



Stephen Kyle

Scottish Fire & Rescue

“The Charity set me back on the right path and showed me how to walk it”



If anyone knows the isolating effects of living with a long-term medical condition, it's Stephen Kyle. The Easterhouse Watch Manager has lived with adult onset Still's disease for 14 years, a rare degenerative condition that causes your body's immune system to attack all its major organs.

So rare is the condition, that when Stephen first got ill, his doctors had no idea what was wrong: "It was scary," he says. "I spent three weeks in hospital, and while it was clear I was seriously ill, no one knew why. Eventually I was told I've got this illness, and that it's a chronic condition that will always be with me. And that was it."

Aged 40, and having spent the best part of 14 years as a healthy firefighter, Stephen's future was different to how he'd imagined: "It took its toll on me mentally, which I hadn't seen coming. I went onto light duties, but flare-ups would last 3-4 weeks where I couldn't get out of bed. I would snap at my family, blowing up over the smallest things. I wasn't a nice person to know."

He applied for help from the Charity and has visited Jubilee House and Harcombe House. Teams created personalised exercises to ease him back into fitness, while being sensitive to his condition: "You're dealing with an incurable illness people haven't heard of, not to mention medication side effects, but they were brilliant."

He was also offered psychological support: "I realised not feeling right in your head means your body doesn't feel right either, and vice versa. There will still be days where I feel sore or emotional, but I've realised it's about learning to accept."

Stephen says he doesn't like to think where he would be without the Charity's help: "I think I'd be in a bad place, to tell you the truth. But things are ticking along. The Charity set me back on the right path and showed me how to walk it."

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/stephen-kyle

Need help?

Call our Support Line today on 0800 389 8820 or visit www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/support