

Recruitment policy - FRS and Control

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Brigade's arrangements for the recruitment and selection of Fire and Rescue Staff (FRS) and Control vacancies (other than the appointment of FRS apprentices). This covers filling both permanent and temporary posts (including secondments and acting up arrangements) and assimilations.
- 1.2 Recruitment is the process of searching for job applicants and encouraging them to apply for jobs either internally for career progression or promotion within the Brigade or externally for employment as a new member of staff. Selection involves the series of steps by which the job applicants are then assessed (for example shortlisted, interviewed, tested, etc.) in order to choose the most suitable person for a vacant post. Flow charts for the recruitment and selection process can be found on hotwire.
- 1.3 This policy should be applied in line with the Brigade's values:
 - Service – We put the public first.
 - Courage – We step up to the challenge.
 - Learning – We listen so that we can improve.
 - Teamwork – We work together and include everyone.
 - Equity – We treat everyone fairly according to their needs.
 - Integrity – We act with honesty.

2 Recruitment and selection principles

- 2.1 The Brigade recognises that a diverse workforce, greatly enhances effectiveness of performance by better reflecting the aspirations, experiences and needs of the communities it serves. The Brigade therefore promotes and supports efforts to get the best job applicants drawn from a strong and diverse field. The selection for appointment will be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.
 - Merit – means the appointment of the best available person judged against the essential criteria for the role.
 - Fair – means there must be no bias in the assessment of job applicants. Selection processes must be objective, impartial, and applied consistently.
 - Open – means that job opportunities should normally be advertised widely. Potential job applicants must be given reasonable access to information about the job and its requirements, and about the selection process.
- 2.2 The line manager for a vacant post will usually assume responsibility for overseeing the recruitment supported by the Recruitment Team in People Services. Managers recruiting for a post will normally be of a higher grade than the post/vacancy being filled.
- 2.3 For appointment to head of service level or above the recruitment process will be determined by the London Fire Commissioner in consultation with the Head of Resourcing, People Services and may involve the mayor of London and/or the deputy mayor for fire and resilience for senior appointments.
- 2.4 Agency workers currently hired by the Brigade will be able to apply for all external vacancies and specific internal vacancies as advertised which are not ring fenced for an objectively justified reason such as redeployment or redundancy.

3 Ensuring diversity

- 3.1 Maintaining and enhancing the diversity of the workforce can only be achieved by ensuring that there are no barriers to diverse groups in the community being able to apply for jobs. Therefore, all vacancies (with the exception of ring-fenced or other internal temporary vacancies) will be advertised both internally and externally.
- 3.2 The Brigade is committed to applying equal opportunities at all stages of recruitment and selection. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to gender, trans or non-binary status, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity leave, caring responsibility, socio-economic background or trade union membership. The Brigade recognises that candidates with disabilities may require reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process. We are committed to providing fair treatment to all candidates, including those with disabilities, and will ensure that necessary adjustments are made to facilitate their participation.
- 3.3 The Brigade collaborates with various organisations and agencies to ensure fair and inclusive selection processes. We may utilise positive action measures, permitted under the Equality Act 2010, to promote equality and diversity in the workplace, particularly for under-represented groups. This aligns with our commitment to inclusion as outlined in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy.
- 3.4 All adverts will include wording that reflects the London Fire Commissioner's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. This will communicate our aim to recruit a workforce that reflects London's diverse communities, ensure Equal Opportunities, encourage applications from all suitably qualified individuals regardless of protected characteristics or personal circumstances, and highlight the measures in place to ensure fair and consistent treatment throughout the recruitment process, including the consideration of reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants.

4 Vacancy approval

- 4.1 Permission must be sought from People Services to fill a vacancy and normally the vacancy should exist on the establishment. Delegated Authority (DA) must be sought to make any changes to the authorised establishment for any posts that are to be funded from a recruiting department's staffing budget (such as new roles or significant changes to roles). Any post changes based on funding from an unspecified staffing underspend cannot be incorporated into the establishment unless specific vacant post/s can be deleted to fund the change. Any such temporary post will be classified as supernumerary. DA or supernumerary classification must be signed off by appropriate Assistant Director/Assistant Commissioner, as well as Finance and People Services before any changes can be implemented, and any resulting recruitment action can begin.
- 4.2 Vacancies also cannot proceed to be filled without agreement from the Vacancy Control Panel (VCP) who are responsible for providing organisational control and final approval of all permanent and temporary recruitment (including short term vacancies, secondments, fixed term contracts and agency worker hires). They also approve variations in starting salary (see section 13) and special responsibility allowances (please see Policy number 563 - Special responsibility allowances). The VCP panel comprises of senior managers from People Services, Finance, Fire Prevention, Central Operations, and Procurement and Commercial departments who will consider the recruitment proposals. Once the DA has been given (as in above paragraph 4.1) or at start of a recruitment process, recruiting managers should complete a VCP form. Hiring managers should raise an order request for an agency worker on the Reed XMS HR system and

then submit the VCP form, please see Policy number 725 - Agency workers policy for more details. Notification of outcome from the VCP will be provided by People Services and if approved recruitment action as appropriate can commence. The VCP form will then need to be completed again where any temporary recruitment (as defined above) is being extended beyond the original agreed period. Please see hotwire for further guidance.

- 4.3 For existing posts, prior to considering whether a vacancy exists, you should consider whether any employees have assimilation rights (please see section 16) or under Policy number 562 – Redundancy and redeployment code (FRS and Control staff). If so, the extant procedure as outlined should be followed.

5 Defining job requirements

- 5.1 Before starting any process, the role requirements for the post must have been determined. These should be clearly defined by producing a job description and a person specification. The job description outlines the main duties and responsibilities of the role. Whilst the accompanying person specification is a description of the qualifications, skills, experience, knowledge, and other attributes (selection criteria) which a candidate must possess to perform the job duties. The person specification should be derived from the job description and forms the foundation for the recruitment process as assessment will be largely based objectively on the selection criteria as determined by the specification. For some vacancies these documents may already exist but may need to be updated and should be reviewed by the manager recruiting for the post before each new recruitment round.
- 5.2 For new posts and those with job requirements that have been substantially revised a job evaluation will be required. Analytical job evaluation is method of evaluating jobs by separately appraising individual job demands, known as factors. Scores are awarded for each factor. Combining the scores for each factor gives a single score for the job. The total points scored decide a job's place in the grading structure. A job description and person specification including the proposed grade will be required before a job evaluation can be conducted. You will be invited by People Services as appropriate to attend a job evaluation meeting where the job evaluation will be conducted.

6 Starting a recruitment process

- 6.1 You can start a recruitment and selection process provided:
- Any necessary financial governance clearances have been obtained (DA).
 - There is an appropriate job description and person specification.
 - An electronic job requisition has been raised by the manager (for all vacancies and for any consequent extensions of fixed term and secondment positions). This is a notification for the process to commence once authorised by People Services.
 - An electronic VCP (Vacancy Control Panel) form must be completed by the manager and signed off by the Head of Service.

Please see hotwire for more details and recruitment process flow charts.

7 Advertisement of vacancies

- 7.1 Vacancies will normally be advertised on hotwire and the LFB external website as appropriate. External media advertising should be encouraged to widen the pool of eligible candidates. For all adverts, consideration should be given to the most appropriate means of advertising for the particular role.

- 7.2 In certain circumstances, for example where there has been a restructure, and employees may be at risk of redundancy, some vacancies may be ring-fenced (see Policy number 562 - Redundancy and redeployment code FRS and Control staff). Ring-fencing is where consideration will be given to comparing the job duties and grade of the new/vacant posts with the job currently undertaken by the employees and only allowing employees within the ring-fence to apply. Ring-fenced positions will need to be justified by the relevant Assistant Director/Assistant Commissioner.
- 7.3 There may also be temporary vacancies that managers wish to use as career development opportunities (such as covering a post holder's temporary secondment, temporary promotion, or detachment to another role) and so a temporary position may be offered either to staff across the Brigade or ring-fenced within the department (Please see sections 14 and 15).
- 7.4 The Brigade supports targeted advertising in order to increase the diversity of applicants i.e., an example of positive action. This can include using targeted media, technology, and social media. The decision to use targeted advertising will be made by the Recruitment Team in liaison with the Inclusion Team and the manager recruiting for the post.
- 7.5 For those vacancies which are ring-fenced to a particular department or team, the vacancy must be advertised locally e.g., within the team/department. Where it is known there is a possibility that an internal secondment vacancy (subject to appropriate conditions of assimilation) may become permanent, this must be stated in the job advert (see paragraph 15.3).

Staff are entitled to reasonable contact from the Brigade whilst on maternity leave, part of this should include updates from their line managers about appropriate recruitment opportunities that become available. Staff should also be encouraged to check for any vacancies of interest themselves on a regular basis whilst they are on leave (through the intranet and Brigade website).

- 7.6 As part of the London Fire Brigade's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be undertaken where required for successful candidates before an offer of employment is confirmed. DBS checks will be conducted through an approved registered body and in accordance with the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements. Certain roles may involve regular or unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults and may therefore constitute regulated activity as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. Individuals who are barred from undertaking regulated activity must not be appointed to such roles. Recruitment advertisements will clearly state the level of DBS check applicable to the post. All advertisements will include safeguarding wording that reflects the Brigade's commitment to protecting children, young people and adults at risk, and informs applicants of any pre-employment DBS requirements, including where a Standard DBS check, Enhanced DBS check, or Barred List check is required before an appointment can be confirmed. The specific safeguarding wording used in recruitment advertisements will be determined by the requirements of the role and will be maintained in the associated recruitment guidance and templates
- 7.7 LFB will also carry out fraud prevention and identity verification checks on candidates applying for jobs as required. In order to prevent fraud in recruitment, LFB will work with partners such as National Fraud Initiative and CIFAS and may run candidate details through external fraud databases. In these instances, job adverts will contain wording to make it clear checks being undertaken and how candidates' data will be used. See Counter Fraud Policy (Policy number 568).

8 Application

- 8.1 All job applicants will usually be required to apply online and upload a CV and any other supporting information e.g., a covering letter as required and conviction disclosure.
- 8.2 Applicants will be asked to disclose convictions as part of their online application. A declaration is made at the point of application to confirm that the information provided on the application is accurate.
- 8.3 Identifying information included within the CV or applicant supporting material - name along with address and gender (if provided), will be removed by the Recruitment Team before it is sent to the long or shortlisting panel.
- 8.4 Applicants will be asked to submit equality monitoring information as part of the application process. This confidential data is held securely within the system for monitoring purposes only and any manager recruiting for the post or panel member will not have access to any identifying information about any applicants in respect of information disclosable for equality monitoring purposes.
- 8.5 For vacancies which are ring-fenced to departments alternative methods of application may be applied such as registration of interest to the manager recruiting for the post. These will be determined in conjunction with People Services on a case-by-case basis as appropriate to the circumstances of the vacancy.
- 8.6 Unless in exceptional circumstances, the Brigade considers individuals who were previously employed by the Brigade but were dismissed for reasons of conduct or capability; or those who resigned under investigation, to be unsuitable to be re-engaged for a period of at least three years following dismissal/resignation. Employees on a live disciplinary sanction at the time the vacancy arises will not be permitted to apply. Candidates who are the subject of a current disciplinary investigation will not be appointed until the outcome of the disciplinary investigation is known. In this case, a post can be held open only with the agreement of the manager recruiting for the post.
- 8.7 Candidates may submit only one application per vacancy, all duplicates will be discarded.

9 Long and shortlisting

- 9.1 Selection decisions both during long/shortlisting and assessment must be based on the role applied for as outlined in the job description/person specification.
- 9.2 The criteria must be applied consistently to all applicants. Managers recruiting for the post will normally be asked to highlight key selection criteria from the person specification against which individuals will be shortlisted. Career history and relevant experience as outlined in the CV will also factor in the shortlisting stage.
- 9.3 For roles where CVs are requested trained staff within People Services will conduct an initial longlist sift of applications/CVs to ensure the selection criteria is met. They will consult with you on any borderline cases to determine if the applications will be taken forward. People Services will then liaise with you to formulate a final shortlist. CV's will not be required for Control staff promotion processes,
- 9.4 Applicants with a disability who meet the minimum shortlisting requirements of the cut off score will advance to the next stage of the selection process.
- 9.5 Applicants who have redeployee status and who meet the minimum shortlisting requirements of the cut off score will advance to the next stage of the selection process.

- 9.6 Vacancies that receive a high volume of applications, will do an initial interview via Teams to ensure that the evidence submitted is a true reflection of the candidate and not AI generated. The best performing candidates will then be invited to the full assessment centre for that role. An independent assessor not normally from the recruiting department and of the same grade or higher than the vacancy advertised, must agree the shortlist, and be represented at interview to act as an assessor in an independent capacity during the selection process for all posts. For Control roles functional tests will be used to sift candidates in such circumstances.

10 Selection

- 10.1 The selection interview will be conducted by an interview panel comprising of Brigade managers (including the independent assessor) who must have received appropriate training or recruitment briefing and may have previously assessed or assisted in panel interviews for the Brigade. All panel members will sign a Declaration of Interest to ensure there are no conflict of interests. If a panel member does declare a conflict of interest then alternative arrangements will be made.
- 10.2 LFB recognises that candidates may use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to support the preparation of job applications. However, all information submitted must be accurate, truthful, and a genuine reflection of the candidate's knowledge, skills, qualifications, and experience. Where there is reasonable concern that an application, assessment, or interview response has been excessively or inappropriately generated by AI, LFB reserves the right to challenge, verify, or further assess the information provided and may withdraw a candidate from the recruitment process where misrepresentation is identified.
- 10.3 The Recruitment Team will consider the diversity of the panel when requesting assessors to participate in the selection process. However, interview panel composition will also be subject to Brigade manager availability at the time. Candidates will be asked that any devices they have that have internet access should be given to the facilitator until the assessment centre has concluded to ensure that any exercises that are undertaken are the work of the candidate with no help from other sources.
- 10.4 The selection process will normally consist of an interview and any other role relevant forms of assessment. Interviews will normally be undertaken face to face, but where there is a business reason to deviate from this, this may be conducted by other means using appropriate technology in real time such as video conferencing (e.g., Microsoft Teams or Zoom). Should these methods be used, job applicants will be provided with full details in advance and notified of what to expect. Such interviews will not usually be recorded digitally nor without the express permission of the interviewee obtained in advance of the interview.
- 10.5 Questions asked in the selection process will be based upon the individual's previous experience, the Brigade's behavioural framework and the selection criteria for the post which will be accessible to job applicants in advance as contained in the job description. Where appropriate (such as for technical/professional posts) questions should be verified with relevant Brigade subject matter experts.
- 10.6 Reasonable adjustments in respect of the assessment process can be requested by applicants with a disability. Applicants who have a disability should inform the Recruitment Team so that reasonable adjustments can be considered and agreed where appropriate. The Recruitment Team will liaise with relevant Brigade subject matter experts such as the Learning Support Team or occupational psychologist to determine what support and further information may be required. Should it be necessary to interview via Teams, candidates will be required to have the camera turned on throughout and should not be wearing face coverings. The panel have the right not to continue if either of these are not met.

- 10.7 The outcome of the selection process will be notified to shortlisted job applicants in writing. The result might be that:
- Those who are appointed or promoted will be given a provisional job offer subject to normal pre-employment checks (e.g., disclosure and barring service (DBS) and references). Please see section 11.
 - Those interviewed for appropriate permanent positions who were not offered the job but are appointable will normally be placed on a panel list in order of assessment score, for a period not exceeding 12 months. During the 12-month period, or until a further recruitment/promotion round commences, whichever occurs first, the candidate may be offered a suitable vacancy which may arise e.g., if the candidate who was appointed or promoted decided not to accept the job or leaves the job within 12 months.
 - Those unsuitable for appointment or promotion, will not be offered a job nor be placed on a panel list.
- 10.8 Members of staff who reach the selection stage of the process may request feedback by contacting the Recruitment Team. Feedback shall not be unreasonably refused. Feedback will usually be provided by the chair of the interview panel either by telephone or face to face. For external job applicants, feedback can be provided on request after an unsuccessful interview whenever possible to do so.

11 Job offer and appointment

- 11.1 All external offers of employment are made subject to satisfactory pre-employment controls, including; a disclosure criminal records check (DBS) at appropriate level (see also Policy number 726 - Disclosure and barring policy), the receipt of satisfactory references (Policy number 709 - Reference policy), right to work, a medical questionnaire and potentially an appointment with the Brigade's occupational health advisers, as deemed appropriate by them. Depending on the role, other verification checks may be required, such as appropriate for professional qualifications, or current driving licence.
- 11.2 During pre-employment checks if it is identified that any relevant details contained within the CV or application are different from the information revealed during the verification process (such as personal details, employment history or stated qualifications) these will be investigated and the job applicant will be offered the opportunity to provide People Services with an explanation for any anomalies as it is possible that the applicant may have made a genuine mistake. However, should it be discovered that false information has been provided, the Brigade may decide to withdraw the job offer. In such instances the decision will be made in conjunction with the manager recruiting for the post.
- 11.3 All internal offers of employment/promotion are made subject to the receipt of satisfactory references (see Policy number 709 - Reference policy). The Brigade will have discretion, depending on the role, to request, whether satisfactory DBS checks and medical questionnaires, (potentially with a medical appointment) will be required. For internal job applicants, those subject to live disciplinary/performance sanction will be deemed as unsuitable for employment/promotion, and candidates who are the subject of a current disciplinary investigation will not be appointed until the outcome of the disciplinary investigation is known. In this case, a post can be held open only with the agreement of the recruiting manager. Attendance levels will also be considered during the reference stage, any records of poor attendance will be considered in accordance with the appropriate guidance (including triggers for management action) set out in Policy number 1005 – Supporting health and wellbeing policy. You should consult with People Services regarding disability related absence (i.e., an employee's sickness absence which may be because they have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

- 11.4 Where, in the opinion of the occupational health an individual is deemed as not fit for appointment to a vacancy for medical reasons, the individual will be placed on a list to be discussed at the next Medical Panel. The Panel will review the details of the case and will consider if any workplace adjustments can be made to enable the appointment. The Medical Panel will normally consist of representatives from People Services Wellbeing Team, General Counsel's Department, Health and Safety, Recruitment, Inclusion team and a doctor from the occupational health provider.
- 11.5 Criminal convictions which are reported as unspent will be reviewed by People Services on a case-by-case basis and considered considering the nature of the offence and the role applied for to determine if the offer can proceed. Decisions on the outcome will be made in conjunction with the manager recruiting for the post.
- 11.6 In all instances references and the other appropriate checks will only be taken up after the selection process has been concluded.
- 11.7 Line Managers will be requested to give a written reference in respect of internal job applicants who will have the right to view such references in line with the Brigade's policy on references Policy number 709 - Reference policy.

12 Salary on appointment

- 12.1 Salary on appointment shall normally be the starting salary for the grade of the vacancy. This may be negotiable depending on career history and experience or current salary if internal but may not exceed the range for the salary band. Before making an offer in excess of the starting salary, you must submit a business case to the Vacancy Control Panel for their consideration by completing the VCP form (see also paragraph 4.2). For external candidates the job applicant's previous salary may need to be verified by production of appropriate original documentation such as a previous wage slip. Where a salary is offered to a candidate above the minimum of the pay scale the new employee will not be eligible to receive a pay award during their first year of employment.
- 12.2 For internal job applicants on or near the maximum salary for their current grade, the starting salary for the new appointment will be the greater of the starting grade for the vacancy or a 5% increase on their current salary.
- 12.3 A record will be maintained by Recruitment of all salaries offered above the starting salary for both internal and external candidates for organisational and equality monitoring purposes. This data will be reviewed on a regular basis.

13 Temporary vacancies

- 13.1 Along with permanent vacancies, departments may have temporary vacancy requirements to meet the needs of short term or exceptional resourcing issues. Cover may be required for a variety of reasons including to maintain business continuity, for specific projects or to meet excess workload demands. It is for the you in concurrence with your Assistant Director/Assistant Commissioner to decide how best these temporary vacancies are filled and you should carefully consider the best approach to take. Short term roles typically can last anything from 3 to 6 months but may be longer depending on the business requirements.
- 13.2 There are several options that can be considered. Temporary vacancies can provide excellent career development opportunities for existing staff and should therefore be given key consideration. These are usually offered as either short-term acting up roles (please see section 14) or secondment positions (please see section 15).

- 13.3 On occasion (such as due to lack of specific skills in house) it may be that a fixed term contract is considered for supernumerary roles through a recruitment process as outlined above from section 4 onwards. The Brigade may also determine to adopt positive action measures to fill positions outlined in this section to provide equality of opportunity and enable underrepresented groups to overcome disadvantages.
- 13.4 In the event of a pressing resourcing need, agency worker cover might be considered. Further details can be found about hiring an agency worker on hotwire.

14 Acting up arrangements

- 14.1 Acting-up is a formal means of recognition and remuneration for when an employee temporarily acts-up into the full or majority of the duties of a job role evaluated at a higher grade than that of their substantive position. This is different to a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA), which is where the member of staff undertakes duties in addition to their substantive post (please see Policy number 563 - Special responsibility allowances). Acting up opportunities may occur for a number of reasons such as the temporary promotion of the permanent post holder, staff absence or temporary vacancy cover. Employees selected to act up will usually receive an acting up allowance to reflect the role that they are acting up into. Please note that acting up arrangements do not require approval of the VCP.

Transferring staff of the same grade

- 14.2 The Head of Resourcing People Services reserves the right to move people across departments/directorates into acting positions to meet urgent organisational needs. Assistant Directors/Assistant Commissioners or their nominees may also decide to move, on a temporary basis, any officer of the same grade (whether temporary or substantive) who are deemed to meet the demands of the post or work to be performed.

Publicising acting up opportunities

- 14.3 Where an acting up opportunity arises, the Head of Service or their nominee should advertise this in writing to those staff working within the immediate team or section who may be appropriately skilled/qualified to perform the relevant role. Staff within the team must be given an opportunity to register an interest in the temporary vacancy.
- 14.4 If there are no suitable staff within the team or section and the temporary vacancy is to be filled, an advertisement should be placed on hotwire seeking applications on a secondment basis (please see section 16). For technical/professional roles, it may be deemed appropriate for agency workers to be used on a short-term basis.

Selection process for acting up opportunities

- 14.5 You should decide how you will select an individual for acting up by a method which gives equal consideration to all eligible staff who have indicated an interest in the role, and you must be able to provide a justification in the form of a written business case for adopting the selected method which has been agreed with your Assistant Director/Assistant Commissioner.
- 14.6 Equal consideration does not necessarily mean that interviews must take place, a short-term acting up opportunity could be shared for example (see paragraph 14.8). However, you may decide that it is most appropriate that a number of individuals in a section should be interviewed to determine the most suitable person to undertake the higher role.

Criteria for selection to an acting up post

- 14.7 You need to decide whether staff have demonstrated the requisite ability to take on additional responsibilities. In determining such suitability, managers should take account of:
- An individual's skills/experience - which would include evidence from: training undertaken, exposure to similar work, previous periods of acting up into a higher grade, or periods of secondment to another post, effectiveness of current performance or voluntary work within the Brigade (such as the Equality Support Groups).
 - An individual's sickness/attendance record over the previous three years. An unsatisfactory level of attendance could cause doubts as to suitability for a higher grade. The manager should seek advice from People Service on disability related absence (i.e., an employee's sickness absence which may be because they have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010).
 - Any live or outstanding performance/disciplinary issues.

Sharing the responsibilities of the vacancy

- 14.8 In some cases, there may be more than one individual who is suitable to undertake the higher graded duties. In these instances, arrangements can be made for the additional responsibilities to be shared as follows:
- Where there is to be a division of duties between two or more post-holders (if the work lends itself to this), an SRA would be applicable (see 14.1).
 - Where the acting up opportunity is available for a period longer than one month, more than one person could undertake the higher graded duties consecutively.

Notifying the decision

- 14.9 Whether interviews take place or not, you must inform staff of the process that is to be followed in determining the award of an acting allowance. Once a decision has been made, you should ensure that:
- Staff are told about the decision.
 - Feedback is offered.
 - Development needs are discussed as appropriate.

The acting up period

- 14.10 The successful employee must be provided details of the timeframe of the acting up period and the acting up allowance they will receive. It must also be made clear that they will return to their substantive post and salary once the acting up period ends. Normally acting up should last no longer than 2 years from commencement.
- 14.11 Acting up arrangements where a temporary acting up allowance is to be applied are actioned by the line manager. For FRS staff these are raised directly on the acting up allowance system. For Control staff these are raised by creating an act up on StARS. Both systems require entry of the details for a specified period of time only.
- 14.12 Throughout the period of acting up, you should review performance of staff at regular intervals while the individual is doing the work to ensure their continued suitability to perform the role and to assist with their personal development. If performance is not acceptable in some areas these issues should be addressed with the member of staff to facilitate improvement.
- 14.13 In certain circumstances the acting up allowance may be withdrawn e.g., for unsatisfactory performance. Following a disciplinary sanction for conduct or performance or where there are unacceptable levels of sickness absence, it may not be appropriate for the acting up period to

continue. Long term absence (i.e., more than 28 days) will normally result in the acting up allowance being withdrawn with one month's notice.

Documenting recruitment decisions made for acting up opportunities

- 14.14 It is essential that you maintain a record of all interview notes and any decisions made about selection (whether or not interviews take place) and feedback given to individuals including any email correspondence, when acting up appointments are made and for reviews throughout the acting up period. If there are any disagreements over the way in which decisions have been reached, (which can lead to grievances or complaints), it is imperative to have written documentation showing which individuals were considered and the reasons for non-selection. All documentation from department level appointment must be securely stored and retained by managers in accordance with Policy number 879 - Records management strategy 5: records retention guidance.

15 Secondments

Internal secondments

- 15.1 An internal secondment is the temporary movement of an employee to another post usually in another part of the department or part of the organisation for a defined period. From time to time, permanent members of staff may be seconded to posts on the establishment that have become temporarily vacant. These situations might arise through maternity leave, a specific project, other secondments or where a post is created initially on a fixed term basis. Secondments may be at the same, or higher grade than the one held on a substantive basis and there will normally be a formal selection process for recruitment to such posts (see also 15.4 below). Before recruitment can commence all secondments and any subsequent extensions will need to be approved by the VCP. Please see paragraph 4.2.

Advertising of secondments

- 15.2 With the exception of posts ring-fenced to a department, secondment opportunities are usually advertised Brigade wide (following procedures from section 4 onwards). It is important to note that on occasion (and subject to certain criteria being met) such temporary opportunities which are covering an established post may become available on a permanent basis as an assimilation and so it is in an employee's best interest to apply for any roles that they may be interested in. Assimilation in this context means that an employee can be offered the role on a permanent basis without being appointed through a further recruitment process. Please see section 16.
- 15.3 You should consider carefully from the outset whether there is a likelihood (subject to continuing funding etc.) that the temporary role may become available as a permanent post in the future. If so (and they wish assimilation to potentially apply), you will need to state this specifically in the job advert, which must be recruited to through a competitive selection process (see paragraph 15.4 below). Provided this happens, the role could then become permanent, subject to all other conditions outlined in the assimilation section being met. A post holder cannot be assimilated where the role they took up has been advertised only as a temporary vacancy and there was no reference in the advert to the post potentially becoming permanent in the future.

Applying for a secondment vacancy through a competitive selection process

- 15.4 Secondments should normally be recruited to through a competitive selection process by which the following must apply:

- (a) The temporary vacancy/secondment opportunity must have been advertised widely (i.e., on hotwire and/or externally) please see section 7.
- (b) The selection process must have followed the usual procedure for the selection of staff, i.e., written application, shortlisting, interview, and any other assessment methodologies considered appropriate to the post/grade please see from section 8.

Secondment arrangements

- 15.5 The current line manager should indicate any potential problems/difficulties that a release of a member of staff would cause from a resourcing perspective. It is not generally envisaged that applicants would be prevented from seeking a secondment opportunity. However, it is recognised that there may be occasions where the exigencies of the service preclude release. In these circumstances, the relevant head of service should consult with the Head of Resourcing for People services (or a designated nominee) who will make the final decision about the outcome. This advice can also be sought at the point that secondments might be extended, as due to resourcing requirements the originating department may require the member of staff to return or alternative resourcing strategies might need to be considered.
- 15.6 A conditional offer should be made to the successful candidate and references, or other pre-employment clearances taken up in accordance with section 11. For all secondments feedback must be provided to unsuccessful candidates. A letter referencing the arrangements e.g., job title, grade and duration for the secondment agreement should be retained on the individual's e-PRF.
- 15.7 If at the end of the secondment period, the temporary cover is to be extended with the same employee both the manager of the secondment and the individual's originating department manager must confirm to HR Services that there is agreement for the secondment to continue. A new electronic job requisition also must be raised for the extension period. Through the secondment period, you should regularly review performance of your staff to assist with their personal development and make sure that they remain suited to the role. Any performance issues should be addressed to enable improvement. It should be noted that appropriate performance of the employee in the role is a key condition should the post become available as an assimilation (please see section 16) therefore this is another important reason that performance is reviewed regularly.
- 15.8 You should prepare a secondment report at six monthly intervals (if applicable) and at the end of the period of the secondment period, highlighting work undertaken, effectiveness of performance and indicating any future developmental needs. A secondment agreement may terminate early owing to the unsatisfactory performance, conduct or attendance of the individual. Any such concerns should be discussed with the individual, line manager and originating line manager before any final decisions are taken. A copy of all review documents should be made available to the individual concerned, and copies emailed to Records Services for placement on the e-PRF.
- 15.9 If a secondment agreement does end early, depending on circumstances such as length of time remaining, due consideration should be given by relevant departments, subject to exigencies of service, for an appropriate replacement (following the selection procedures as outlined in section 15) for the specified period. Consideration should also be given to those in the chain of posts covering the secondment benefiting from the development opportunity for the specified period to ascertain if it is possible for continuation in those posts. Due to the temporary nature of secondments and service requirements continuation in the circumstances as described cannot be guaranteed.

External secondments

- 15.10 Temporary external secondment opportunities may also be available for current staff in vacancies outside of the Brigade. Any roles available at other related organisations including the GLA group and other Fire and Rescue Services are advertised in the Current Vacancies section of Hotwire.

16 Assimilation

- 16.1 This section outlines the circumstances in which a permanent or fixed term contract member of FRS staff or Control staff may be assimilated into another post.
- 16.2 Over time the circumstances regarding a temporary post may change. Where there has been a change in situation, for example, the post is vacated by the substantive post-holder or a fixed term post becomes a permanent post on the establishment, assimilation of the seconded or temporary post-holder into that post may be considered, provided the conditions outlined below are met. There will, however, be no automatic right to assimilation, as there may be occasions when such action is not appropriate e.g., if there is a need to fill the post through redeployment.
- 16.3 Conditions:
- The vacancy must be an established permanent post.
 - The person seconded or temporarily in the role must have been recruited to the post via a competitive selection process (see paragraph 15.4) and if a secondment the post as originally applied for must have been advertised at the recruitment stage as a vacancy that could potentially become available on permanent basis (see paragraph 15.3).
 - The person must be a permanent or fixed term contract member of staff and have held the temporary post for at least six months (from date of appointment to that post).
 - The line manager concerned must confirm in writing to the Assistant Director/Assistant Commissioner that the person has been performing the full range of duties of the post satisfactorily to the standard required. (To this end the detail can be submitted for secondments in appropriate performance reports - see paragraph 15.8). This must be endorsed by the appropriate Assistant Director/Assistant Commissioner.
 - Any appointment made will be subject to references, covering the temporary period of work which the Brigade considers satisfactory. When considering the satisfactory nature of references, account is taken of sickness records and any live or outstanding disciplinary matters.
 - The concurrence of Head of Resourcing for People Services (or their nominee) must be sought in all cases.
- 16.4 The assimilated member of staff providing they meet the above conditions must be the employee who had been appointed in that role on a temporary basis.
- 16.5 If the conditions described above are met, the seconded or temporary post-holder will be issued with a revised contract of employment confirming assimilation into the post. If the above conditions are not met, the substantive vacancy must be advertised and filled in accordance with Brigade procedures (as outlined from section 6).
- 16.6 Where a permanent member of staff acts into or is seconded to a post for a period of at least 6 months and their base posting has been deleted, they may be assimilated into the acting or seconded post, provided that the latter post is permanently vacant in accordance with Policy number 562 - Redundancy and redeployment code (FRS and Control staff). In such instances the conditions in paragraph 15.4 above must be met (i.e., the temporary role must have been recruited to via a competitive selection process).

- 16.7 Where a permanent or fixed term member of staff has direct assimilation rights to a post as a consequence of redundancy, this is set out in Policy number 562 - Redundancy and redeployment code (FRS and Control staff).

17 Grievance procedure

- 17.1 An employee cannot raise a grievance about the outcome of a selection process (whether temporary or permanent). However, where the staff member considers that the selection process was not followed correctly, they may raise a grievance about the process in accordance with Policy number 394 – Complaints (Grievance) policy.

18 Records

- 18.1 As part of the recruitment process, the Brigade collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants solely for recruitment purposes in order to assess applicants' suitability for a vacancy that has been advertised, for progression through the application process, obtaining references from previous employers and to fulfil legal or regulatory requirements including background checks and equality monitoring in order to analyse the recruitment processes and ensure that the Brigade meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty).
- 18.2 All personal data is processed in accordance with legislative requirements (General Data Protection Regulations - GDPR) as set out in Policy number 351 – Data protection and privacy policy and the Brigade's General Privacy Statement. Please see also further information related to use of data in the recruitment process on hotwire.
- 18.3 For internal candidates records as appropriate (i.e. if successful in gaining a position) will be kept on your electronic personal record file (e-prf) and retained in accordance with Policy number 788 - Electronic personal record file (ePRF) policy. Please send records by email to RecordsServices@london-fire.gov.uk.

19 Help and support

- 19.1 Additional details regarding the recruitment process including further guidance can be found at the filling a vacancy page on hotwire. For further assistance please contact the HR Helpdesk on extension 89100 option 3 and by email to IT.HR@london-fire.gov.uk. Please contact a Professional Standards Adviser in the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) on extension 31880 or by email to PSU@london-fire.gov.uk regarding a complaint (grievance).
- 19.2 This policy may also be available on request in other alternative accessible formats as set out in Policy number 290 – Guidance note on translation and interpretation. Please contact Communications on extension 30753 and by email to communications.team@london-fire.gov.uk to discuss your needs and options.
- 19.3 The Brigade invites your engagement so that it can learn so if you have a suggestion that can improve this policy then please submit your idea via the Staff Suggestion Scheme on Hotwire as set out in [Policy number 887 – Staff suggestion scheme](#). Any changes do need to go through the agreed engagement, consultation, negotiation or governance requirements.

Document history

Assessments

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

EIA	03/08/2026	SDIA	L - 31/07/26	HSWIA	30/07/26	RA	NA
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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 8, para 12.1	Reference added regarding the salary position for a new employee in their in first year of employment.	27/01/2026
Page 3, para 4.2 Page 7, para 11.1 Page 8, para 12.1	Paragraph added about the Vacancy Control Panel (VCP). Update to DBS vetting paragraph. Update as a result of VCP approval required for variations in starting salary.	22/06/2026
Page 9, para 14.1 Page 11, para 15.1	Update as a result of VCP reference. Update as a result of VCP approval required for internal secondments.	
Page 4 para 3.4 Page 4 para 4.1 Page 6 para 7.7 Page 7 para 9.6 Page 7 para 10.1 Page 8 para 10.2	Diversity info moved. VCP Information added. Safeguarding info added. Initial interview info added. Declaration of interest info added. Mobile device info added.	20/08/2026

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

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Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

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