forms part of a suite of information covering this subject area; hyperlinks to all the documents are available by clicking back to the home page.

Should any omissions or errors come to light with regard to the content of this suite of documents, readers are invited to contact policy.development@northwalesfire.gov.wales with their feedback.

It is recommended that this document be reviewed on a triennial basis; however, it might require earlier revision in the light of any regulatory change which comes into effect in the interim.			
Owner (Department)	Human Resources	Version	1.0
Last reviewed by (postholder)	Head of Human Resources	Date last reviewed	7 th December 2023
		Recommended review date	7 th December 2026