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Advice for applicants:

- do it
- don't let disabilities hold you back
- get the support you need

I always wanted to serve in a uniformed organisation, the fire and rescue service was pretty much top of the list. It has given me a fantastic and varied career for the past 20 years.

Being dyslexic means I have to work harder and really make sure I pay attention to detail. This was especially the case in the written exercises of the application process. I wasn't open about my dyslexia then so didn't seek any additional support or reasonable adjustments. The advice I give people now is to take advantage of the support that is available – especially for people with disabilities.

There are lots of opportunities in the fire and rescue service for people who wish to progress. I have never let my dyslexia hold me back, I completed my MBA last year which I could only have dreamed of when starting my career.

I thought my dyslexia would hold me back when I applied which is why I kept quiet. But being open and honest about it since then has helped me gain real support so I could develop and progress. The reaction of my peers and managers could not have been more positive and inclusive, in fact I am now the disability champion within my fire and rescue service.

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It's not all about running into burning buildings! The incident side of things is only a small part of what I do – and becoming less and less as I progress. My career ambition in the next 10 years is to be in a principal officer position within the North West, which I will not allow my dyslexia to be a barrier to achieving.