



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET
POST OF RETAINED FIREFIGHTER (CARLOW SECTION) OF CARLOW FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

CLOSING DATE: 12 noon on Friday, 27th March 2026.

FOUR TYPED APPLICATION FORMS (one original completed signed copy and three full copies of the original) should be returned to:

**Administrative Officer,
Human Resources Section,
Carlow County Council,
County Council Offices,
Athy Road,
Carlow.
R93E7R7**

Candidates who send their applications by post should allow sufficient time to ensure delivery not later than the latest time for acceptance.

Please note the following instructions:

- A Curriculum Vitae or applications by email or fax will **NOT** be accepted.
- All application forms **MUST** be typed and before signing the form, please ensure that you have replied fully to all sections/questions.
- You should satisfy yourself that you are eligible under the qualifications required for this post – **a copy of educational results/qualifications MUST be submitted with your application form if you wish to have them considered in support of your application.** Failure to submit such copies may result in your educational qualification(s) not being considered in any shortlisting exercise.
- Carlow County Council is not responsible for any expenses which may be incurred by the candidate in attendance for aptitude test or interview.
- Applications received after the closing date and time specified will **not** be accepted.
- Applications received that do not comply with the requirements set out in the booklet, i.e., typed application form, one original fully completed signed copy and 3 copies of the application form and copy of educational results/qualifications, will **not** be accepted.
- Carlow County Council may decide, by reason of the number of persons seeking admission to the competition to carry out a shortlisting procedure. Shortlisting will be based on qualifications, relevant experience and information submitted on the application form. The number of persons to be invited for interview shall be determined by Carlow County Council.

CARLOW COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

1. The Carlow Fire Service is a retained service. Retained firefighters work on a part-time basis.
2. Membership of the Fire Service is voluntary and a firefighter may resign at any time if he or she wishes, having provided statutory notice.
3. The appropriate retaining fee and the hourly rate for attendance at fires and drill sessions will be paid according to the Approved National scale as set out, for the time being, as APPENDIX A attached.

An attendance at 85% of all drills and training sessions on a quarterly basis is necessary to qualify for a retaining fee. Firefighters who do not meet this requirement may lose 50% of Retainer (Annual Leave, Certified Sick Leave and Jury Duty, if not excused, may be valid excuses for absence). Other penalties may also apply.

4. A successful candidate will only be offered employment on a probationary basis as a Retained Firefighter subject to satisfactory completion of the following courses:
 - (a) Firefighting Skills Course. This course is a full-time, three-week course, which will be held at a training centre in Ireland and may involve staying away from home on a Monday to Friday basis for the three weeks.
 - (b) Breathing Apparatus Course. This course is a full-time, two-week course, which will be held at a training centre in Ireland and may involve staying away from home on a Monday to Friday basis for the two weeks.
 - (c) Compartment Fire Behaviour Training Course. This course is a full time, one-week course, which will be held at a training centre in Ireland and may involve staying away from home on a Monday to Friday basis for the week.
5. The earnings of a Retained Firefighter are variable depending on the level of activity undertaken by each individual. Earnings are made up of an annual retainer, payments for attending training, payments for attending call outs, payments for carrying out Community Fire Safety duties and payments for other duties.

An annual review will be undertaken in December each year to identify stations with low incident mobilisation. Where such levels fall below 75 hours in a calendar year, an adjustment payment will be made to each firefighter to provide for a minimum annual payment of 75 hours. This payment will be calculated on a pro rata basis for any new entrants in a calendar year.

Qualifications

Character:

Firefighters are required to:

- be of good Character, be physically and medically fit,
- possess intelligence, courage, and initiative.

Before being accepted, fire-fighters will be required to pass medical, physical, and other examinations which may include cardio-vascular assessment tests. Firefighters will also agree to undertake such other examinations as may be deemed necessary by the Chief Fire Officer. This may include, but is not limited to, return to work medicals, the provision of inoculations, screening etc. Carlow County Council may make whatever enquiries it considers necessary to satisfy this condition. Firefighters must be prepared at all times to act with a keen and responsible approach to both training and such other duties as may be assigned to them. The successful applicant will be subject to Garda Vetting prior to any appointment being confirmed.

They will also be required to comply fully with the requirements of the “Occupational Health Scheme for Members of the Retained Fire Service” as published by the Local Government Management Services Board in July 2005. Retained Fire-fighters will be required to undergo regular and ad-hoc medical examinations at any time.

Qualifying Criteria:

- Firefighters must be not less than 18 years on recruitment. Retirement age for Retained Fire-fighters is 55 years of age. The Council may however, at its discretion, extend the age limit beyond the age of 55 years but under no circumstances shall such extension be such as to permit an employee to continue beyond the age of 62 years. A birth certificate shall be submitted to Carlow County Council as proof of age.
- A firefighter must reside and work within a reasonable distance of the Fire Station to enable him/her to respond promptly to all calls. On receipt of a fire or other emergency Carlow Fire & Rescue Service aim to mobilise their stations within 5 minutes.
- Applicants shall possess adequate practical, literacy and numeric skills to allow them to carry out their duties in a competent and safe manner. Applicants will be required to undertake Firefighter Suitability Assessments including assessment of practical, literacy and numeracy skills as part of the selection process. Attendance at these assessments is at the candidates own expense.
- Applicants who are successful must be prepared to undertake any Fire & Rescue Service training courses deemed necessary to refresh and/or enhance their capability to carry out their role in a competent and safe manner and any other training or courses as may be required by the Chief Fire Officer.
- All new applicants must hold a current clean Class B driving licence free from endorsements on the last day of receipt of application for the position. Successful applicants will be required to obtain and maintain a full class C driving licence within the probationary period of **twelve months**. Successful applicants shall be expected to complete the Emergency Services Driving Standard training.
- It is the responsibility of the firefighter to notify the Chief Fire Officer in writing without delay of any endorsement or suspension applied to your licence.

Health:

A firefighter shall be free from any defect, disease, physical or psychological condition that may adversely impact on their duties and must be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

They will also be required to comply fully with the requirements of the "Occupational Health Scheme for Members of the Retained Fire Service" as published by the Local Government Management Services Board in July 2005. Retained Fire-fighters will be required to undergo regular and ad-hoc medical examinations at any time.

Abridged Conditions of Employment

- A firefighter must reside and work within a reasonable distance of the Fire Station to enable him/her to respond promptly to all calls. On receipt of a fire or other emergency Carlow Fire & Rescue Service aim to mobilise their stations within 5 minutes. If, at any time, his/her availability is affected by change of residence and/or work or for any other reason, he/she will be required to resign. (Proof of address / Eircode must be provided).
- A firefighter must submit a letter from their employer, outlining their permission to attend training and emergency callouts. Self-employed personnel must also provide written evidence as to availability prior to appointment.
- A retained firefighter who is offered employment will be sent on a Firefighting Skills Course of 3 weeks duration, which will be followed by a 2 week Breathing Apparatus Wearer Course, 1 week Compartment Fire Behaviour Course as well as a variety of shorter courses. These courses are non-consecutive. Failure to successfully complete such courses, will result in termination of the firefighter's employment. Unless there are exceptional mitigating circumstances, as determined by the Chief Fire Officer, firefighters will be permitted one opportunity to pass the Recruit Training course and the Breathing Apparatus Initial Wearers course.
- Retained firefighters will be subject to a probationary period of 12 months following appointment.
- Retained firefighters are required to comply with the Composite Agreement for Retained Firefighters 1999, as implemented in Carlow County Fire & Rescue, including completing age-related fitness tests.
- A retained firefighter is required to retire from the service on reaching 55 years of age unless he/she passes an annual occupational health test, where he/she will have an option to work until reaching age of 62.
- The annual leave entitlement will be calculated in accordance with the Working Time Act, 1997 and S.I. No. 473 of 2001 Organization of Working Time (Records) (Prescribed Form and Exemptions) Regulations, 2001. The present annual leave entitlement is 28 days per annum. One day's annual leave is equivalent to 24 hours. Payment for annual leave is confirmed as being 8% of earnings. These earnings will be calculated on the basis of the previous year's earnings excluding the retainer, clothing allowance and payment for annual leave and public holiday leave in the previous year. The payment for annual leave will be made when employees take annual leave as part of the fortnightly pay cycle.

- A firefighter shall be provided with a minimum of 100 hours training per annum comprising 2 hours per week of regular scheduled training drill activities. Firefighters will be expected to attend training courses prescribed and scheduled during the calendar year as part of Carlow Fire & Rescue Services training programme.
- Based on an annual 52 weeks, excluding 4 weeks annual leave, Retained Firefighters will be required to be available and attend alerts 24 weeks in the year on a week on/week off-flexible basis. Across the 24 weeks where a Retained Firefighter is rostered-off they can, if they so wish, attend incidents. In the event of occasional unavoidable absence of a rostered-on member for part of his /her week, it is the responsibility of the rostered on member to arrange cover for the period of his/her absence with an available (rostered off-flexible) member. This agreement has to be notified and agreed with by the Station Officer or Sub-Station Officer in advance. This is to guarantee that the Station Officer is in a position to ensure that the minimum crewing levels for each station are met before any cover arrangement can be approved.
- Firefighters are rostered for duty in accordance with the station procedures. During a rostered-on period, they will attend all fire calls. The obligation is on the fire-fighters to ensure that they receive all fire calls during the rostered period.
- Firefighters will be required to carry a Fire Service Alerter, switched on, **at all times** and to ensure this Alerter is fully operational.
- Firefighters will accept and abide by the Brigade Service Orders at present in force and any Service Orders made in the future by the Chief Fire Officer.
- Firefighters will abide and comply with all safety management systems provided and their responsibilities under the health, Safety & Welfare at Work Act 2005.
- In the event of a grievance, firefighters will use the grievance procedures of Carlow County Council.
- In the event of breach of discipline by firefighters, the Disciplinary Procedures of Carlow County Council will apply.
- The appointment is probationary for the first twelve months. During this period the candidate will be required to demonstrate progression in his/her training and will be required to undertake practical tests and appraisals at regular intervals, to develop and enhance their skills as a Retained Firefighter.
- Applicants will be required to attend for interview at their own expense. The interview board will recommend a panel of suitable applicants and further vacancies that occur, within a one-year period, will be filled from this panel.
- Any absence on sick leave must be reported to the Station Officer or Sub Station Officer on the first morning of illness. Where a firefighter is absent due to sickness, a certificate from a qualified Medical Practitioner must be submitted on the third day of a continuous absence and on a weekly basis thereafter.
- Where a firefighter becomes incapacitated for an extended period as a result of serious illness or injury, payment of the retainer for a period of 3 months will be subject to:
 - (a) the Station Officer having received notification as soon as possible concerning the circumstances of the absence and,

(b) a medical certificate from a qualified Medical Practitioner being submitted within three days of a continuous absence and on a weekly basis thereafter.

Payment of the retainer may be extended to six months depending on the merits of each case and the applicant's attendance records. Extended sick leave would normally only be granted to a firefighter on one occasion only. A medical certificate of fitness to return to work must be submitted prior to resuming operational duties after all periods of certified sick leave exceeding 7 days duration.

- A Return to Work Form must be completed by any staff member absent on uncertified and certified sick leave. The form must be countersigned by the Station Officer and forwarded to a Senior Fire Officer prior to submission to Human Resources. The medical certificate should state the general nature of the illness. This information will be treated in confidence. The local authority reserves the right to refer you for an independent medical examination. Dependent on the nature of illness/injury a firefighter may be referred to an Occupational Health Practitioner prior to resuming work.
- Firefighters shall abide by the policy on Long and Prolonged Term Absence.
- Persistent incidents of frequent intermittent sick leave absences may be investigated, and such investigation may include referral to an independent medical advisor. If it is found that abuse/misuse of the scheme has taken place, entitlements to paid retainer fees during sick leave may be revoked or any other sanction in accordance with the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure may be applied.

APPENDIX A

PAYMENT AND ALLOWANCES FOR RETAINED FIRE-FIGHTERS

- Remuneration from 1st February 2026 will be as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Current Retaining Fee: | 0- 1 Years | €16,852 |
| | 2-4 Years | €17,864 |
| | 5-7 Years | €19,112 |
| | 8 Years Plus | €20,251 |

Hourly Rate of Attendance: Attendance at Fire Practices and Drills

Drill Rate per Hour €51.56 (approx. 100 hours per annum)

Fire Hourly Rate of Attendance

| Day | | Night/Weekend | |
|-----------------|--------|----------------------|---------|
| 1st Hour | €52.08 | 1st Hour | €104.16 |
| Subsequent Hour | €26.04 | Subsequent Hour | €52.08 |

Community Fire Safety Payment: €26.04 per hour

Community Fire Safety Annual Payment: €40.06 per fortnight

CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

