

Impact Report 2016/17

# The road to sustainability

Our work and impact in 2016/17



# Welcome

Chief Executive Dr Jill Tolfrey on a year that has seen us successfully reshape services to address the growing and changing needs of our beneficiary base, alongside setting the foundations for long term sustainability.

The nature of reports like this often inevitably sees them focusing on numbers and percentages, on income and expenditure, increases, decreases and year-on-year comparisons. However, while these comparators are vital in helping to paint a picture of our Charity's performance, they only provide a black and white outline. The colour comes from the real-life stories of the thousands of people who we help and support every year, the impact we have on their lives and the impression of us that they have taken away with them. The framework holding it all together, meanwhile, comes from the hard work and dedication of our employees, volunteers, fundraisers and supporters, without whom none of what we do would be possible.

As you read through this report I therefore urge you to do so with this in mind and to take some time to look back through the case studies and news stories on our website to remind yourself of the incredible work our Charity does. We make a genuinely life changing difference to our beneficiaries from all areas of the fire community and across the length and breadth of the UK. The numbers really only tell a fraction of the story.

The needs of our beneficiaries are changing and in 2016/17 we established a new programme of support that helps individuals and, uniquely, couples who are facing challenges with a long-term condition that is stopping them



living life to the full. The aim of our new Health and Wellbeing Programme, which runs at Harcombe House, is to provide the opportunity for beneficiaries to understand their condition and how to live successfully with the challenges it may bring.

2016/17 also saw a huge amount of work behind the scenes at the Charity as we continued to explore ways to improve efficiencies, ensuring that as much of every pound of hard earned income was used to deliver services and we were as 'lean' as possible.

We have established new and modern ways of working, launching and embedding a new database system that will enable improved administration and two-way communication with our beneficiaries, supporters and volunteers and employees.

2016/17 was the last year of the 2014-17 strategic plan and gave opportunity to reflect upon achievements during the lifetime of that plan. Such reflections identified how much change has taken place both in fire and in health. Understanding these changes has set a strong foundation for the



development of the key elements of our new strategic plan, taking us through to 2020.

The other challenge was, of course, how best to work together to reduce and reverse the downward turn in our traditional fundraising income, as well as looking at the development of new income streams such as Harcombe House Holidays. This has meant that 2016/17 was a year in which we continued to provide first class services for our beneficiaries, while also laying the foundations for our long term future.

In regards to our finances, you'll notice on page five of this report that our income actually exceeded our expenditure in 2016/17, which is of course a positive position to end the year on. However, these figures more accurately reflect the savings and efficiencies we recognised across the Charity through the year, rather than any significant increase in our fundraising income. Going forward, we want to be able to invest in our services, to reach more people and to break new ground in our work. However, in order to do this we need to ensure we continue to address the downward trend that we have seen in regards to our regular donations,

as well as looking to new avenues for raising income.

We recognise there is an increasing competition for income but our ambition remains to raise and spend around £10m a year to provide quality bespoke services to a growing number of beneficiaries, ensuring that their changing needs are met. 2016/17 has seen us laying the foundations to achieve this, but we need the continued support of the fire community and the public as a whole. So, whether you regularly donate, play the Lottery or fundraise for us, please continue to do so and encourage others to do the same. If you are reading this and you would like to hear more about how you or your organisation can support us please contact me direct by email on [ceo@firefighterscharity.org.uk](mailto:ceo@firefighterscharity.org.uk). Of course, if you think you need our help then please get in touch with our Customer Care team on **01256 366566**.

With your help we have done great work, but we have so much more we want to do. Let's make it happen.

Thank you for your support.

Jill



# 2016/17 At A Glance

The people we supported and how we helped them in 2016/17

## WHO WE WORKED WITH

We helped **4,127** individuals in 2016/17. This was around 20% less than in 2015/16 largely due to the introduction of revised criteria for beneficiaries accessing recuperation. This targeted approach to recuperation enabled us to spend more time with beneficiaries on our other programmes, supporting their specific needs and improving their overall health and wellbeing

## BREAKDOWN OF BENEFICIARIES

- Serving firefighters – **1651** (40%)
- Support staff – **165** (4%)
- Former personnel – **949** (23%)
- Dependants – **1238** (30%)
- Other – **124** (3%)

## HOW WE HELPED THEM

**2,244** beneficiaries completed a residential rehabilitation programme, including 150 who attended on the new Health and Wellbeing Programme.

**1,276** beneficiaries were able to benefit from a recuperation break at one of our centres.

Our child and family programme at Harcombe House supported **63** people.

**544** people were supported through our Beneficiary Support Services

and then latterly through our newly introduced Advice, Information and Support Service.

**2,271** one-to-one psychological therapy sessions were delivered.

**309** beneficiaries accessed our primary psychological therapy programme, meaning that this was the main reason for their attendance.

**683** beneficiaries attended on the physical rehabilitation programme and self-referred into the psychological services team for support.

## OUR TEAM

Here's who worked behind the scenes to support our beneficiaries in 2016/17:

The average number of staff employed during the year was 196 (2016: 216)

Numbers employed, calculated on a full time equivalent basis, analysed by function were:

	2017 Number	2016 Number
Charitable activities	101	115
Costs of generating funds	17	16
Support	18	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>151</b>

## MEET KATIE

Katie Love, 36, is a Crew Manager at Stockton Fire Station, part of Cleveland Fire Brigade. She's been in the fire and rescue service for just over 10 years. She visited Jubilee House for rehabilitation after rupturing her anterior cruciate ligament while on a shout.

Katie was part of a breathing apparatus team at a house fire where access was made over a wall. As she lowered herself down, the drop was longer than expected, and she landed, sustaining a significant injury to her knee.

Leaving hospital with a leg brace and crutches, unable to drive and reliant on others to help her, Katie turned to The Fire Fighters Charity. "I always knew the Charity was

there," she says, "but it was only after my injury that a couple of lads on shift said to get myself booked in.

"I had quite high expectations of Jubilee – and my recovery's gone extremely well! Even my hospital physio can't understand how I've got back to work so quickly. Even though I'd gone just 13 weeks post-surgery, I went in with the expectation I'd be able to go back to work afterwards. For me, it was about getting my confidence back and making sure my knee could do what I thought it could.

"While on rehabilitation, I ran for the first time since having my injury. I used the anti-gravity treadmill, which allowed me to gain

confidence in running, and then move onto the normal treadmill in the second week. The staff were fantastic too – the amount of different injuries and people they see – they have a good positive approach if you're not so confident or sure what you're doing.

"After Jubilee, I went back to work – I had to do reinstatement training, hauling a 13 stone dummy up flights of stairs under breathing apparatus with my crew, so I definitely knew my knee was okay from that! I'm fine now – I have physio once a fortnight to keep strength in my leg, and I try to do an hour of exercise every day."

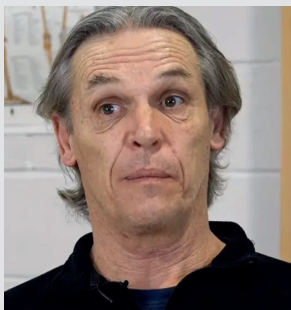
**Video:** Watch Katie's story at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/katie](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/katie)

# 2016/17 Highlights

A snapshot of our work and your incredible fundraising achievements in 2016/17



## MEET KERN



**Retired firefighter, Kern, was supported by our psychological services team, here's his story.**

Kern a former retained firefighter from Dorset Fire and Rescue Service applied to the Charity for psychological support after a breakdown, he has since visited Marine Court to take part in the rehabilitation programme and to access support from our psychological services team.

"It all started for me with a massive breakdown and just progressed from there," he says candidly. "I applied for support from The Fire

## WE BAKED A DIFFERENCE

In May 2016 we set out to Bake A Difference with a national bake sale fundraising campaign. The one off event saw hundreds of fire stations and offices across the UK competing to win a prestigious Golden Rolling Pin trophy by raising the most money through the sale of biscuits, bakes and spectacularly creative cakes. Amidst fire engine, firefighter and fire engine-shaped cakes, Linton Fire Station in Cambridgeshire raised £1,250 to take the crown.

## YOUR CHARITY NEEDS YOU

Winter 2016 saw the launch of Your Charity Needs You, a fundraising campaign that directly asked fire and rescue service personnel across the UK to respond to our call for support and to help us overturn our deficit budget with a one off gift of £5, donated via text message.

## NEW CUSTOMER CARE TEAM

Our new Customer Care Team came together in 2016/17, consolidating three different supporter and beneficiary-facing teams into one central team that can now provide a single point of contact for all incoming calls and enquiries. The

Customer Care Team can be contacted on **01256 366566** or via the Services Access Line on **0800 389 8820** and would be happy to help you with any query you may have.

## DELIVERING IMPROVED SERVICES WHILE SPENDING LESS

We worked hard behind the scenes to keep our support costs as low as possible in order to ensure that as much of our income as possible is funnelled into our service provision. This meant identifying where efficiencies and savings could be made across every department and taking action to implement those changes, without affecting our ability to deliver our services.

In line with the work undertaken behind the scenes to reduce support costs, we also sought to maximise the quality and delivery of our services with the funds that were available to do so. Far from standing still, 2016/17 saw us ensuring that the targeted services we were delivering remained of the highest standards possible, we introduced a new Health and Wellbeing Programme and continued to explore ways to enhance our centre-based programmes as well as our community-based services.

## JANUARY RECYCLING RECORD

2017 kicked off with our annual month-long textile recycling competition. Stations across the country made it a record breaking start to the year by surpassing previous totals and raising £45,895 from 213,613KG of donated clothes.

## CAR WASH TOPS QUARTER OF A MILLION

The National Car Wash League 2016/17 – our biggest fundraising event of the year – raised over £269,000 nationally, with Slough Fire Station taking the crown as League winners after raising almost £5,000 across the year.

## NEW CHAIR APPOINTED

We appointed a new Chair of the Trustee Board in November 2016. Andrew Lynch, Editor of FIRE magazine, succeeded Ken Seager who had held the position for five years.

Andrew said of the appointment: "It's a great honour and privilege to Chair the Board of Trustees at The Fire Fighters Charity and I look forward to working with the Senior Leadership Team, Board of Trustees and our wonderful volunteers and employees to continue to ensure we are providing the best possible services for our beneficiaries."



## MEET ZOE AND JAMIE



## A first-hand account of our new Health and Wellbeing Programme

Diagnosed with chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, Zoe from Leicestershire, was unable to work or lead a normal day-to-day life struggling both physically and mentally. Supported by her husband Jamie, Zoe spent time on our Health and Wellbeing Programme after her condition began to take a toll on family life.

Jamie, a serving firefighter, sought help for a back injury while attending with Zoe and explained that the Charity's intervention came at exactly the right time for his wife and for his family. "It was at a time where we were at a real bad place," he said, "it was all just spiralling downwards and we couldn't get out of it."

Zoe explained further: "Fibromyalgia is a chronic pain condition and made everything a whole lot worse. I went from a person that could run and cycle to a person who was very weak and in lots of pain and really struggling. It was a really hard and upsetting time.

"To come here alone, without Jamie, would have been extremely hard," she said, referring to the ability for partners to attend the Health and Wellbeing Programme with each primary beneficiary.

Jamie added: "It has been amazing, it has far exceeded our expectations and the difference that I have seen in Zoe has been incredible."

**VIDEO:** Watch Zoe and Jamie talking about their time at Harcombe House at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/zoeandjamie](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/zoeandjamie)



# Our finances

## MEET DAVID



David Leeson, 41, from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is an ex-frontline firefighter who has an active aggressive form of relapsing progressive multiple sclerosis.

Originally, David was given a wheelchair by the NHS; "It was good but it was so heavy that I couldn't go anywhere without assistance. I have a lack of strength at times in my left hand side due to the MS. I needed a specialised lightweight chair that would give me some independence back.

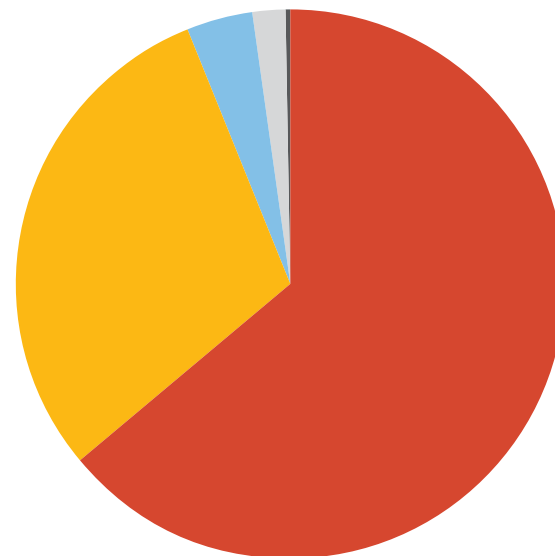
"There was no way I could afford to buy the wheelchair I needed, so I decided to contact the Charity to see what options would be available. I was nervous to begin with as I never imagined I would ever need help, but immediately I was put at ease.

I was visited by one of the Charity's representatives who helped me with the forms. The whole process was very easy."

The application was successful and the Charity purchased a new, lightweight for David; "It has made a big difference to me. It's opened avenues, and given me opportunities that I wouldn't have had before."

The wheelchair has given David the chance to take part in sport again. He spent a season as part of the wheelchair curling squad for Team GB and Team Scotland and was part of the squad who played in the Braehead International against teams including Russia, Finland and Denmark; "I never thought I would ever represent my country in a sport," he said proudly.

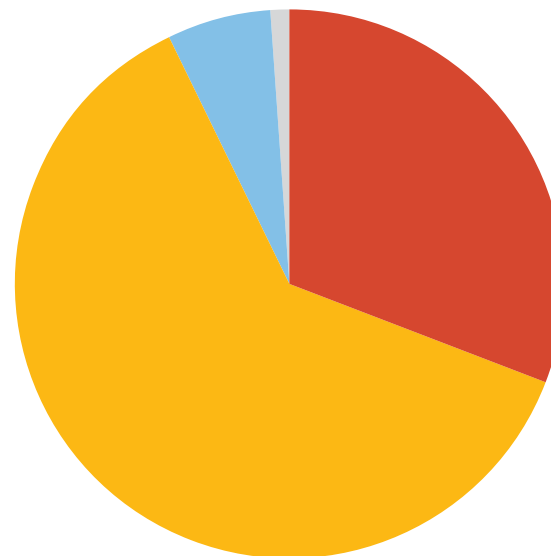
### INCOME



- Donations and legacies: **£5,199,103**
- Other trading activities: **£2,447,773**
- Investments: **£309,365**
- Charitable activities: **£173,342**
- Other income: **£205**

**TOTAL INCOME: £8,129,788**

### EXPENDITURE



- Raising funds: **£2,540,114**
- Rehabilitation and recuperation centres: **£5,036,130**
- Beneficiary support: **£459,046**
- Retirement homes: **£83,700**

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE: £8,118,990**



# The next three years

A look ahead at how we will build on the work undertaken in 2016/17



Throughout 2016/17 the Senior Leadership Team and Trustee Board worked together to agree, compile and publish our new Strategic Plan. This was launched in April 2017 and set out our direction of travel for the next three years, outlining the areas of work that we will focus on, what we want to do and why we want to do it.

The plan includes four key areas of work:

1. Increased mental health support
2. Increased access to advice, information and support
3. Strong, healthy and connected communities: Built through combining the strengths of online interactions and face to face contact
4. Enhanced physical activity and rehabilitation programmes

The first of these four key areas – increasing our mental health support – will see us developing our online, telephone-based and centre-based psychological support services, making access to support easier and more timely. This comes in the wake of an increase in demand for our psychological support services over recent years.

Other aspirations within the new plan include improved access to advice, information and support through the use of new technology including web-based resources, tele-rehabilitation and the establishment of a dynamic



## A WORD ON THE FUTURE Dr Jill Tolfrey, Chief Executive

"The aspirations set out in the new Strategic Plan are in response to evidence showing that mental health and musculoskeletal injuries are the main reasons for sickness absence, and a loss of connectedness in communities is well known to lead to poor health and wellbeing. We know that we can do more to support our beneficiaries providing we have the income required. We cannot do this without help from across the fire and rescue community.

"This Strategic Plan sees us focussing on mental health, maintaining the quality of our physical programmes whilst also ensuring that we use new technologies, together with the expertise of our employees and volunteers, to create strong, healthy communities amongst our beneficiaries. By doing so, The Fire Fighters Charity will be able to support many more people over the next three years, bringing them together and equipping them with the tools they need to support themselves."

online community. We want to help beneficiaries to keep in touch, easily accessing advice, guidance and support as necessary to keep active and healthy.

Strong, healthy and connected communities will be enhanced further with the provision of an on and offline contact service that combines traditional communication channels with a strong volunteer network. Aiming to improve connectedness and reduce social isolation, we are keen to ensure that our beneficiaries feel

part of a connected community, supporting healthy living and encouraging new behaviours and lifestyle choices.

Other aspirations outlined in the downloadable document – available at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/strategicplan](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/strategicplan) – include enhanced physical activity and rehabilitation programmes, with new residential short stay health and fitness programmes for individuals and couples to promote understanding about diet, nutrition, exercise and keeping active.





# Keep in touch

**Telephone:** 01256 366566

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**Registered Office:** The Fire Fighters Charity, Level 6, Belvedere,  
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Charity registered in England & Wales (1093387) and Scotland (SC040096)

**Royal Patron** Her Majesty The Queen

