

New firefighter induction protocols

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy provides guidance to officers and others on the protocols to be adopted when a new firefighter is to be posted to a fire station following successful completion of the Firefighter Training Programme.
- 1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy number 1013 - staff probationary policy, as well as the Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship Managers Guidance found on Hotwire.
- 1.3 The intention is to ensure a consistent approach is taken when firefighters are first posted from the Training Centre.

2 General guidance

- 2.1 The arrival of a new member of staff onto a watch is a matter that needs careful planning, and everybody needs to be aware of their individual responsibilities with regard to supporting the new firefighter through the initial stages of their career. This includes taking steps to help the new firefighter to integrate into station life and their watch with compassion and respect.
- 2.2 Although the new firefighter will have received intense training before they arrive at station, they will still require ongoing support with learning daily routines, duties, embedding practical skills and meeting the requirements of their apprenticeship and development. It is expected that watch personnel have an understanding of station-based learning and development for achieving both their Level 3 Apprenticeship. **At all times the sub/stn officer will have lead responsibility for the welfare, training, and development of their staff.**

3 Completion of initial training

- 3.1 Trainees will undertake their initial acquisition training and attain the minimum safe standard to work as an operational firefighter before they arrive at station. Trainees will not pass out until all training areas have been satisfactorily achieved. During this time the Training and Professional Development Team (T&PD) will oversee initial training and ensure that any identified learning and development needs are addressed appropriately. The evidence obtained will be utilised to produce an end of course report following discussions between the trainee and their trainers.
- 3.2 EPT will determine the most suitable posting for each new Ff candidate in accordance with Policy number 651 - Station allocation and transfer policy and the station commander will be notified of the exact date of arrival.
- 3.3 On the final day of initial training, a pass out ceremony will be held and at least one borough officer (station commander or above) will be invited to attend the ceremony. Every effort should be made to ensure that the officer attending is the station commander from the receiving station. stn/sub officer and/or the volunteer watch mentor (if assigned) from receiving stations could also be released to attend subject to the needs of the service.

4 Preparing for the arrival of the new firefighter to station

- 4.1 On receipt of the posting notification, the placement station commander is to make every effort to make sure that they have prepared for the arrival of the new firefighter and is available to conduct the induction meeting on the first duty shift. The station commander, station officer or sub officer should use **Appendix 1** to ensure they have carried out all the preparation steps in advance of this first meeting. This includes annotating the PARC card on StARS with 'Induction Day.'

- 4.2 In the event of the station commander being unavailable to meet the new firefighter on their first duty day, arrangements should be made for a station commander from the same borough to welcome the new firefighter at the placement station. In situations where there is no station commander on duty in the borough, the borough commander should conduct the induction or request another station commander from a neighbouring borough/station to attend the meeting.
- 4.3 Prior to the arrival of the new firefighter, the borough commander, station commander and stn/sub officer will receive, electronically, the end of course report and any other relevant documentation pertaining to the new firefighter (personal development plans, fitness plans, learning support advisor reports and probation reports). The contents should be discussed between the placement managers and a plan of action agreed. A copy of each document will be placed on the individual's electronic Personal Record Folder (e-PRF).
- 4.4 Following completion of initial training, the trainee's uniform and fire gear will be delivered to the placement station. On receipt of the trainee's personal issue the receiving station will securely store the package in anticipation of the arrival of the trainee.

5 Support for the new firefighter

- 5.1 Firefighters leaving the Training Centre environment after their period of initial training may feel vulnerable or apprehensive when arriving and reporting for duty at a station for the first time. By putting support in place, we can minimise any uncertainty that an individual may feel and ensure they swiftly integrate into station life with ease and a sense of belonging. It is important the new firefighter is provided with support through to full competency and beyond.
- 5.2 Personnel and officers on the watch are vital in creating a supportive and inclusive environment for the new firefighter. All members of the watch should take a level of ownership to provide the new firefighter with guidance, demonstrate skills and support them to fill any gaps they may have in their learning.
- 5.3 In addition to this, a volunteer firefighter from the watch can be assigned to the new firefighter as their watch mentor. A suitable and motivated volunteer for this role should be assigned (before the induction day). It is important the mentor is provided with the guidance necessary to understand what this role entails and how they can assist the new firefighter to integrate into station life (refer the mentor to Appendix 3). The watch mentor should place time aside at least every other tour, to meet with the apprentice in a private space and have informal catch-up discussions. These can be planned on Station Diary.
- 5.4 The mentor-trainee relationship is extremely helpful to assist the firefighter to settle into the watch/station environment, familiarise them with their surroundings and introduce the practical application of the skills they have acquired whilst in training. For the new firefighter, they receive the benefit of building a trusting relationship with at least one person from their watch who can act as a point of contact for questions and being signposted to additional support they may require (without feeling nervous or under assessment).
- 5.5 If a situation arises where the new firefighter raises an area of concern, the mentor will need to encourage them to speak to their officer in charge. It is important the mentor facilitates raising concerns early so they can be resolved swiftly, avoiding escalation.
- 5.6 If the new firefighter raises any issues of concern which poses a risk to the new firefighter themselves, the organisation, or others, it is important the mentor shares the issue with the officer in charge or appropriate manager without delay.
- 5.7 It would not be the responsibility of the mentor to complete records associated with the development programme. This remains the responsibility of the assessor.

- 5.8 Advice on the completion of these development records or any aspect of the development programme can be gained from Hotwire or by emailing Career Development Services.
- 5.9 In the event that the mentor is off work/transferred, the importance of the new firefighter having an immediate contact point remains for as long as necessary. Therefore, a sub/stn officer should be nominated.
- 5.10 The sub/stn officer should meet regularly with the mentor, to discuss their continuing role and any additional support the new firefighter requires. This arrangement should be for a minimum of 6 months and when appropriate dispense with this arrangement in consultation with the firefighter.
- 5.11 Supporting the firefighter with their development is covered in section 8.

6 Induction day (first duty shift)

- 6.1 On the new firefighter's first duty, they should prepare themselves for roll call, supported by their sub/stn officer or watch mentor. The watch officer at change of watch, should contact Control and book the appliance status 7 for 'induction meeting'. This should last no longer than 1 hour. Following the induction meeting, the new firefighter can be placed on the nominal roll call board and placed on the run.
- 6.2 An induction day is designed to welcome the new firefighter to their station, introduce watch members and their mentor. The station commander can carry out the induction on the new firefighter's first shift. This discussion aims to help the new firefighter comfortably familiarise themselves with their new work environment and settle in. Appendix 5 should be completed and handed to the new firefighter. Appendix 2 outlines the informal format to be followed by the station commander/stn/sub officer when inducting the new firefighter. This is a baseline guidance note, and officers may wish to add other relevant local issues as they think necessary. On completion of the induction, a copy of Appendix 2 should be emailed to HR (record services) to add to the individuals e-PRF.
- 6.3 The new firefighter will be expected to ride the appliance on their first duty day, riding positions can be managed locally in line with policies.
- 6.4 The stn/sub officer should introduce the firefighter to their watch mentor. The checklist in Appendix 4 should be used by the watch mentor on the induction day to help familiarise the new firefighter with the station, answer questions and support them to settle in. This checklist can be added to, as considered necessary by the mentor/sub/stn officer to take account of any local circumstances.

7 First week on station

- 7.1 In addition to the induction meetings described above, within the first week the firefighter should meet the station commander and stn/sub officer to discuss and agree an initial training development plan. The firefighter's development, end of course report and any other documentation provided by Training and Professional Development Team and Babcock should be used during the discussion and when formulating the initial training plan. If any learning needs have been identified through assessments, there should be a discussion about how any recommendations from Learning Support will be implemented at station. Any other matters arising should be discussed at this time and resolved if possible.
- 7.2 The sub/stn officer should, as soon as possible spend time with the firefighter to discuss the Apprenticeship Programme and expectations of new staff. Advice on assessment can be obtained from Career Development Services and Hotwire.

- 7.3 The watch mentor should continue to support the firefighter throughout this time, providing advice and guidance as necessary.

8 First month on station

- 8.1 The sub/stn officer should meet the new firefighter regularly to discuss progress, monitor welfare and how they can best continue to provide support to the firefighter. The end of course report, learning support recommendations and the requirements of both the apprenticeship and personal development record can be reviewed and used to assist these meetings. The opportunity should also be taken at this time to discuss with the mentor how the firefighter is settling in with their watch, role and highlight any additional support the new firefighter may find helpful.
- 8.2 At monthly intervals the sub/stn officer should review and record the progress with the new firefighter. A review meeting should be completed including action plans for identified training needs. Witness testimony for activities undertaken can also be provided.
- 8.3 A Babcock apprenticeship coach will be allocated to support the new firefighter with their apprenticeship. Feedback on performance will be given to line managers within the 9 month probation period.
- 8.4 The station commander will conduct regular formal probation reviews that will take place 3 months after being posted to station following attendance at the Training Centre (7 months total service with the Brigade). The borough commander will at 9 months total service with the Brigade, formally review the probation.
- 8.5 The sub/stn officer should meet regularly with the mentor, to discuss their continuing role and when appropriate dispense with the formal arrangements. It is recommended this arrangement is in place for a minimum of 6 months.
- 8.6 As far as possible, standbys for the new firefighter and their mentor should be avoided in the early months following placement. This will ensure the trainee receives consistent support in the early stages of their career.

Appendix 1 - Preparation checklist

Station commander/officer in charge to arrange prior to the arrival of the new firefighter

		Completed	Notes / Further actions
Background	Time should be made available to familiarise yourself with end of course reports, any development reports/other reports as required, this should be recorded in the LFB Diary as a station based meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Familiarise yourself with any learning support reports if applicable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Annotate PARC card with 'Induction Day'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Uniform + storage	Check for correct workwear uniform (correct gender and size).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Order sleeping bag, pillow and any other items.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Allocate personal locker (and provide padlock).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Allocate PPE peg to new firefighter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Support	Source a suitable member of the watch to be a volunteer mentor to the new firefighter and brief them with the details of Appendix 3 to help them understand the expectations of this role.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Brief the watch about the arrival of the new member of the team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Time should be made available to complete the contact sheet, Appendix 5 ready to hand to the new firefighter on their first day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix 2 - Firefighter induction day checklist

For completion by station commander/officer in charge on Induction Day and email to record services to add to the firefighter's e-PRF

Induction carried out by:		Date:	
Name of trainee firefighter:		Station:	

		Completed	Notes / Further actions
Introductions	SC or officer in charge to meet and welcome the new firefighter on their first day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Introduce the new firefighter to the on-duty officer in charge and the watch.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Explain what support there is available to help them integrate into station life, with their development and apprenticeship, and who to is their point of contact to raise any concerns/queries (watch mentor).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Introduce new firefighter to their watch mentor (WM)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of WM:
	Book the appliance status 7 for 'induction meeting'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Uniform + storage	Check workwear uniform (correct gender & size) supplied.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Check PPE (correct gender and size) supplied.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Check the new firefighter has sleeping bag, pillow, locker, PPE peg and any other requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Procedures	Provide the new firefighter with Appendix 5 with contact details and explain the procedure to book late or unfit for duty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Familiarisation of stand by-out duties. This will be managed locally by line management.		
Other			

Appendix 3 - Watch mentor guidance note

What is a watch mentor?

A mentor is:	A mentor is not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to provide informal support to the new firefighter to help them integrate into station life, familiarise them with the role and station/surroundings. • Be a point of contact and safe place for the new firefighter to open and honestly share their experiences. If required, informing them of the support network available within the LFB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A substitute for a line manager. • A coach or mentor. • Directly responsible for the training and development of the new firefighter. • A substitute counsellor. • Overseeing welfare concerns.

Watch mentor support

- Support and encourage the firefighter; ask them how they are getting on, travel, how they are adapting to working shifts, home life (if they choose to share), how they are generally progressing with their apprenticeship and any support they may need.
- Help the new firefighter to become familiar with the station life/station/surrounding area, daily routines.
- Encourage questions if they are unsure about any aspects of their role.
- Provide a safe listening space to share triumphs and/or discuss concerns so that they can be flagged early to the appropriate person (officer in charge).
- Arrange one to one informal chats (preferably in a private space).
- Signpost the new firefighter to additional support if required (senior officer, trauma and counselling, mental health support networks, equality support groups, Babcock coach).

How long is the arrangement?

This is a decision you can make with the firefighter and watch officer, when all parties feel is appropriate (minimum 6 months). Ongoing support can be maintained by the whole watch as and when required.

Appendix 4 - Watch mentor checklist

Name of watch mentor		Date	
Name of firefighter		Station	

	Induction Day	Completed	Notes / Further actions
Uniform + storage	Check workwear uniform and PPE (correct gender and size).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Discuss the PPE cleaning procedure and spare gear locker.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Show them their personal locker.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Take them to their PPE peg.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Station life	Explain station routines and watch room duties – typical day and night shift schedule, breaks etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Explain mess duties, how it works and what it costs – tea / coffee/meals (include arrangements if they have any dietary requirements or want to bring in their own meals etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Handover by previous watch on duty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Familiarisation with appliance stowage and inventories/tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Familiarise them with station ground and surrounding area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Take through accessing IT – Hotwire, Big Learning, POMS etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Facilities	Station security – belongings, fire/emergency evacuation procedure, first aid, smoking policy, parking, cycle racks etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Workplace tour – toilets/showers, gym, changing rooms, kitchen, food storage, mess & resting room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Door access codes, parking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Key cupboard.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Local facilities (shops nearby and other useful information).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Procedures	Station number and procedure to book late or ill.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Roll call and dress standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Watch-room and mobilising equipment familiarisation, ops readiness board, printer, telephone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Explain different sound alerts and mobilising routine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	The correct procedure for reporting health and safety defects)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix 5 - Handout for new firefighter

This form is to be completed by the sub/stn officer of the placement watch. Once completed it should be handed to the new firefighter on their first day of arrival at their station.

Important information for new firefighters

This form provides you with the basic information that you require prior to reporting for your first on the run duty shift. You will find it useful to keep this document handy until you build up knowledge of procedures and contact points.

Phone number 020 8555 1200 extension:

Address of station

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Station access code(s)

Booking late/sick

If you find it necessary to book late for duty or sick you should phone the station at the earliest opportunity and in any case before the due start of the shift. It is important that you speak to the on-duty sub/stn officer and pass to them all the details requested. If booking sick you should contact the sub/stn officer for the first four consecutive shifts.

Personnel	Name	Phone number
Borough commander		
Station commander		
Station officer		
Sub officer		
Leading firefighter		
FBU rep		
Welfare rep		
FF charity rep		

Nearest transport

Bus route and stop

Underground station and line.....

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	10/01/24	SDIA	L – 16/10/23	HSWIA	25/09/23	RA	
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Page 3 and 11	All references to Central Service Delivery (CSD) changed to the Establishment and Performance Team (EPT).	04/11/2009
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current, please read through.	26/05/2011
Page 3 Para 4.2 and Appendix 2	Reference to adding TR on StARS for the induction day.	26/05/2011
Page 3 Para 4.3 Page 3 Para 4.4	Managers will receive information electronically. EPT are no longer required to inform the FBU of placements.	26/05/2011
Page 5 and Appendix 2	Equality Services now deliver input to trainees whilst at STC	26/05/2011
Appendix 6	Amended Trainee personal summary.	26/05/2011
Page 13	SIA date added, as it had been missed off.	12/12/2012
Page 13	Subject list and FOIA exemptions tables updated.	16/12/2014
Page 1	Amendments to PN Owner and Responsible work team due to TMR.	09/10/2015
Throughout	Reviewed as current with no changes.	27/06/2016
Page 1	Owner title/Department name changed in line with the introduction of the London Fire Commissioner which now replaces the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.	15/10/2018
Throughout	Advisory and Counselling updated to Counselling and Trauma Services, plus the removal of Southwark Training Centre.	14/11/2018
Throughout	Changes made to team/department names to reflect the change in organisational governance (the abolition of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority).	05/12/2018
Throughout	Role to rank changes made.	11/01/2022
Throughout	Title of policy amended and content/appendices updated throughout by Ops Policy and the cultural change team based on recommendations from 2021 inquest to ensure new firefighters consistently have support mechanisms when they join. These changes are reflected in the new appendices written. Policy 651 about station allocations is currently being reviewed, therefore any content relating to this has been deleted.	12/09/2023
Throughout	Reviewed as current with no changes, updated impact assessment dates added.	17/01/2024

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification