

Employers guide to On- call Firefighters



What is an On-call Firefighter?

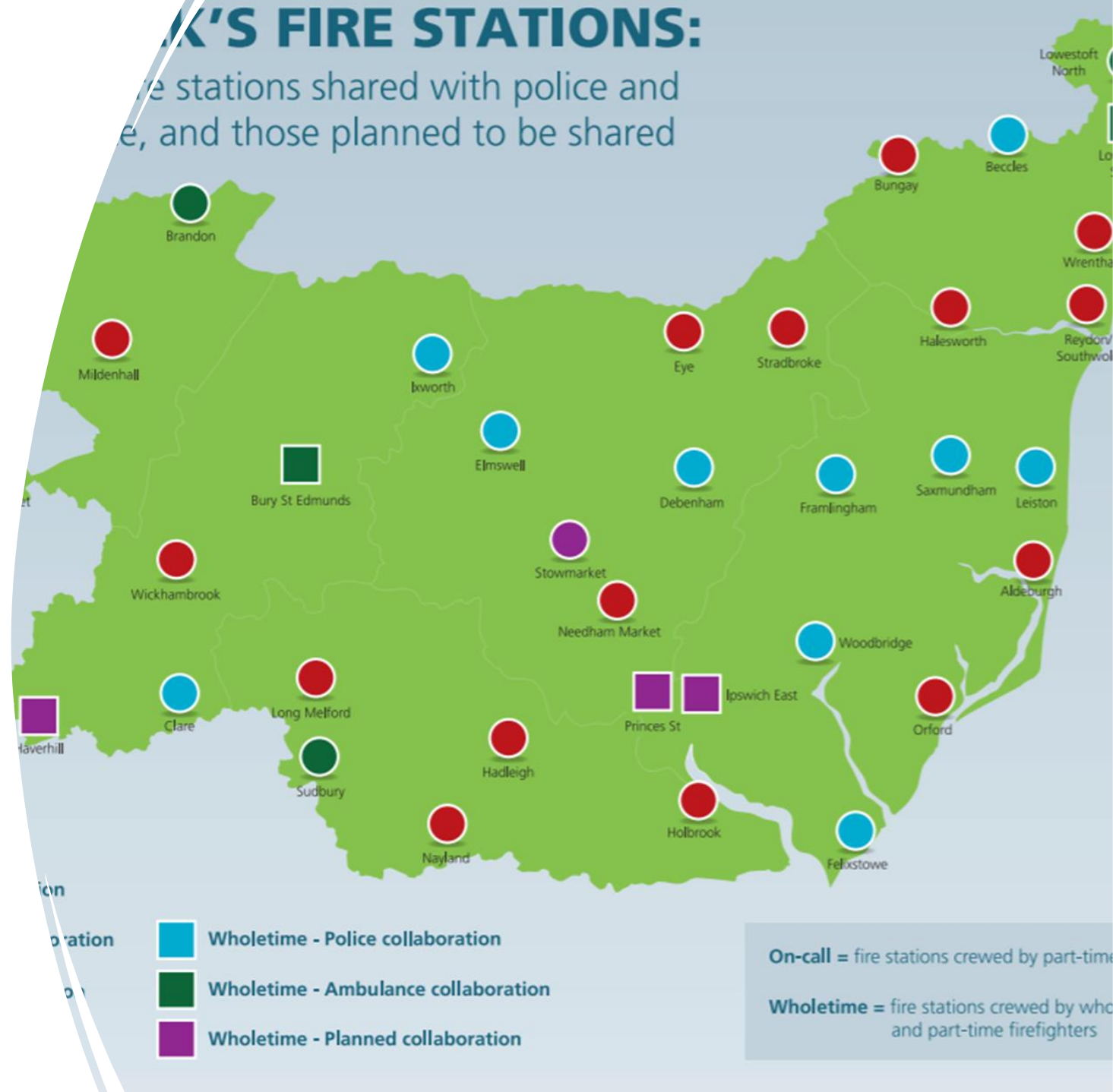
An On-call Firefighter is a fully trained, operational firefighter who helps to protect their local community and the people of Suffolk.

While Wholetime Firefighters will be based on station full time, an On-call Firefighter will have their main employer and responds at agreed times of availability. They carry a bleeper that will alert them to incidents, at which time they will go to their fire station to respond. After the incident they will return to their day.



How many firefighters are On-call?

- Most firefighters in the UK are On-call.
- Suffolk Fire and Rescue have 35 fire stations and 29 of those are crewed entirely by On-call.
- The 6 wholetime stations are also backed up by On-call crews.
- Almost any incident attended by firefighters will have On-call crews there.
- This is consistent throughout the UK outside of London.



What does this mean for me as an employer?

- As a service we rely on employers like yourself to support both us and the community by agreeing to release On-call firefighters to attend incidents
- Your support plays a huge part in keeping the community safe.
- This may mean your employee would need to leave work on occasion to respond to an incident and then return to work after.



How does it work?

- When a recruit applies, they will fill in a form to indicate their availability to respond called an AA08.
- They will be required to get a form signed by you as their employer to agree to release them during working hours.
- During their working day, should there be an incident, their pager will sound, and they will need to leave as quickly as possible to attend and then return to work once the incident is resolved.
- Incidents may take 30 minutes but can be a few hours depending on how large or serious the incident is.



How will this affect me?

- This means that there could be occasions where your employee would be gone for a few hours during work.
- They may occasionally be late to work if they have been at an incident during the hours close to work times, however you would always be notified of this.
- Most incidents occur during the night so may not be when your employee is at work, most Firefighters are not called out every day, this varies throughout the year.



What's in it for me?

- As an employer supporting Suffolk Fire and Rescue you would be playing a huge part in supporting and protecting the people of Suffolk.
- The service would recognise your support by way of awarding a plaque you can display in the workplace along with an attendance from the district officer and recruitment team and possibly some media presence and social media promotion for you.
- You can request attendance from your local station crew for any events you put on in the area.
- On-call firefighters are loyal to their employers, we have found that firefighters who are released stay with their employer long term, this will help with your own staff retention.
- The training the service provides will give your employee the ability to work in high stress situations, perform under pressure, work as part of a team, be able to improvise and adapt and be innovative in their work.
- Firefighters are trained in first aid and trauma care which they will bring to your workplace among a huge range of other transferable skills.
- The WE ASPIRE values and culture from Suffolk Fire and Rescue promote equality, diversity and inclusion at work as well as instilling, pride, supporting and empowering their colleagues.



What else is there to know?

- As an employer you wouldn't need to release your employee for all their working hours. The service can be flexible with availability, for example, if you have regular periods where you are busy or do not have sufficient staff to cover in someone's absence you could agree to release around these times.
- As mentioned previously, most incidents occur at night and most firefighters are not called out every day, you may not need to release someone as often as you think.
- Firefighters appreciate the effort their employer goes to for them, and you could come to an arrangement for them to make up lost time or to come in for some additional time in case they are called out.
- During community events you could be involved as a supporting employer which would generate exposure and promotion for your workplace.
- The essential part you would play in the community will make a huge difference to people and may help save lives.

