



PAUL

ON-CALL FIREFIGHTER, NORFOLK FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Advice for applicants:

- don't waste time
- don't make excuses – height, age etc
- believe in yourself

I had wanted to join the fire service since childhood but wasn't able to when I was young because of the height restrictions (I'm 5'3"). When I heard the restrictions had been lifted I just went for it.

I lived close enough to the fire station so applied to be an on-call firefighter.

At 48 I wasn't the youngest of recruits but I was definitely one of the keenest! Joining when you're more mature means you bring a lot of experience with you. I could really focus on what I wanted to achieve.

I had a problem with my hearing and thought for a while that because of that my dream might be over. But HR couldn't have been more helpful. Obviously, safety is the most important thing so that's why they were being strict about it. They gave me advice and I saw a specialist who helped me overcome it.

Being part of something as important as the fire service is a dream come true. I love everything about my job – literally everything – and am so proud of being a firefighter. I love my team – we all support each other and are great friends. Obviously, my parents and wife worry when I run out the door, but they know I have the support of a great team and service.

As I joined so late I want to make the most out of every minute I have here. Hopefully I have another 10 years in me yet! I'm hoping to get some more courses under my belt and learn and experience as much as I can before it's my time to hang up my tunic for the last time.

My advice would be: don't waste time. Get your name on the list and get yourself in the fire service. I wish I'd done it years ago. Don't think you can't cos of this or that – you can do it. I'm living proof of that.