

# PRESS RELEASE

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## RECRUITING FIREFIGHTERS IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

More than 350 men and women from Northamptonshire applied to become firefighters in the latest East Midlands recruitment campaign.

Half of them (176) successfully showed that they met the necessary personal qualities and attributes in their applications, and were invited to sit the written tests. A total of 107 of those people passed that test in March, and will go on to take the physical tests later this month. Those who are successful at that stage will then face one final hurdle – an interview in June.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is hoping to find seven people to fill its firefighter vacancies, and advertising began last autumn. There was a particular emphasis on trying to encourage applications from women and people from different ethnic backgrounds, in order to achieve a workforce which reflects the communities served. Their efforts paid off, as 10% of applications came from women (7% achieved in 2007) although the number of applications received from people from ethnic communities fell slightly from 8% to 6.7%.

This is the second firefighter recruitment campaign to be managed across the region, encompassing Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire. A total of 2,146 applications were received across the five counties this year, and Regional Recruitment Manager Alan Richmond believes that the benefits of organising it across all fire and rescue services can be clearly seen.

“We learned a lot from the first campaign and, as a result, we have been able to streamline events more this year,” explained Alan. “We have seen a much higher standard of application this time, which may have been because we gave clearer instructions to candidates. Consequently, a higher percentage of applicants passed this year’s initial sifting exercise – 44% rather than 27%. The written tests were held in the

same central Leicester location over three days rather than taking up a whole week, saving us time and money.

“The other major benefit of organising the campaign across the whole region is that it means applicants have to apply just once. One application gives them the chance of finding a place in any of the five counties, if they are successful. This saves lots of effort on behalf of the candidates and the organisers.”

Cllr Peter Roffey, Chair of the East Midlands Regional Management Board, said he was pleased with the results so far, as they clearly showed the value of all five fire and rescue services working together. “If the selection criteria and process are the same throughout the region, then the applicants will all compete on an equal basis, regardless of where they are from or which Service they wish to join,” he said. “It also saves us money in terms of time and administration.”

Those candidates who are successful at the interview stage and are offered firefighter training posts will then take part in a 13-week training schedule, learning their basic competencies before being assigned to a fire station to continue their training whilst putting their skills into practice.

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## NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS

	<u>2009</u> campaign <b>East Midlands</b>	<u>2009</u> campaign <b>Northamptonshire</b>
Applications received	2,146	358
Applicants completing the written tests	877	176
Applicants going forward to the physical tests	552	107

For further information, please contact:

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