



# CAROLINE ANDERSON

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OFFICER AND FORMER  
ON-CALL FIREFIGHTER, DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE  
AND RESCUE SERVICE

## Advice for applicants:

- do it
- the opportunities are huge
- be an inspiration

I was working as a legal secretary for a small firm of solicitors audio typing for 8 hours a day when I saw a banner at my local fire station recruiting men and women. I needed a new and exciting challenge in my life so thought I would give it a go.

When I failed the initial fitness test I was really surprised. I thought I was fairly fit as I was a single mum to two teenage boys and I thought running around after them and walking our two collies twice a day would mean I could easily pass the test. But I was 38 and so appreciated I should put some effort in.

So I trained for two months, retook the test and thankfully passed. The recruitment process otherwise was quite straightforward and I soon got used to being one of the only females on the courses.

I love my job - being able to do something useful that helps people and makes them safer - what could be better? I've worked for many different departments within the fire sector and community is at the heart of all of them.

Being a firefighter is about working as part of a team to help people in need and to solve problems, but there are lots of other roles within the service which are equally rewarding. The fire service really looks after its staff and there are lots of opportunities if you want to take them.

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These days my role is more about encouraging those who think they can't to believing they can. Watching people grow in confidence is very rewarding.