

Information Pack



Combined Fire Control Emergency Call Handler



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**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**
Working together to improve community safety



Our Service

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) offers staff a satisfying and varied career. The aim of this information booklet is to provide a better insight into the role of Emergency Call Handler with the Service's Combined Fire Control (CFC).

CFC handles the emergency calls from residents in both Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. It was the first control room of its kind to combine two service's functions together when it launched in 2011.

Cambridgeshire is served by 27 fire stations, of which seven are crewed by wholetime firefighters. The remaining stations rely on on-call firefighters, who respond to emergency calls while working their regular day jobs.

Suffolk is served by 35 fire stations of which six are crewed by wholetime firefighters, with the rest also crewed by on-call staff.

Working in the control room provides staff with a rewarding role that involves helping people in their time of need and a way to serve their local communities. The role offers varied day-to-day activity and working in a close knit team. Being able to work under pressure and multitasking several things at once will be needed.

Like many organisations CFRS draws those considered suitable for promotion to senior management positions from its existing staff and ensures that it has people with a wide range of skills to select from.



Combined Fire Control

Combined Fire Control acts as the primary communications hub for CFRS, receiving information and taking appropriate action in order to facilitate a successful conclusion to events.

When a member of the public dials 999, from Cambridgeshire or Suffolk, a telephone exchange operator will connect them to the control room at Service Headquarters in Huntingdon. The Emergency Call Handler answers the emergency call and gathers the required information before sending fire engines and officers where needed. They ask a number of questions to determine the location and nature of the emergency, entering this information into a bespoke computer system in order to establish the location of the nearest fire engines.

The call handler is trained in the use of specialised emergency call handling techniques in order to support and protect callers in potentially life threatening situations. They will identify risks to a caller's safety and advise on immediate actions while awaiting the arrival of fire crews.

CFC is crewed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and as such, each member of the team must be prepared to work a shift pattern involving days and nights, weekends, and on public holidays. More information about the shifts is available later in this booklet.

An Emergency Call Handler must have excellent listening skills, especially for taking emergency calls. Developed oral and written communication skills are essential. Team working is critical and the ability to make quick decisions, whilst working under pressure is also essential.



The Role

On reporting for duty, a short handover period takes place. This allows for those going off duty to brief oncoming staff with all relevant information from the day, such as any incidents in progress, crewing levels and any other relevant information.

During the shift a variety of duties are performed, including:

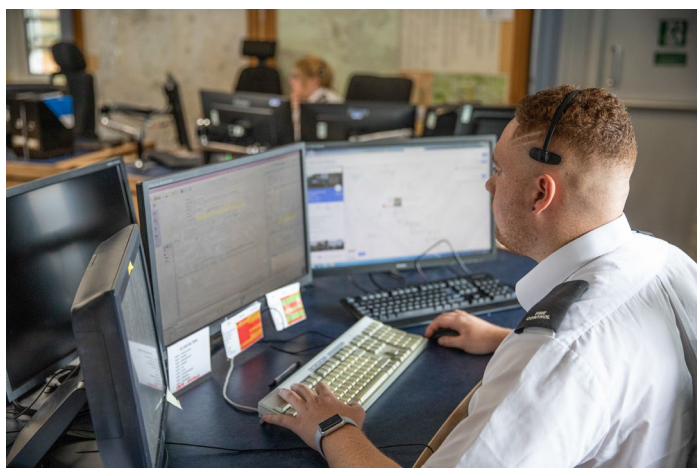
- Answering emergency calls.
- Mobilising fire service assets, such as fire engines and officers, to emergencies and other requests.
- Transmitting and receiving messages via the radio.
- Ensuring the correct availability of officers and appliances is shown.
- Informing other emergency services and utility companies where required.
- Monitoring incidents from start to finish.
- Maintaining accurate incident logs.
- Completing computerised statistics after each incident to compile reports
- Carrying out other administrative duties.

Training is carried out to develop skills and to keep up-to-date with policies and procedures. Although some of the work is routine, no two days are the same. The role is varied, challenging and rewarding.

Emergency Call Handlers are based at CFRS HQ in Huntingdon, but may be asked to work from any location in Cambridgeshire.

Specific requirements for the role can be found in the Job Description and Person Specification later in this booklet.

Please note that the role of Emergency Call Handler, or Firefighter (Control), **does not** carry out firefighting duties and does not provide a career path into the role of wholetime or on-call firefighter.



Career Phases

New trainee Emergency Call Handlers receive foundation training, consisting of technical, practical and theoretical work. The initial training will be for a period of seven weeks on a day duty system, consisting of formal training along with time spent learning and working with existing operators.

When the foundation training is complete, trainees will be required to start operational duties and join a watch (either Blue, Green, Red or White).

Following the successful completion of the foundation training, a structured development plan is given to trainees, which will need to be completed in addition to the programmed watch training that takes place. The training will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the expected milestones are being achieved.

The watch team will provide the support required by the trainees to ensure they are getting the help they need. This is an important part of the team structure on any watch and trainees will find a positive environment to work in, with the option to work with mentors, experienced officers or staff that have recently completed their training.

CFRS offers continuous in-house and external training to support people reaching their potential and to ensure staff continue with their development. There may also be opportunities to attend external courses at various locations.



Promotion Opportunities

There are opportunities for career development within Combined Fire Control. Once trainees have completed the development programme, opportunities will be made available to take on extra responsibilities, such as project work and watch based responsibilities.

Within CFRS the career pathway for CFC staff is outlined below:

Emergency Call Handler / Firefighter (Control)



Crew Commander (Control)



Watch Commander (Control)



Station Commander (Control)



Selection Process

Throughout the recruitment and selection process, applicants will be communicated with via email and telephone.

The process consists of four progressive stages, meaning applicants must be successful at each stage to progress onto the next. If an applicant is unsuccessful at a stage the application will not be continued.

Applicants should review the candidate timeline document available separately on the website for key dates. Please note this document will only be available when the application stage is live.

The four stages are as follows:

Application and shortlisting

Applicants are asked to complete a standardised application form containing the relevant personal details. It gives applicants the opportunity to provide evidence to meet the criteria in the personal specification for the role. Applicants must fully complete all sections before submitting their application.

All relevant qualifications should be listed within the application, with full details provided for each awarded qualification. For example:

Maths, GCSE, Grade C, June 1997, Longsands Community College St Neots rather than 10 GCSE's A-C (9-4). Copies of the qualification certificates should also be provided. Failure to do so may prevent the application from being progressed.

Assessment day

Applicants successful at the application stage will be invited to attend an assessment day in Control at Service HQ in Huntingdon.

The assessment day will involve a number of individual and group exercises to test candidate's abilities to meeting the requirements of the job. Tests will include:

- Typing test
- Attention to detail test
- Multi tasking Exercise
- Call handling simulation test

There is a minimum standard to be attained. Only the highest performing candidates will be invited to the next stage.

Interview

Top performing candidates from the first two stages will be invited to attend a formal interview. Prior to the interview candidates will be required to complete an online personality questionnaire. This will be incorporated into the interview.

Candidates will participate in a structured Interview based on the job description and person specification, which will last around an hour.

Information from the Equality Monitoring Section will not be provided to the Interview Panel.

Pre-Employment Clearances

Medical

Candidates will be invited to attend a medical appointment with the Service's Medical Advisor and Occupational Health Advisor.

References, qualifications, DVLA and DBS checks will also be carried out by the Service's HR team. This will include a request to see the original qualification certificates to ensure they match the copies provided. Once these checks have been carried out, candidates will be offered a position.

It is advisable to provide notice to any current employer once a formal appointment letter has been sent.

Holding List

There is the potential for a candidate to be placed on a holding list, meaning they will be considered for positions that become vacant in the following year. After a year, candidates will need to re-apply if still interested.

Terms and Conditions

The information below is for guidance only, and may be subject to change at any time.

Place of work

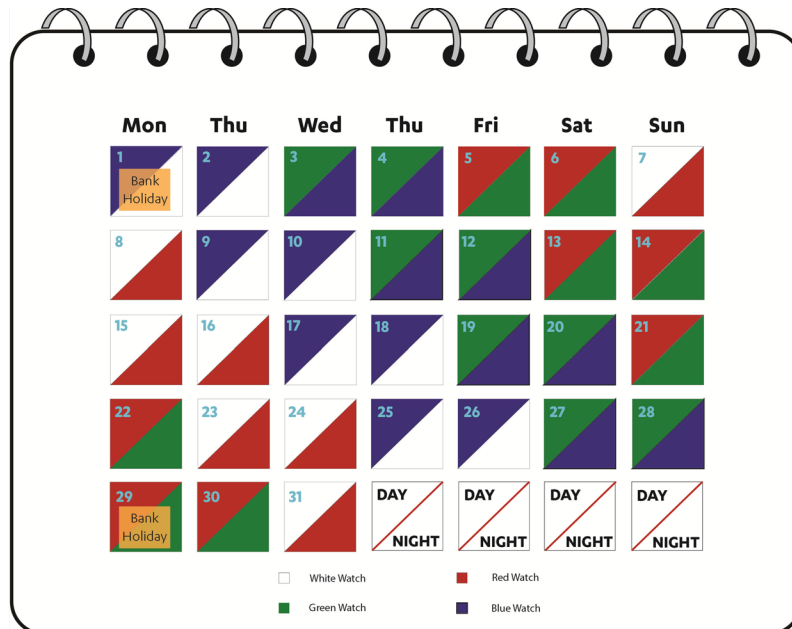
The role is based at Service Headquarters, Brampton Road Huntingdon PE29 2NA

Hours of Duty

Emergency Call Handlers carry out their duties 24/7, which entails an average of 42 hours work per week. A shift watch system is operated involving some unsocial hours. The shift pattern is:

- Two days worked - 8am until 5pm
- Two nights worked - 5pm until 8am
- Four rest days (known as rota days)

Below shows how the shift pattern works. Successful applicants will be allocated to either, white, green, red or blue watch and work to that watches pattern.



There is also a second shift pattern, which is a day duty shift. This pattern could be available to candidates following a successful probation period.

Initial training is completed on a day duty, working Monday to Friday from 9am until 5pm.

Holidays

The annual leave entitlement is 28 days plus Public Holidays, which is taken in accordance with Service policies.

After five years' of service, three additional days are granted as long service leave.

Subject to exigencies of the Service, staff will be entitled to a day's leave on the eight statutory public holidays. A member of staff required to work on Public Holidays shall be paid at double time for those hours and be granted a day's leave in lieu.

Other leave arrangements are in place to cover a range of circumstances.

Pension

Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme, this is funded by contributions both from staff and the Fire Authority.

Transfer of contributions from previous employment is possible under certain circumstances. Information regarding pension will be made available during induction.

Sickness

Staff are entitled to receive pay when on sick leave, subject to national conditions.

Probation

From the date of appointment, new staff will serve a probationary period of 24 months. A development programme will be provided at the start of employment, which has regular checks and assessments.

Training and development

Effective and regular training will be essential for staff to carry out the role successfully. Some training courses will be compulsory and training venues may be outside Cambridgeshire areas.

A wide range of other development opportunities exist, including assistance with study for promotion and sponsorship for qualifications that are relevant to the role.

External Employment

A Firefighter (Control) **must not** hold any other office or employment for gain or hire, or carry on any trade or business, without the prior approval of the Chief Fire Officer. In addition, staff are not permitted to be volunteer members of the reserved armed forces, including the Territorial Army, Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve or Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

Uniform and Personal Appearance

Uniform is provided and must be worn while on duty in accordance with Service's policies and procedures.

Staff are expected to maintain personal appearance, hygiene and cleanliness of uniform in keeping with a disciplined service.

Salary

Salary payments are made directly to the nominated bank account on a monthly basis.

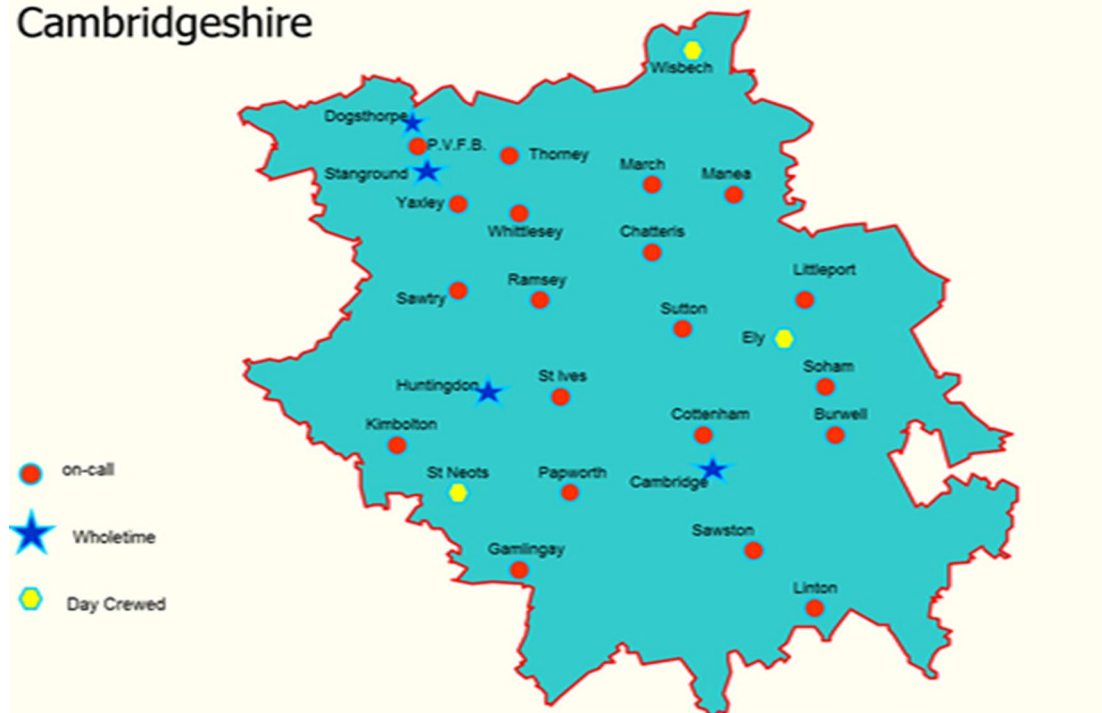
The rates of pay for a Firefighter (Control) as at July 1, 2018 are:

FIREFIGHTER (Control) (Trainee)	£21, 763 per year
FIREFIGHTER (Control) (In Development) (On successful completion of foundation training)	£22, 669 per year
FIREFIGHTER (Control) (Competent) (When assessed as competent after two year period)	£29,006 per year

NB 2019 pay award pending

Fire Stations

Cambridgeshire



SUFFOLK



Job Description

Responsible to: Watch Commander Combined Fire Control

Responsible for: No line management responsibility

Job purpose: To receive and respond to emergency calls

Main duties and accountabilities:

1. Emergency response

- Gather information to aid effective response to emergency calls.
- Mobilise resources in response to the needs of an emergency.
- Support emergency callers.
- Support the ongoing needs of an emergency event.
- Contribute to the continuous business improvement of the service.

2. Maintain information and equipment

- Monitor the availability of operational resources.
- Manage information to support decisions on operational cover.
- Gather required information.
- Inform and advise others.
- Retrieve and enter data to update databases.
- Extract required information from databases.
- Test communication and mobilising equipment.
- Maintain communication and mobilising equipment.

3. Personal development

- Take responsibility for personal performance.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with people.
- Develop your own skills to improve performance.
- Communicate your own skills and knowledge to colleagues.
- Support development of colleagues in the workplace.

4. General duties

- Receive and process general enquiries made to Combined Fire Control.
- Provide a communications focus for the Service outside of normal working hours.
- Support and promote the Service's fairness at work policy and procedures to ensure fairness in employment and service delivery.
- Support and promote the Service's health and safety policy and procedure to maintain a safe and healthy working environment.

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITIES (applicable to all staff)

1. Equality and Inclusion

- Support and promote the Service's statement, policies and procedures on Equality and Inclusion in employment and service delivery.

2. Health, Safety and Risk

- Ensure that health, safety and risk issues are factored into all areas of activity
- Support and promote the Service's Health and Safety policies and procedures to maintain a safe and healthy working environment.

3. Personal Development

- Responsible for updating own practices and professional knowledge.
- Undertaking personal development activities as agreed with line manager.

4. General

- To undertake such other duties as may be required from time to time, commensurate with the grade and positioning of the post.

OTHER GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOB

1. Continuous personal development

- The post holder must be willing to continuously develop their professional knowledge, experience and understanding.

2. Travel

- Travelling across the county may be required to facilitate the effective delivery of the role and to participate in meetings etc.

Person Specification

CORE COMPETENCIES	CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	MEASUREMENT
QUALIFICATIONS/ EDUCATION	Able to type more than 40 words per minute with 90 per cent accuracy.	✓		Selection Process
	Four GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades A to C including English Language.	✓		Application Form
COMMUNICATION	The ability to communicate and converse at ease with customers and provide advice or give correct information in accurate spoken / written English.	✓		Application Form and Selection Process
	Knowledge of second language.		✓	Application Form
	Experience of alternative communication e.g. two way radio work.		✓	Application Form and Selection Process
	Experience of customer service e.g. excellent telephone manner		✓	Application Form and Selection Process
MOTIVATION/ DISPOSITION	Able to work quickly, calmly and confidently under pressure in an emergency situation.	✓		Selection Process
	Be committed to work in a disciplined environment involving shift work and unsocial hours.		✓	Selection Process

	Committed to self-development.	✓		Application Form and Selection Process
	Is open to change and actively seeks to support it.	✓		Application Form
	Maintains a confident and resilient attitude in highly challenging situations.	✓		Application Form and Selection Process
	Adopts a conscientious and proactive approach to work to achieve and maintain excellent standards.		✓	Selection Process
	Understands and respects diversity and adopts a fair and ethical approach to others.	✓		Selection Process
ORGANISATIONAL	Works effectively with others.	✓		Application Form and Selection Process
	Maintains high attention to detail in a high paced environment	✓		Application Form and Selection Process
	Understands recalls, integrates and applies relevant information in an organised, safe and systematic manner.		✓	Application Form and Selection Process
IT	Experience of using ICT packages confidently e.g. Microsoft packages	✓		Selection Process

*Reasonable adjustment will be made for those candidates who may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010. However, it is essential that the successful candidate can travel to any part of the county when required

Skills Checklist

Working as an Emergency Call Handler is both rewarding and challenging. The questions below provide potential applicants with an idea of the skills required for the role. Please read through each question carefully and tick Yes or No in the box provided.

	Yes	No
Are you someone that others see as dependable?		
Are you prepared to work days, nights, evenings, weekends and Public Holidays?		
Are you genuinely interested in people?		
Can you work in an environment where you will work with the same four or five people every day, and you will not see many other people?		
Can you work in an environment where most of your contact with colleagues outside of Fire Control will be by telephone only?		
Are you able to manage your energy levels in prolonged and challenging situations?		
Can you work in an environment where sometimes you will be extremely busy, but some shifts may be fairly quiet?		
Are you prepared to work within a disciplined uniform service and take orders from a higher ranking officer?		
Are you prepared to work to strict uniform guidelines?		
Can you take responsibility for representing the Service when you are at work and when you are not?		
Do you want to work as part of a close-knit team?		
Can you get on with people from different backgrounds and cultures?		
Do you have the sensitivity to deal with members of the public when they are distressed, confused or being obstructive?		
Are you able to communicate important information to children and/or adults?		
Can you work under pressure?		
Can you stay focused in a busy environment?		
Are you committed to always maintaining and developing your skills?		
Are you able to convey detailed information clearly both verbally and in a typed format?		
Are you committed, enthusiastic and prepared to see situations through to their conclusion?		