

# Firefighter

Debbie Woodland visited us to tell us all about working as a firefighter.



Working in the fire service is a 24hr per day job, which you will continually train for even when in the job. You will be involved in:

- Putting out fires/ investigating the cause of fires
- Rescuing people from cars (this can be the largest part of the job)
- Sawing people/animals from danger
- Cleaning up chemicals
- Water rescues.

After joining the service you can then specialize in any of the following areas:-

- Technical fire safety – including advising schools and businesses on safety and ensuring they are complying with the law.
- Community safety – children in schools, the elderly, fetes ect
- Animal rescue specialists
- Investigation

There are different types of fire stations which are:

**Whole Time** – This is manned 24hrs per day and is fire officers only job. The fire officers are in teams, which are Red, Green, White and Blue watch. The fire officers work 2 days and 2 nights then have 4 days off. There are only currently 3 of these stations in Wiltshire.

**Day Crewed** – This is manned from 9am until 6pm and is the only job of the fire officers. They work 3 days on and 3 days off although they all carry pagers and need to be able to get back to the station within 3 minutes if a call come through. There are 3 of these in Wiltshire.

Retained – These are mostly empty as all of the fire officers have other jobs, although the officers need to be able to get to the station within 3 minutes of a call. The hours are chosen to fit around the officers other jobs.

The skills needed to be a fire officer are:-

- English – reading, writing and good communication and understanding of what is being said you also to be able to remember it.
- Maths
- Science
- IT

A fire officer has to have a willingness to learn and be an active part of a team. They must be able to follow instructions, be adaptable, flexible and confident.



Resilience is a high priority for a successful fire officer, they must also be able to stay calm under pressure and have empathy in any given situation.



Jobs within the fire service are advertised on the fire service website. The process to getting a job within the service after you are 18 is to:-

- Fill in an application form – which then be short listed
- Complete a written test – which tests how you can work with numbers, understand information, have awareness of situations and problem solving. You can have three attempts at passing this stage.
- Physical tests – this includes a casualty evacuation test, enclosed space test, equipment assessment, equipment carrying, ladder climb and ladder lifting.
- Interview
- Medical

Provided you successfully pass all of the above you will then undertake 8-12 weeks of training.