



Kathy Dunn – Retained Firefighter

What it means to be a Retained Firefighter

Retained Firefighters – Ordinary people doing an Extraordinary job

For firefighters, saving lives and protecting communities is all in a day's work. But whilst the majority of firefighters are full-time employees of the Fire and Rescue Service, an additional 30% of our fire crews have jobs elsewhere and are 'On-Call' with their local fire station.

Retained Firefighters provide emergency cover to over 90% of the UK. There are over 14,000 retained firefighters in England, protecting our small towns and rural communities and they are responsible for operating 60% of all fire engines.

Retained firefighters make up an invaluable part of the team, heading to their fire station only when needed in an emergency. They are paid

volunteers who, just like full-time firefighters, are trained to deal with everything from extinguishing burning buildings to providing first aid.

They come from all walks of life and could be full-time parents, office staff, manual workers or any profession you can think of. But whilst retained firefighters are ordinary men and women, they do an extraordinary job for the Fire and Rescue Service and are integral to keeping their local fire station crewed and protecting the local community.

In England at any one time there are more retained firefighters providing emergency cover than their full-time colleagues. The only difference is that they aren't based at a fire station.

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Kathy Dunn – School Caretaker

“

I've made lots of good friends and enjoy the team atmosphere ”

Kathy Dunn
School Caretaker and
Retained Firefighter

A FLEXIBLE SYSTEM

Retained firefighters carry an alerter. They let the fire station know when they're available so they can respond immediately to emergency calls at any time. Many have an arrangement with their employer, so they can be 'On-Call' for the Fire and Rescue Service whilst at the same time remaining a valued employee. Others choose to devote only evenings and/or weekends to being 'On-Call'.

Your Fire and Rescue Service will ensure that it's a system geared to suit both the employers and the employees that they release to be 'On-Call'.

BEING 'RETAINED'

Retained firefighters have to live or work within about five minutes of their local fire station in order to respond to call outs quickly. They are called out on average two or three times a week but the commitment varies around the country and between different fire stations.

Their duties can include:

- Responding to emergency calls – they could be tackling a chemical spill one day, or extinguishing a burning building the next.
- Delivering community fire safety information. This could include provision of information to businesses, schools and people more vulnerable to fire, through to engaging with young people to reduce anti-social behaviour and fire-setting.
- Reducing risks and hazards in the community through the identification of health and safety issues.

JOINING UP

A number of Wiltshire towns currently need more retained firefighters. To find out more, visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk or call Tracy on (01380) 731179.

Retained Recruitment Hotline

(01380) 731144

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Justin Lewis – Retained Firefighter

What to expect?

Retained Firefighters – community champions

If one of your employees is a retained firefighter it can have real benefits for your business, as well as your local community. Of course, this also requires a commitment from you as their employer, although the impact on your business should be manageable.

HOW MUCH AND HOW OFTEN?

Retained Firefighters are called out two or three times a week, usually for about an hour. This commitment will vary around the Country. They are able to choose when they wish to be

'On-Call' – for example, during the evening, daytime or weekend. However, the system is flexible so should a busy week at work arise, or urgent deadlines loom, then your business takes priority.

Your employee might have to rush off to attend an emergency at very short notice, but the additional skills they will bring to your workplace will make this worthwhile. What's more, as an employer you can feel proud that you have played a vital role in making the local community safer.

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Justin Lewis – Self-Employed Electrician

“

It was a
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”

Justin Lewis
Self-Employed Electrician
and Retained Firefighter

EXTRA TRAINING AT NO EXTRA COST?

So what else can you expect, as an employer of a retained firefighter?

No Financial Cost

Retained firefighters are paid an annual retainer fee plus payments for attending emergencies by your Fire and Rescue Service.

Free Training

At no charge, your employee will receive training from the Fire and Rescue Service worth hundreds of pounds in directly transferable skills.

For more information on the benefits to you as an employer we've put together a helpful Fact Sheet – Retained Firefighters – Helping Your Community which you may find useful.

JOINING UP

If you're interested in finding out how you can help the community, your staff and your own business, log on to www.communities.gov.uk/oncallfirefighters or visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk or call Tracy on (01380) 731179.

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Steph Tilling – Retained Firefighter

Being 'Retained'

Retained Firefighters – working at the heart of your community

Monday morning you tackled a burning building, Wednesday afternoon you rescued casualties from a road-traffic accident – and the rest of the week? You were a valuable staff member to your employer.

As a retained firefighter your training, skills and experiences will be an asset in any career and you will be protecting your local community.

Across the country, retained firefighters make up 30% of the operational Fire and Rescue Service. These ordinary men and women work

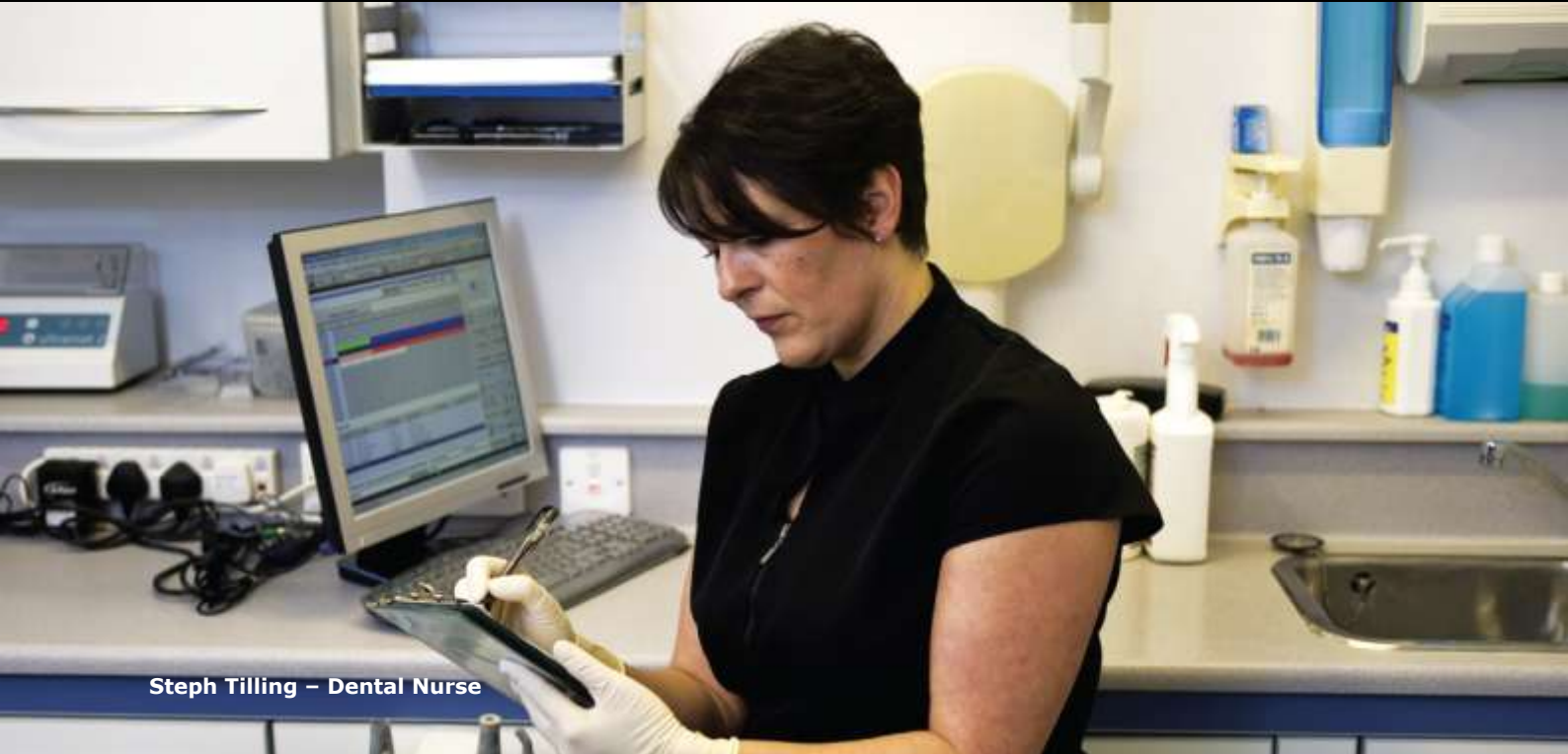
on a 'standby' basis, responding to emergency calls and are paid both an annual retainer and fees for attending training, emergencies and giving fire safety advice. They usually live or work within five minutes of their local fire station in order to respond quickly to emergency calls.

Without the help of these individuals, the protection available to your community could be affected. That's why we're currently looking for more men and women prepared to take on this role.

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Steph Tilling – Dental Nurse

“
It’s an exhilarating adrenalin buzz with great rewards
”

Steph Tilling
Dental Nurse and
Retained Firefighter

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

You could be sitting at your desk one minute, then halfway up a ladder the next, and you’ll never know when the next call is going to come. For most of our retained firefighters, the best part of the role is combining an exciting and rewarding contribution to their community with the challenges of their current job.

Fire and Rescue Services are committed to offering retained firefighters flexible contracts and working hours to ensure a healthy work/life balance. On average you’ll be called out two or three times a week for around an hour, which makes managing both roles straight-forward for most firefighters.

As you will be helping your community, as well as learning valuable new skills, you’re likely to find that your employer is understanding. After all, your time away from work will be relatively short and the benefits you bring to your company significant.

You would get some important personal benefits too. In return for your commitment, you’ll:

- Be paid an annual retainer and call-out fees – most On-Call Firefighters earn between £5000 and £7000 per year
- Receive first aid and trauma care training
- Get risk assessment and health and safety training
- Forge important links with your community
- Have opportunities for educational and vocational qualifications

NEXT STEPS

A number of Wiltshire towns currently need more retained firefighters. To be eligible you must be able to travel to your fire station within five minutes of an emergency call. The role requires commitment, self-motivation and above all the desire to protect the community.

Applicants will be asked to go through a recruitment process to assess whether they have the potential to do the job. This will involve written and physical tests and an interview.

To find out more, visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk, click on 'Jobs', click on 'retained firefighters' or call Tracy on (01380) 731179.

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Andy Burwood – Retained Firefighter

The benefits to employers

Retained Firefighters – helping your community

As an employer you're often "firefighting" so you probably feel you need all hands to the pump. But there is a way to bring real-life firefighting skills into your business with a substantial benefit to your community.

Nationwide, Fire and Rescue Services need the help of local businesses to provide capable staff as retained firefighters. Their work is vital to the safety of the local community and your support in releasing your staff to carry out firefighting duties is crucial.

BRINGING YOU VALUE

Retained firefighters are highly trained professionals who can bring added value to your organisation. They gain many useful transferable skills with the Fire and Rescue Service which can be useful in any workplace.

These can include:

- Personal skills: such as team work, quick thinking, using initiative, taking responsibility, communication skills and keeping calm in difficult situations. Being a firefighter also requires commitment and self-discipline.
- Emergency skills: including first aid and trauma care, will assist your business on health and safety, first aid and fire related matters. They are trained on an on-going basis to maintain and develop these skills.
- Educational and vocational qualifications: Firefighters are encouraged to gain National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), and to maintain up-to-date skills. These can benefit employers through better productivity levels and improved motivation.

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Andy Burwood – Sales Executive

“
My employer is supportive of my request to leave work to attend ‘shouts’ until I can return ”

Andy Burwood
Sales Executive and
Retained Firefighter

Firefighters never quite know what they might find when they respond to ‘a call’. Not only does this mean they are trained to deal with a wide variety of situations, they are also more able to cope with unexpected events in other areas of working life.

Businesses have found that the benefits offered by allowing their staff to be ‘On-Call’ have far outweighed any inconvenience caused by their employee responding to an emergency.

Because retained firefighters aren’t based at fire stations but operate on standby, they’re only called out when needed.

They are first and foremost your staff member, but are available ‘On-Call’, to help and protect the local community when needed.

YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU

Retained firefighters are men and women from all walks of life, from teachers and shopkeepers to company directors and builders. They provide a significant service to their community whilst delivering unparalleled knowledge and skills to their employer.

Not only do they bring Fire and Rescue Service skills into your workplace, but by offering one of your employees the flexibility to become a retained firefighter, you can make a really positive contribution to your local area.

JOINING UP

Through your staff, you’ll be saving lives and forging important ties with your community. If you’re interested in finding out more just log on to www.communities.gov.uk/oncallfirefighters or contact Tracy on (01380) 731179 or visit www.wiltsfire.gov.uk

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Working together



“
It hasn't infringed
on any work
commitments ”

Rachel Hicks, The Pines Care Home

**Rachel Hicks
(Employer)
The Pines Care Home,
Shropshire**

As Tim Perk's boss, Rachel finds that working with a retained firefighter greatly increases health and safety awareness in her care home. She also feels that having a staff member as part of her local Fire and Rescue Service is highly beneficial for her specific business.

“As a care home working with adults with learning disabilities it's very important that every member of staff has fire safety training” says Rachel. “Having Tim as part of the Fire and Rescue Service means that we have someone with greater expertise who knows the residents and the layout of the home, so if there were an emergency he wouldn't cause undue worry or stress to them”

Rachel allows more flexible arrangements for Tim, and ensures there is always an extra staff member at the home in case he is called out. “Having an employee as part of the Fire and Rescue Service has not infringed on any work commitments” she says.

“Tim doesn't get called out much on shift, and I feel it's very important to have retained firefighters and support our local community. I don't know where we'd be if we didn't have our local firefighters.”

**Tim Perks
(Employee)
Care Worker and Retained
Firefighter, Shropshire**

“I love being a firefighter” says Tim Perks, whose full-time job sees him employed as a care worker. Although this job is demanding, Tim still finds the time to fit in his extra retained work through a combination of dedication and an understanding employer.

“My employer has been exceptional in letting me go off and do my job as a firefighter” says Tim. “There are some shifts where I physically can't leave but the Fire and Rescue Service know about those and they rota for them down the station.”

Besides the adrenalin rush of attending emergencies Tim has made many friends in the Fire and Rescue Service and values the teamwork aspect very highly.

“This is the best job in the world” says Tim.

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**Stephen Treasure
(Employer)
Treasure & Son Ltd,
Shropshire**

Employer Stephen Treasure has several staff members working as retained firefighters, and believes they play a vital part in the local community. In addition, he believes the role keeps his employees fitter, increases their sense of teamwork and confers valuable first aid skills.

"It's an important part of our business to benefit the local community and it's important for the community to have retained 'On-Call' Firefighters" he explains.

**Gwynfor Benjamin
(Employee)
Carpenter and Retained
Firefighter, Shropshire**

Carpenter Gwynfor had worked for Treasure and Sons for 18 years before

colleagues persuaded him to join the Fire and Rescue Service. Now he teams his carpentry skills with fire fighting, working in an On-Call capacity for his local station.

The role has worked wonders for Gwynfor's confidence, and he feels that his new training has improved his work skills and more besides. "It's helped me deal with life too and all that it throws at you" he explains. "As you answer your pager, you're never sure what the job will be".

Gwynfor finds it easy to strike the right balance between his day job and part-time role. He can choose when he's 'On-Call', so he's available when it's not busy at work. With an understanding employer on his side, combining the two jobs works well.

“
It's important for
the community
to have Retained
Firefighters ”

Stephen Treasure,
Treasure & Son Ltd.





“
She’s up to date
on the latest
issues and
legislation”

Kate Hudson, Head Teacher

**Kate Hudson
(Employer)
Head Teacher, Lincolnshire**

“It means she’s up to date on the latest issues and legislation and she can spot things others may miss” explains head teacher Kate Hudson. “She’s the health and safety governor here at the school, so her experience and training feeds well into her job.” By having flexible working policies in place, the school gets real benefits from Kathy’s role as a Retained Firefighter.

**Kathy Dunn
(Employee)
School Caretaker and
Retained Firefighter,
Lincolnshire**

Kathy joined up after hearing about the role from a friend. He told her that their local Fire and Rescue Service was looking for volunteers to become retained firefighters. She initially intended to work five to ten years, but is now hoping to continue as long as her fitness

allows. Her rural location sees her called out to incidents which include field fires in summer, and road traffic collisions in winter.

In her position as caretaker, Kathy has brought her firefighting skills with her and is also Health & Safety Governor in the school where she works.

Whilst her retained work is varied and exciting it’s the teamwork which Kathy finds the most enjoyable aspect of the job. “There’s a sense of well-being from being in the group” she explains. “I’ve made lots of good friends and enjoy the team atmosphere and comradeship.”





“
It was a childhood
dream ”

**Justin Lewis,
Self-Employed Electrician**

Justin Lewis Self-Employed Electrician and Retained Firefighter, Gloucestershire

Being a firefighter was a childhood dream for Justin, but it wasn't until he became retained that he was able to make it a reality. Working as an electrician, Justin enjoyed his day job but felt he was limited in his opportunity to 'give something back.' So joining the Fire and Rescue Service part-time allowed him to both help his community and fulfil a lifelong ambition. Justin has now worked as a retained firefighter for six and a half years and counting.

"Being a firefighter, people have great respect for me, and the type of person I am" he says. "Helping people as part of my working life gives me enormous job satisfaction."

Justin gets called out to a range of incidents from house fires and floods, to road traffic accidents. On one memorable occasion he joined a fleet

of eighteen fire engines to extinguish a mammoth blaze in the local ten pin bowling alley which raged for fourteen hours. But not every incident is as dramatic.

"One particular call out was to help someone who had their hand stuck in a letterbox, which was quite amusing!" says Justin.

In addition to varied and exciting call outs Justin also greatly appreciates the opportunity to build on his current working skills. "Training in health and safety, and first aid are also beneficial in my day job" he explains.

Justin thrives on the excitement and uncertainty of his work with the Fire and Rescue Service. He never knows what the next call out will be, but more importantly it gives him the chance to combine a challenging day job with a rewarding role with his Fire and Rescue Service and serving his local community.



“
It's an exhilarating
adrenalin buzz with
great rewards ”

Steph Tilling, Dental Nurse

Steph Tilling Dental Nurse and Retained Firefighter, Gloucestershire

"It's an exhilarating adrenalin buzz with great rewards" says retained firefighter Steph Tilling. Steph works as a dental nurse and is a mother of three, making her role with the Fire and Rescue Service an additional rewarding aspect of her day to day life. "I joined because I wanted a challenge, something exciting and the chance to work with the community" says Steph.

The work hasn't always delivered what she expected. On her first call out she arrived expecting a small kitchen fire only to be confronted with a blazing building. She has rescued people as well as encountered fatalities in the course of her duty, and has been involved in delivering educational fire safety advice within the community.

During her work with the Fire and Rescue Service Steph has learned to use a defibrillator and breathing apparatus in addition to learning casualty care and first-aid skills.

"I get to do a lot of interesting things I've never done before" she says. "I've learnt things like CPR which are also of benefit to my employer." She finds the role works well with being a mother and her full time job and brings an exhilarating element of uncertainty to her day. "Your alerter could go off any time – day or night" she says. "And whenever it does, you don't know what you're being called to. We have road traffic collisions, barn fires, house fires – all sorts. I would recommend this job to anyone who wants an exciting challenge. I think it's fantastic."

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Frequently Asked Questions

HOW LONG WILL MY EMPLOYEE BE AWAY WHEN CALLED OUT ON DUTY?

Typically, this could be two to three hours per week. Your local Fire Station Manager will be able to give you specific advice. It's a flexible arrangement, depending on the needs of your business. Retained firefighters are given the option of choosing the cover they wish to provide.

They could opt for evening, daytime or weekend cover, with full-time cover being 120 hours per week, and in most instances your employee should be able to provide you with their 'On-Call' rota on a weekly basis.

Firefighters working the Retained duty System agree to be available for a

certain number of hours per week. They carry a pager and must be in a position to get to the fire station within five minutes of an emergency call-out during their available hours. Rest assured, however, that your needs and requirements as the primary employer will always have priority.

Fire and Rescue Services are committed to offering retained firefighters flexible contracts and working hours to ensure a healthy work/life balance.

IF MY EMPLOYEE IS CALLED OUT TO ATTEND AN EMERGENCY AM I OBLIGED TO LET THEM GO REGARDLESS OF MY ORGANISATION'S NEEDS?

No. Retained firefighters let their Fire and Rescue Service know when they

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are available so when an emergency call comes in, only those who have booked in as being available are expected to respond and attend.

WHAT SORT OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT WILL MY STAFF UNDERGO AS PART OF THEIR ROLE AS A FIREFIGHTER?

All firefighters go through a rigorous training and development programme which is provided by their Fire and Rescue Service. They will develop skills in risk management, communication, team working, leadership, self discipline, first aid, trauma care, health and safety, and much more, and they will bring this training and experience back to their workplace.

HOW LONG WILL MY EMPLOYEE BE REQUIRED TO TAKE TIME AWAY FROM WORK FOR TRAINING?

Firefighters must be well trained if they are going to work safely and effectively in the wide range of operational incidents they have to tackle. Fire and Rescue Services recognise that some retained firefighters might need to take time off from their primary employment to undertake training. Most Fire and Rescue Services will aim to reduce the impact on the primary employer by providing basic training at fire stations on drill nights and during weekends, reducing the time required for training during weekdays.

WHAT IF MY EMPLOYEE GETS INJURED WHILE AT AN INCIDENT?

Retained firefighters are trained to a high standard before they are fully operational so this is a rare occurrence. In the event this does happen, the Fire and Rescue Service should have a policy in place for compensating the employee for any loss of earnings after Statutory Sick Pay. Details can be obtained from your Fire and Rescue Service.

ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS FOR ME OR MY BUSINESS OF EMPLOYING AN ON-CALL FIREFIGHTER?

Like all employers Fire and Rescue Services have to comply with current legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Working Time and Road Transport Regulations. Depending on the number of hours they are contracted to their primary employer, retained firefighters may have to sign an Opt-Out agreement under the Working Time Regulations.

If you are a haulage company or your employee drives a truck for work, both you and your employee should be aware of the implications of the EC Drivers' Hours and Tachograph Rules for Goods Vehicles (Regulation 561/2006).

Details of any legislation and its impact can be obtained from your local Fire and Rescue Service.

WHAT BENEFITS DO I GET AS AN EMPLOYER FOR RELEASING A MEMBER OF STAFF TO BE AN ON-CALL FIREFIGHTER?

Many find the biggest reward is the knowledge that their company is undertaking a vital role in protecting the local community. By allowing one of your employees to become a retained firefighter you know you have made a difference every time they respond to an emergency and help save lives.

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