



Comhairle Contae **Lú**  
**Louth** County Council

**LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**CANDIDATE INFORMATION**  
**BOOKLET**

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY & SIGN THE DECLARATION ON PAGE NO. 19**

**RETAINED FIRE**  
**FIGHTER**

**Drogheda, Dundalk, Dunleer,**  
**Ardee, Carlingford**

---

**Contact:**

**Human Resources Section**  
**Louth County Council**  
**County Hall**  
**Millennium**  
**Centre**  
**Dundalk**  
**Co. Louth**  
**A91 KFW6**

Email: [recruitment@louthcoco.ie](mailto:recruitment@louthcoco.ie)

Telephone Number: 042 9335457

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>The Competition .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Duties and Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Qualifications for the post .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Provisions .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Selection Process: .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Phase 1: Review the Briefing Document in full &amp; Complete Questionnaire.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Phase 2 - Formal Application and Short-listing: .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Phase 3 -Station &amp; Literacy Tests .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Phase 4 - Interview.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Communications: .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Employee Benefits .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Application Process.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Fine Print: .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Terms &amp; Conditions &amp; Declaration .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions .....</b>	<b>20</b>

## THE COMPETITION

Louth County Council invites applications from suitably qualified persons who wish to be considered for inclusion on a panel from which permanent & fixed-term contract vacancies for the position of Retained Fire Fighter Ashbourne Fire Station shall be drawn.

### THE POSITION – BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

Louth County Council is the authority responsible for local government in Louth. The county of Louth is divided into the three municipal districts of Drogheda, Ardee and Dundalk. There are five electoral areas in Louth: Ardee, Drogheda Rural, Drogheda Urban, Dundalk-Carlingford and Dundalk South. There are 29 elected county councillors and an annual operating budget of €171.7 million in 2024.

The Council provides a diverse range of services across a large geographic area. Key services areas include housing delivery, planning and development, emergency services, infrastructural upgrades and projects (road improvements, public realm), community services and facilities (community/leisure centres, libraries and parks), encouraging economic development through FDI (foreign direct investment), and supporting existing and new business.

#### **Context:**

Local Government has undergone a very significant reform process in line with the proposals in “Putting People First”. The programme sets out a wide range of actions to deliver reform in order to address weaknesses, enhance effectiveness and accountability and improve performance across the entire system. The Local Government Act 2014 provided the necessary legislative basis to give effect to many of the reform measures set out in the Action Programme.

The Act, together with the Action Programme provide the broad policy context within which the successful candidate will work and a focussed agenda which he or she will be required to lead and deliver on, as directed by the Chief Executive.

The Council now requires additional members for the retained (i.e. retained/part-time & on-call) Fire Service.

The Fire Service responds to all emergency calls from the public for assistance, primarily to protect life and save injury to individuals, but also to prevent and restrict damage to property. Many emergency calls are not just in relation to fires, but can be to incidents involving road traffic collisions, incidents involving chemical spillages or toxic emissions, and river rescues, etc.

To deliver this service to the public the Fire Service develops operational plans, including the provision of adequate water supplies for fire-fighting; ensures that effective arrangements exist to receive emergency ‘999’ calls and mobilise resources; implements effective operational communication systems throughout the Fire Service; enforces, promotes and encourages fire safety within the county by programmes of inspection and publicity; conducts effective training to develop the skills and abilities of personnel; and provides, maintains and repairs its premises, vehicles, plant and equipment.

Fully qualified Fire-fighters are skilled personnel capable of using the most modern equipment, methods and techniques to undertake the full range of duties such as fire-fighting, rescue, road traffic collision extrications and other emergencies.

A Fire-fighter's work and training is geared towards responding safely and effectively to emergency calls, regardless of weather conditions or the time of day or night. Every time Fire-fighters are called to the scene of an emergency, they must be prepared to deploy the skills in which they have been trained and respond to the instructions and commands of their Incident Commander.

In order to function effectively in emergencies Fire-fighter's must demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Courage and physical strength;
- A capacity for rapid, intense and sustained effort;
- An unquestioning acceptance of orders in emergency situations;
- A capacity to use their own initiative when alone;
- Complete and automatic familiarity with the equipment and tools of the profession (which may range up to major items of plant such as Fire-fighting appliance vehicles);
- A practical understanding of the basis of a wide range of subjects necessary to anticipate and overcome hazards;
- Empathy with victims of emergency situations;
- An ability to carry out their function in what may occasionally be emotionally difficult and harrowing circumstances.

#### **A GOOD JOB:**

Action, serving the community, job satisfaction and training – with all this on offer working in the Fire Service is very appealing. If you can meet the demands of a public service with a first-class reputation for dealing with all types of serious incidents, the Retained Fire Service can offer you a fulfilling and satisfying job.

#### **A SATISFYING AND PROGRESSIVE CAREER:**

A career as a Retained Fire-fighter will be demanding both physically and mentally. You will be operationally 'on-call' once you have completed your recruit training and for the first year you will be on probation. You will be expected to absorb a wide range of information and to demonstrate your technical and practical skills through a series of assessments and examinations.

#### **ALWAYS IMPROVING:**

Technological developments in every dimension of our lives and new hazards must be matched by improvements in fire-fighting techniques and equipment. A reasonable standard of education is desirable so that you can assimilate the technical work involved in today's service. The role of a modern Fire-fighter is very challenging and rewarding and individuals are required to display determination, physical stamina and discipline in stressful situations.

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To be available to respond to and deal with emergency calls immediately and safely within the station fireground area;
- To work effectively and efficiently as a member of a team;
- To be available and undertake all training as required;
- To acquire and maintain knowledge to enhance professional skills in all areas relevant to the position including:
  - Topography;
  - Hazards and special risks;
  - Water supplies and fixed fire-fighting systems, etc.
- To maintain, clean, repair and test fire-fighting and emergency equipment as required;
- To uphold the Fire Service's high standards and reputation with particular regard to appearance, dress, conduct, behaviour and demeanour;
- To maintain a level of health and fitness commensurate with your duties as a Fire-fighter;
- To understand, comply with and implement all relevant policies of Louth County Council and County Fire Service e.g.;
- Health and safety;
- Grievance and Disciplinary, Dignity at Work, etc.
- To undertake routine administrative duties, including the use of information technology, as required;
- ☐ To carry out any other duties as reasonably required by the Chief Fire Officer.

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE POST

### 1. CHARACTER

A candidate must be of good character and, if being considered for a post after interview will be required to provide a reference from two responsible citizens who are not related to them.

### 2. AGE

Candidates shall be over the age of 18 years at the date of appointment. Any candidate who reaches the age of 55 years prior to appointment will cease to be eligible for appointment on the result of the competition.

### 3. RETIREMENT

The normal retirement age is 55. The retirement age for a Fire-fighter may be extended up to 62 years at the discretion of Louth County Council as their employer and subject to the Fire-fighter successfully completing a medical examination by the Council's Medical Adviser for each of the last 7 years of service. Details about retirement age can be found on <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release> .

## 4. HEALTH

---

Candidates must:

- a) Be free from any illness or disease which would render him/her unsuitable for duty with the service and be in a state of health that meets the required standards as determined by the Council's Medical Adviser, such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.
- b) Before being accepted for appointment a candidate will be required to pass a medical examination by a qualified medical practitioner nominated by Louth County Council; and as a condition of retention of the appointment, to pass further such medical examinations at specified intervals.
- c) Successful candidates to the positions will be required to co-operate with the National Occupational Health System for Retained Fire-fighters, and to undergo periodical medical examinations.

## 5. MEDICAL EXAMINATION

---

Before recruitment, in order that conditions as to health may be ascertained, a candidate must undergo such medical examination (which may include X-ray and/or other special tests) as the Council consider necessary and in line with national guidance and requirements for Retained Fire-fighters/National Occupational Health System for Retained Fire-fighters. The medical examiners will be nominated by the Council. A candidate must comply, with such remedial requirements as the Council considers necessary.

Fire-fighters employed by the Council will be required to undergo regular compulsory medical examinations as set out in the National Occupational Health System for Retained Fire-fighters, up to age 55 and then annually up to age 62 (details about retirement age can be found on <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release>). A Fire-fighter who is unable to satisfy the Council as to his/her ability to perform his/her duties to the necessary standard will be required to retire.

## 6. EDUCATION & TRAINING

---

A candidate must have attained a suitable level of education to enable him/her to undergo successfully, the appropriate training, and to perform satisfactorily as a Fire-fighter. Each candidate must be able to demonstrate a proficient level of literacy and numeracy skills to allow them to fulfil the duties of the role. Candidates will be required to undertake a Literacy and Numeracy Competency Test as part of the recruitment process.

## 7. DRIVING LICENCE

---

A candidate must, at the date of application, be the holder of a full unendorsed Class 'B' Driving Licence. On appointment and after an interval decided by the Chief Fire Officer, Fire-fighters are required to obtain a HGV licence (training and application paid for by the council) and undertake further driving training and instruction to enable them to drive fire appliances and other Fire Service fleet. If a Firefighter has their licence suspended or removed for any reason, they must immediately inform the County Council, and it shall be dealt with through the Council's disciplinary procedure and may result in termination of service at the absolute discretion of the County Council.

## MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

### SALARY

The employment is part-time and pensionable.

A Fire-fighter shall be paid at the appropriate approved national rates of Fire and Retainer Fees.

The current rates of remuneration are: -

<b>Retainer (Annual Amounts)</b>	<b>01/10/2024</b>				
Retained Fire Fighter		Retained Sub Officer / Driver Mechanic		Retained Station Officer	
On recruitment	<b>€13,523</b>	0-3 Years	<b>€18,393</b>	0-3 Years	<b>€22,821</b>
2-4 Years	<b>€14,515</b>	4-7 Years	<b>€20,096</b>	4-7 Years	<b>€25,072</b>
5-7 Years	<b>€15,739</b>	8+	<b>€21,645</b>	8+	<b>€27,119</b>
8+	<b>€16,854</b>				
<b>Activity Rates</b>					
	<b>01/10/2024</b>				
<b>Basic Hourly Rate for Activity (Drill Rate)</b>	<b>Standard Attendance Rates</b>		<b>Premium Attendance Rates</b>		
	1st Hour	Subsequent Hours	1st Hour	Subsequent Hours	
<b>€24.77</b>	<b>€49.54</b>	<b>€24.77</b>	<b>€99.08</b>	<b>€49.54</b>	
<b>Hourly Attendance at Drills (Double Drill Rate)</b>	<b>€49.54</b>				
<b>Community Fire Safety Annual Payment (40 hours at Basic Rate Annually)</b>	<b>€38.11</b>				
<b>Community Fire Safety Payment - Hourly</b>	<b>€24.77</b>				

### PROBATION

Before appointment as a Firefighter, a recruit shall attend and successfully complete the three-week Firefighter Skills Training Course.

Recruit Firefighters will be required to undergo and successfully complete the following recruit training programmes during their probationary period: -

- A three-week Recruit Firefighting Skills Course (including manual handling);
- A two-week Breathing Apparatus Initial Wearers' Course;
- A one-week Breathing Apparatus Compartment Fire Behaviour Course; and
- Any other course that the County Council may consider necessary.

Training Fees will be paid at the current hourly rate for Firefighters during training. This hourly rate is currently €24.77.

Failure to successfully complete all the above courses will result in the termination of the Firefighter's employment. Some or all the above courses will be held at a training facility, which may or may not be situated locally.

From the date of commencement as a recruit Firefighter, there shall be a period of 9 months during which the recruit Firefighter shall be on probation. During this time the recruit Firefighter shall be continually assessed to determine his/her suitability for continued employment. Such period of 9 months may be extended at the

absolute discretion of the Council. The recruit shall not become a permanent Firefighter at the end of the period of probation unless the Council is satisfied that the Firefighter has been satisfactory in all respects.

The person appointed will cease to hold the appointment at the end of the probationary period unless the Chief Fire Officer or another appointed officer of Louth County Council certifiesthat he/she has complied with the requirements for appointment and is otherwise performing satisfactorily in the post and carrying out all duties to the required standard.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

---

1. It shall be the duty of every Fire-fighter while at work:
  - a) To take reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions while at work;
  - b) To co-operate with his/her employer and any other person to such extent as will enable his/her employer or the other person to comply with any of the relevant statutory provisions;
  - c) To use in such manner to provide the protection intended, any suitable appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or other means or thing provided (whether for his/her use alone or for use by him/her in common with others) for securing his/her safety, health or welfare while at work; and
  - d) To report to his/her employer or his/her immediate superior, without unreasonable delay, any defects in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare, of which he/she becomes aware.
2. No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment, or other means or thing provided in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing the safety, health or welfare of persons arising out of work activities.

## **SICK LEAVE**

---

If absent on sick leave, the Firefighter must immediately inform his/her Station Officer or Sub Officer. Where a Firefighter is absent due to sickness for three or more consecutive days, they shall submit a sick leave certificate to the Council from a medical doctor. The medical certificate must be signed and state the medical practitioner's Medical Council registration number, medical certificates are required to be submitted on a weekly basis in cases of absences extending beyond one week. Depending on the nature of the absence, a medical certificate of fitness and/or independent medical review may be required prior to a Firefighter resuming operational duties following a period of sick leave absence, having regard to the nature of the illness/injury and/or length of absence at the absolute discretion of the Council.

A Return to Work Form must be completed with the Line Manager when a Firefighter returns to work after any period of sick leave.

Arrangements for payment during sick leave will be made in accordance with the relevant Public Service Sick Leave Scheme in place, which may be reviewed from time to time.

## **RESIDENCE/PLACE OF WORK AND/OR STUDY**

---

Holders of the post shall be required to live and work (and study – where relevant) within a radius of 8 minutes of the Fire Station to which he/she is stationed. All applicants for the position of Retained Fire-fighter must have

the ability to respond to their local fire station within sufficient time of a call being sent to their alerter/pager (which the Fire-fighter carries) to enable an 8-minute turnout time for the station.

**It is essential that all candidates live and work (and/or study) within the required 8 minutes response of the station – failure to meet this criterion will mean disqualification for the position.**

**Whether a candidate meets the criterion for distance from the fire station in terms of required response will be ascertained based on the information provided by the candidate and verified using AA route planner, local station knowledge or other reasonable means as determined by the Chief Fire Officer.**

## **AVAILABILITY**

---

Candidates who are in employment should inform their employers of their intentions regarding applying for a post in the retained Fire Service. Such candidates will be required to produce an employer's statement that they will be released to attend Fire Service calls and fulfil training when required. Self-employed people or those in education must also provide written evidence as to availability. Unemployed persons are not precluded from applying, provided that they satisfy the residence and availability requirements.

**Candidates must provide evidence that they are available to respond to calls/remain on-call whilst undertaking their normal daily routines (live/work/study etc).**

The Council has sole discretion as to whether the availability as so evidenced is acceptable. Any changes to residence, employment or education after appointment must be notified in writing to the Chief Fire Officer.

Evidence of availability may be requested at any time and any changes placing a Firefighter outside of the limit of the 8-minute response time will require their resignation. Similarly, any restrictions arising that would prevent the Firefighter responding within the required time to the station (i.e. change of employment or circumstances) will require resignation from service.

There is an obligation on Firefighters to attend at alert/fire calls and at drills. This is the basis on which a retainer is paid. The onus on arranging to receive an alert/fire call shall rest with the Firefighter.

### **Drills**

Notwithstanding any other disciplinary action that the County Council may apply, failure to attend or participate in 85% of all drills in any quarter of a year, without good reason, will be addressed through the Local Authority's disciplinary procedure.

### **Incidents**

In the case of an alert/fire call the Firefighter shall attend all calls within their Rostered-On duty Period (24 Weeks per annum). Firefighters who attend calls will be remunerated as per the Crew Management Arrangements for Retained Firefighters as operated by Louth County Council.

Where the Chief Fire Officer considers that a Firefighter is not fulfilling the above attendance standards which he/she considers reasonable in all the circumstances, the Chief Fire Officer will consider the matter of attendance under the Council's disciplinary policy. Subsequent continuing failure to meet the above attendance standards, without good reason, shall be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure, and may result in termination of service at the absolute discretion of the County Council.

## **PENSION**

---

Successful applicants may join the appropriate pension scheme. Full details in respect of the scheme can be made available to candidates prior to appointment.

## UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT

Fire-fighters are required to keep in good order any item of uniform or equipment issued to him/her, to return such items on dismissal or resignation; and to make good any damage to same not arising from fair wear and tear. A uniform is supplied which will be worn according to the dress code of the service. Fire-fighters will make themselves available for emergency duties outside of working hours where required. For this purpose, they will be required to use technology supplied by Louth County Council. Retained Fire-fighters must carry a fire service pocket alerter/pager at all times when on-call and must ensure it is in proper working order. There is an onus on each Fire-fighter to ensure that they receive the call alert/page to allow them to respond and to notify their line manager/station officer immediately if any issues which may delay or prevent their alert.

## DRILLS & FURTHER TRAINING

A Fire-fighter shall attend and participate in training and shall undergo from time-to-time courses and further training as required or deemed appropriate by the County Council and the Chief Fire Officer.

## EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY

The post of Fire-fighter is open to everyone who can meet the qualifying criteria. Louth County Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

# SELECTION PROCESS

The following is a brief summary of the Fire-fighter recruitment process with Louth County Council. Please note that the Council reserves the right at any stage to cease or alter the recruitment process.

### **Phase 1: Review the Briefing Document in full & Complete Questionnaire:**

- Complete the questionnaire below entitled a 'Career as a retained (part-time) Fire-fighter – Is it really for you?'
- If you answer yes to all the questions, you should then check out minimum requirements for the post contained within this document.

### **Phase 2: Formal Application and Short-listing:**

- All applications submitted at this point will be subject to a short-listing process to ensure that the requirements to live and work (and/or study) within an 8-minute response time of the Fire Station are met. Candidates who do not adequately demonstrate their availability to meet the response time for calls whilst undertaking their normal daily routines will not be shortlisted.

### **Phase 3: Work Related Tests:**

- All candidates shortlisted for interview will move to the next phase, the Literacy & Station Tests.

- Each candidate must bring their current driving licence to these tests as identification; otherwise you will not be allowed to proceed with the tests. Details of the test are advised later in this document.
- If your driving licence does not have a photograph, you must also bring a current passport for photographic identification purposes.
- A candidate must demonstrate the required level of proficiency at the Station Tests in order to proceed to the Interview stage.

**Phase 4:      Interview:**

- If you are successful in the work-related tests you will proceed to Interview.

The information you supply in the application form will play a central part of the short-listing process. Louth County Council's decision to include you on the shortlist of candidates going forward to stage two of the process may be determined based on this information.

Where, by reason of the number of persons seeking admission to the competition and the standard of knowledge, training or experience in general of such persons, Louth County Council consider that it would be reasonable not to admit all the persons to the competition, Louth County Council may admit to the competition only persons who appear likely to them to attain in the competition a standard sufficient for selection and recommendation for appointment.

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend an interview, is not to be taken as implying that Louth County Council are satisfied that such person fulfils the requirements of the Regulations or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration. It is important therefore, for you to note the onus is on you to ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview. If you do not meet these essential entry requirements but nevertheless attend for interview you will be putting yourself to unnecessary expense, as Louth County Council will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred.

Interviews shall be conducted by Board(s) set up by Louth County Council. The Board(s) will assess the merits of candidates (except insofar as they are assessed otherwise) in respect of matters referred to in the prescribed Qualifications and any other relevant matters. Before making its final assessment, a Board may recall a candidate for further questioning. Any such further attendance shall be regarded as part of the interview. Only candidates who reach such a standard as Louth County Council consider satisfactory in the competitive interview shall be considered for selection. Candidates who do not adequately demonstrate their availability to meet the response time for calls whilst undertaking their normal daily routines will not be considered for selection.

Before being recommended for appointment candidates shall satisfy Louth County Council that they possess the requisite knowledge and ability (including a high standard of suitability and where administrative experience is a requirement a high standard of administrative capacity) for the proper discharge of the duties of the position.

Louth County Council may, at their discretion, select and recommend another person(s) for appointment on the results of this competition if the person recommended for appointment does not accept the appointment or, having accepted it, relinquishes it or if an additional vacancy arises.

**Responsibilities of the applicants**

The onus is on all applicants to make themselves available for the obligatory test(s) on the date(s) specified by

Louth County Council and to make whatever arrangements are necessary to ensure that they receive communications sent to them at the address specified on their application form.

**Canvassing will disqualify.**

Before contracts of employment are entered various checks are undertaken. These include medicals, references and Garda vetting. The Council will invite to attend a medical only the required number of successful candidates at the interview stage to meet the number of vacancies determined by the Council at the time.

Applicants must be able to satisfy the Medical Doctor appointed by the council that they are in general good health and have the potential to maintain minimum fitness standards for the duration of their careers. Applicants may also be required to undergo:

- (a) Eye sight test;
- (b) Colour perception test;
- (c) Chest X-ray;
- (d) Hearing Test.

References for successful candidates will also be checked and Garda Vetting will also be completed at this point.

All the above have to be satisfactorily completed and candidates must be available to commence Recruit Training at a Training Centre on the date determined by the Council.

A Recruit Fire-fighter must be able to make continual and satisfactory progress to pass the written, oral and practical tests set at intervals throughout this period. The training is varied and demanding and covers such subjects as; Fire-fighting, breathing apparatus, compartment fire behaviour training, first aid, and basic fire safety. Candidates who do not satisfactorily complete the Recruit's course, Breathing Apparatus Initial Wearers Course or Compartment Fire Behaviour course may have their employment terminated.

Successful candidates will be posted to an operational Fire Station as part of the operational team and will attend fires and other emergencies. Initial appointment will be for a probationary period of 9 months with reviews undertaken every 3 months in the probationary period. This probationary period will commence once you have successfully completed your recruit Fire-fighter training course. Probation may be extended at the discretion of the Chief Fire Officer. Again, the Probationer must demonstrate progress in practical skills and technical knowledge.

# PHASE 1

## Review the Briefing Document & Complete Questionnaire

### A CAREER AS A RETAINED FIREFIGHTER - IS IT REALLY FOR YOU?

We receive enquiries each year from men and women who want to be Fire-fighters. Our objective is to be fair and equitable to all applicants in our recruitment and selection. The following list of questions has been put together to help you decide whether being a Fire-fighter is really for you. Simply tick YES or NO to each of the following questions.

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Are you able to meet the demands of working in a disciplined uniformed service? Can you take orders from other people?		
Are you able to meet the criteria of living and working (and/or studying) within eight minute response time of the fire station?		
Can you get on with people from different backgrounds and cultures?		
Do you have the emotional strength to deal with a road traffic collision or other instances where there may be severe injuries or loss of life?		
Can you work as part of a close-knit team? Can you work under pressure without letting the rest of your team down?		
Do you have the sensitivity to deal with members of the public when they are distressed, confused or being obstructive?		
Can you take the responsibility for representing the Fire Service both when you are at work and <i>when you are not at work</i> ?		
Are you committed to maintaining and developing your skills?		
Can you confirm that you do not suffer from aquaphobia, claustrophobia or vertigo?		
Are you committed to maintaining your health and physical fitness? Is regular exercise a part of your everyday life?		

Are you prepared to work when needed at night, weekends, and public holidays?		
Are you a practical person who likes to work with their hands and with 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, even if you are wet and cold and you don't know when a job might finish?		
Would you be able to manage interruptions to your daily routine at any time day or night to travel to the fire station for a call?		
Would you have the support needed by family/those you live with to allow you to respond to calls at short notice and be detained at calls for as long as it takes to deal with them?		

If you answered yes to the above, can you give good examples to back your answers up during the interview stage? If you can then you may wish to proceed to the pre-application phase below.

If you have answered yes to all these questions, proceed to check that you meet the minimum qualifications for the position and, and please ensure you have read and understood this booklet.

## PHASE 2 FORMAL APPLICATION & SHORT-LISTING

All applications submitted at this point will be subject to a short-listing process to ensure that the requirements to live and work within a 8-minute response time of the fire station are met.

## PHASE 3 STATION & LITERACY TESTS

Each candidate invited for interview must successfully complete the next phase, Station & Literacy Tests

**Candidates must bring a GP LETTER confirming your fitness and your current driving license to these tests as identification; otherwise you will not be allowed to proceed with the tests.**

**If a candidate's driving license does not have a photograph, you must also bring a current passport for photographic identification purposes.**

Candidates will be required to undergo the following tests.

**(A) Ladder Climbing Test and Attitude to Heights**

**Protocol:** Climbing Fire Service ladders and working at heights is an essential part of the role of a Fire-fighter.

A ladder 13.5m in height will be placed against a high building. You will be given basic instruction in the correct and safe technique of climbing ladders and working off them. This includes taking a leg-lock on the ladder, which allows you to let go of the ladder with your hands yet remain safely on the ladder, using a leg grip technique.

For the purpose of this test you will wear a safety harness.

After being given the basic instruction you may be allowed one practice climb, after which the assessment will commence. Under assessment you will be required to climb the ladder and take a leg lock approximately half way up. You will then climb to the top of the ladder and, when instructed, descend back down the ladder. A series of numbers and letters will be displayed to you at ground floor level during the exercise. To read them you will need to look down. You will identify each letter and number and inform the assessor.

Candidates will be assessed on your ability to work at heights by completing the task outlined. In addition, you will be expected to demonstrate the correct techniques for ladder work, outlined at the beginning of the session, to show you have understood basic instruction and have the ability to put that instruction to use

**Level Required:** The candidate must successfully complete this test in its entirety.

**(B) Manual Dexterity**

**Protocol:** Candidates will be required to re-assemble at least six types of connectors/couplings. When connected they cannot be simply pulled apart. The different types of connection will require different combinations of movement to assemble them. Movements will include twisting, pushing and pulling, etc.

This task is designed to test the candidates' manual dexterity and pattern recognition when dealing with standard fire and rescue service connections/couplings. All connections are used on different items of equipment within the Fire Service and are required to form a water or air tight seal.

**Level Required:** Candidates must successfully complete this test in its entirety within a time limit.

**(C) Ability to Work in a Confined Space**

**Protocol:** The ability to move and manoeuvre the body (and other objects) in awkward and tight situations, sometimes in complete darkness, is an aspect of fire-fighting. This test is designed to test your agility and ability to cope with these conditions.

Candidates will be given basic instruction on putting on and wearing a breathing apparatus set (approx. weight 18kg). Although wearing the set, you will not be expected to go 'under air' but will breathe normally with the facemask on and demand regulator removed thereby allowing fresh air into the facemask. The mask will be blanked out and you will be required to enter and crawl through a short tunnel of restricted height and width.

A candidate's performance will be judged on your ability to successfully complete the task.

**(D) Literacy & Numeracy test**

**Protocol:**

To complete the test successfully, you must demonstrate a basic competency in reading, writing and mathematics.

- a) You will answer a small number of questions based on your understanding of a brief passage of text given to you;
- b) You will transcribe a passage of text read aloud to you by the Assessor;
- c) You will carry out a few simple mathematical calculations.

**Level Required:** Candidates must score 50% marks in each of the tasks in this particular test.

**Preparing for Your Selection Day(s)**

Success in the practical assessment day requires a moderate level of fitness. These tests will not be a problem for someone who maintains a good level of fitness. If you are not sure about your fitness level it is recommended that you undertake regular aerobic exercises, for example, running, swimming and cycling

If you have never participated in an exercise regime or have any doubts about your general health or have injuries or illness, it is recommended you consult your GP before undertaking strenuous exercise.

**You must pass the work-related tests to proceed to next phase i.e. interview.**

## PHASE 4 INTERVIEW

If you are successful in the work-related tests you will continue to Interview.

**Thank you for expressing an interest in a career as a Retained Fire-Fighter**

Applicants will have to demonstrate at interview to the satisfaction of the board that they possess sufficient skills and experience in the competencies listed below:

1. Experience & Knowledge
2. Team Work
3. Communication & Interpersonal Skills

## COMMUNICATIONS

Louth County Council will contact you when necessary at each stage of the competition by email. It is strongly recommended that you only submit one email address with the application form, and that you do not change your email address in the course of this recruitment campaign, as any email will be sent to the email address originally supplied on your application form. It is important to note that the email address you provide when applying must be one that you can access at all times. The onus is on the applicant to inform the Human Resources Department of any change in email address throughout the recruitment and selection campaign. This can be done by emailing [recruitment@louthcoco.ie](mailto:recruitment@louthcoco.ie). The onus is also on each applicant to ensure that s/he is in receipt of all communication from Louth County Council. Louth County Council does not accept responsibility for communications not accessed or received by an applicant.

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Examples of some of the current Employee Benefits include:

- A range of Family Friendly Policies
- Availability of a Cycle to Work Scheme
- A range of Learning and Developmental Opportunities
- Paid Maternity and Paternity Leave
- Option to become a member of Louth County Council's Social Club
- Automatically entered into a pension scheme
- Access to the services provided under Louth County Council's Employee Assistance Programme

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Application forms are available on our website.

Completed application forms must be **submitted to [recruitment@louthcoco.ie](mailto:recruitment@louthcoco.ie) with the subject line mentioning 'Retained Firefighters'**

**Please note that amendments to the application form will not be accepted after the closing date.**

**All further correspondence will be through your confirmed email address supplied on your application form**

## PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

Before contracts of employment are entered into, various checks are undertaken. These include medicals, references and Garda vetting. The Council will invite those successful candidates who accept an offer to fill a vacancy to attend a medical assessment. References for successful candidates will also be checked and Garda Vetting, will be completed at this point.

## FINE PRINT

### GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Louth County Council reserves the right to vary the number and sequence of each stage of the selection process as the competition progresses
2. Louth County Council will bear the expenses for the OHS medical tests but candidates will have to bear the expenses to travel to the location of the clinic.
3. The admission of a person to the competition, or invitation to partake or attend any element of the selection process, or a successful result letter, is not to be taken as implying that Louth County Council is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements.
4. Placement on any panel from this competition is no guarantee that a position will be offered.
5. **The Importance of Confidentiality:** Candidates can expect that all enquiries, applications and all aspects of the proceedings to the extent that they are managed by Louth County Council are treated as strictly confidential subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2004.
6. **Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn:** Candidates who do not complete and submit any assessments before the specified date; or do not attend/ undertake any stage of the selection process as requested or do not furnish such evidence as requested in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.
7. **Data Protection:** The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on the 25th May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive. The personal information (data) collected on the application form, including any attachments, (which may include the collection of sensitive personal data) is collected for the purpose of processing this application and any data collected is subject to Louth County Council's privacy statement which can be found at <https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/policy-and-redress/gdpr/>
8. **Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify.**
9. Candidates shall undergo such medical examinations (which may include special tests) as Louth County Council consider necessary. Medical Examiners will be nominated by Louth County Council.

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

Candidates must note that this employment is **part-time only** and may affect your Social Welfare entitlement(s) and is pensionable.

The following particulars of office will apply:

1. A Firefighter must reside and work within a **eight-minute** mobilisation/response time of the Fire Station of his/her fire service to enable him/her to respond promptly to all calls. If, at any time, his/her availability is affected by change of work or for any other reason, he/she will be required to resign. (Proof of address / Eircode must be provided)
2. A firefighter **must** submit a letter from their employer (if relevant), outlining their permission to attend emergency callouts.
3. A retained firefighter who is offered employment, on probation, will be sent on a **Recruit Induction Course** of 3 weeks duration, which will be followed by a 2-week **Breathing Apparatus Wearer Course** and a variety of shorter courses. We will endeavor to provide this training during the probationary period.
4. Retained firefighters are required to comply with the WRC Agreement, as implemented in Louth County Council Fire & Rescue, including completing age-related fitness tests.
5. The recruitment selection process may include the completion of an Application Form, Literacy/Numeracy Competency Test, Work Related Tests, an Interview and a Medical.
6. The recruit firefighter must make continuous progress to pass the written, oral and practical tests set during these courses. Recruits who do not pass the Recruits Induction Course or the Breathing Apparatus Wearer Course will have their employment terminated.
7. Absence from training or fire calls without good reason will lead to investigation and possible disciplinary proceedings, which may include suspension without pay and dismissal from the Fire Service.
8. Firefighters are required to attend Fire Service Training Programmes which will include:
  - Regular or weekly training sessions
  - The training described at 5 above
  - Block release courses or major emergency exercises
  - Other Fire Service training including training courses outside County Louth
  - Emergency Services Driving Standard (ESDS) instruction to a standard appropriate to drive Fire Service vehicles.Firefighters must keep training records, as required.
9. A Firefighter shall always be available when on-call for attendance at fires or other incidents.
10. (a) Firefighters will be called to attend fires in a manner to be decided by the Fire Service.  
  
(b) Firefighters will co-operate with reasonable measures designed to facilitate call out. In particular, each firefighter shall carry a Fire Service pocket alerter at all times while on call and it shall be his/her responsibility to ensure that it is kept in proper working order.
11. When required, a Firefighter will substitute for any other Firefighter absent through sickness, annual leave or any other reason.

12. A Firefighter shall be responsible for items of personal equipment issued to him/her in connection with his/her employment.
13. A Firefighter shall carry out all instructions issued to him/her in connection with his/her employment.
14. Firefighters are under the immediate control of the Station Officer or Sub Officer of their Brigade and must receive the approval of this officer for any absence from their turnout area.
15. When required, a Firefighter shall assist in or carry out the cleaning, testing or repair of equipment. Cleaning of station premises and environs is included in this requirement.
16. A Firefighter shall carry out any further duties, which may be assigned to him/her from time to time by the Local Authority. These duties may include driving duties (when the firefighter is suitably qualified), training duties or deputising for the Station Officer or Sub Station Officer, where necessary.
17. Firefighters will be bound by agreements entered on their behalf by their Trade Unions, if they chose to become a trade union member.
18. Remuneration will be as per the WRC Agreement and payments to firefighters will be made fortnightly
19. A uniform is supplied which will be worn according to the dress code of the service.
20. Louth County Council as an employer is obliged to ensure, in so far as it is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees. Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Council has a legal duty to exercise all due care and take all protective and preventive measures to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff. All employees also have a legal obligation under health and safety legislation to co-operate with management and not engage in any improper conduct or behaviour which would place themselves or others at risk. Employees must comply with all health and safety rules and regulations and attend all relevant health and safety training. Employees must not be under the influence of an intoxicant at the place of work.

**Declaration:**

**I hereby agree to the qualifications and conditions of the employment as outlined above**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

## 1. Who can I contact if I have a query in relation the Recruitment Campaign?

If you are unclear in relation to any aspect of the recruitment and selection process, please read the briefing document and frequently asked questions carefully before contacting Louth County Council's Human Resources Department. If you still need to contact the Human Resources Department please send your query via email in the first instance to [recruitment@louthcoco.ie](mailto:recruitment@louthcoco.ie).

## 2. What happens if I cannot attend a particular stage of the competition?

The onus is on you to attend for all stages of the recruitment competition at the locations, dates and times notified. Louth County Council cannot change dates and times of any particular stage of the process.

## 3. I have submitted my application form. What happens next?

Louth County Council will carry out an eligibility check on all application forms to ensure that they meet the minimum qualifications for the post. You do not need to contact the HR Department. If you do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements for the post based on the information submitted on your application form, you will not be invited to interview.

Depending on the number of candidates remaining at this stage of the competition it may be necessary to hold a short listing process. The shortlisting process may take the form of either a desktop shortlisting process based on the information contained in the application forms or a shortlisting interview/assessment. You will be contacted by email in relation to any interview dates and times. The onus is on you to attend for interview on the dates and times allocated. Alternative dates and times cannot be facilitated. When attending for interview you must produce photographic identification when registering your attendance at the Human Resources Department.

## 4. What happens on completion of the shortlisting process?

Louth County Council will contact all applicants advising them of the results of the shortlisting process. If you have been successful at this stage you will be invited for a final interview.

## 5. What happens after undertaking the final interview?

If you qualify at final interview stage you will be placed on a panel and ranked in order of merit. Vacancies may be filled from this panel as they arise and in order of merit. Please note that being placed on a panel is not a guarantee that you will be appointed to the position.

## 6. How will Louth County Council communicate with me throughout the Recruitment and Selection Campaign?

Louth County Council will contact you when necessary at each stage of the competition by email.

It is strongly recommended that you do not change your email address in the course of this recruitment campaign, as any email will be sent to the email address originally supplied with your application form. It is important to note that the email address you provide when submitting your application form must be one that you can access at all times.

The onus is on the applicant to inform the Human Resources Department of any change in postal address, email address or mobile telephone number throughout the recruitment and selection campaign. This can be done by emailing [recruitment@louthcoco.ie](mailto:recruitment@louthcoco.ie)

The onus is on each applicant to ensure that s/he is in receipt of all communication from Louth County Council. Louth County Council accepts no responsibility for communication not accessed or received by an applicant.