



Photo

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AREA MANAGER – COMMUNITY SAFETY,  
TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

## Advice for applicants:

- speak to people who have been through the selection process
- attend recruitment days
- obtain a specific training programme to help you pass the physical tests and gets some coaching for interview

My dad was a firefighter, as was my fiancé. However, despite being very fit and competing in a number of sports, it wasn't a career I was considering. I wanted to join the police. My rationale for this was because I wanted to help people – something firefighters do every day.

The turning point came after I ruptured my ACL playing sport. After my knee operation I was told I would not be accepted in the police service – doctors told me I would be lucky to walk properly again. But I'm a firm believer that you can achieve anything. My fiancé encouraged me to consider applying for the fire service instead and, after giving it a bit of thought, I decided to give it a go.

I needed to get back to fitness after my knee operation. That gave me the focus I needed to see if I could manage to do all that is expected of a firefighter. I attended the fire station where my fiancé worked and tried wearing the breathing apparatus, climbing a ladder and running out hose – all of which I managed. This gave me the confidence to start training hard to get through the physical tests. 12 months after my operation I passed the physical tests after getting through the written element and went on to interview. I was offered the position and started my basic training.

I now work as an Area Manager overseeing a number of departments (Prevention, Fire Safety, Operations, Resilience, Fire Control, Technical Services Centre). The best bit about my job is spending time with people in the departments and on stations and being in a position where I feel I can influence the vision and direction of the Service.

For those who are considering becoming a firefighter I would say it's a massively fulfilling role. The teamwork, support, experiences and training that you will be exposed to will be like nothing you have received before. You will have some amazing highs and some upsetting lows – but you are in a position to contribute to prevention work that will reduce incidents occurring in the first place. You'll be there for people at their most vulnerable and you and your team will help them to the very best of your ability. These individuals will be indebted to you for the rest of their lives. You will feel proud of what you do on a daily basis.

As a firefighter you should never underestimate the positive impact you can make, or the positive role model you will become.