

Royal Visit
Special Issue



The
Fire Fighters
Charity

Issue 21
Winter 2019/20

Shout!

Official magazine of The Fire Fighters Charity

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Editorial



Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2019 issue of *Shout!* from The Fire Fighters Charity. This is a special, commemorative issue to mark the visit to our Harcombe House centre of His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge in early September.

You'll find a wealth of images from The Duke's visit in the pages that follow, together with the stories and accounts of the people he met while he was with us. As I hope you'll see, this special visit showcased the incredible work of our Charity and provided us with an opportunity to show off all that we have achieved during the recent refurbishment of Harcombe House.

His Royal Highness remarked to me how impressed he was with the facilities we provide and the way in which we are able to support the fire services community. I, meanwhile, was proud to be able to represent all our hard working employees and volunteers and to explain how our approach to supporting those in need extends across all our centres and the wider community. Indeed, HRH's visit was as much about recognising the work of the whole Charity, and all those who fundraise for us, as it was about recognising the difference that Harcombe House has made to those who have walked through its doors. I hope you enjoy the images from a wonderful day for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Shout!* you can read Paul Weller's incredible story. Paul suffered a life changing injury following a football match, which led to him sadly having to

leave West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. In a fascinating article, Paul talks about the physical and psychological battles he has had to overcome and highlights some of his fundraising ambitions.

We've also got some fantastic winter fundraising ideas; some great information and advice in our health and wellbeing pages; new family and volunteer sections and, I'm delighted to say, a brand new *Junior Shout!* section for all our younger readers... and a few of our older ones too!

Enjoy the magazine and, dare I say it already, have a safe and peaceful festive season.

Dr Jill Tolfrey
Chief Executive

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Shout! about it Contact the editorial team on shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk or 01256 366566

Shout!

about it

Here's where you'll find out what we and our supporters have been working on over the last six months. We're always on the look out for interesting stories and if you've got something newsworthy that you'd like to *Shout!* about, let us know: shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk

Shout! supports Shout

During his visit to Harcombe House in September His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge and The Royal Foundation announced the launch of a new 24/7 crisis text line for the emergency services community.

Operated by our magazine's namesake, Shout, a dedicated crisis line set up by The Royal Foundation, the new text service allows members of frontline emergency service communities to text **BLUELIGHT** to **85258** any time day or night to be connected to a trained and supervised Crisis Volunteer.

Shout, offers a free, anonymous service, connecting people who are experiencing moments of crisis with trained volunteers at the end of a text message. A legacy of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's Heads Together campaign, Shout aims to change the national conversation on mental health.

The Fire Fighters Charity's Chief Executive, Dr Jill Tolfrey, confirmed that the organisation is committed to supporting Shout, stating: "We are extremely proud to partner with Shout and are looking forward to working with its volunteer network and The Royal Foundation to ensure that the fire services community is fully aware of this new service."

"Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the fire and rescue services community is central to our ambitions as a charity. So we are delighted to support an initiative that complements our own work and shares our desire to make mental health support available and accessible to as many people in need as possible."

Find out more at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/ShoutTextLine



Worldwide coverage for Royal visit

Over the days that followed The Duke Of Cambridge's visit to Harcombe House the resulting press coverage spanned the globe. Images and video from the day, together with information about the work of the Charity and our role in supporting the UK's fire services community was reported on TV, radio, in print and online around the world.

Posted on Instagram by Kensington Palace to its 10 million followers and featured on the Royal Family's official YouTube page, footage and photos from the visit were seen by vast numbers of people on social media within hours of His Royal Highness leaving our Devon centre.

Tim Beynon, Head of Marketing and Engagement at The Fire Fighters Charity said of the coverage: "The value of coverage on this scale is immeasurable to a charity like ours. Only the Royal family can generate such global interest and, as raising awareness of the mental, physical and social needs of the UK's fire services community is so vital to us, this visit has given us a worldwide platform that we could only ever have previously dreamt of. So we are hugely indebted to His Royal Highness for shining the spotlight of the world's press on The Fire Fighters Charity for a day."



News Shorts...

Spirit of Fire 2020: Nomination Deadline Looming

Nominations for The Spirit of Fire Awards 2020 are due to close on January 3, 2020, with the awards ceremony itself scheduled for the Spring.

Recognising the hard work, support and dedication of those who go to extraordinary lengths to fundraise and raise awareness of the Charity, as well as those who have shown courage in the face of personal adversity, Spirit of Fire 2020 is open to nominees across the UK.

A large number of nominations have already been received for the New Year's ceremony, but with the number of categories now increased to 12, there is still plenty of time to nominate someone special in your crew, team, office or family.

For full details, turn to page 32.

Chief Fire Officer Challenge

In September, Chief Fire Officer Paul Fuller of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service began an ambitious challenge to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, aiming to raise £10,000 for The Fire Fighters Charity and Children's Burns Trust.

A Trustee of The Fire Fighters Charity, Paul is hoping to complete the expedition in seven days, travelling through four different climate zones and reaching extreme altitude at almost 6000 meters. To sponsor Paul visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paul-fuller7

We'll publish an image of Paul at the summit of Kilimanjaro in the next issue of Shout!



Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service @Norfolkfire

These 3 decided that they wanted to raise funds for @firefighters999 by doing the Nightrider 100k...in full fire kit! Almost 5 hours of riding through London, in the middle of the night, but they did it and have raised a whopping £1764.53. Well done! Awesome effort.

Nursing boost for Jubilee House

A successful application to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has seen an increase in the number of nursing bedrooms at Jubilee House, meaning an extra 100 beneficiaries with nursing needs can now visit each year, supported by Jubilee House's team of registered nurses and clinical assistants.

"We're absolutely over the moon, as we've had four bedrooms since we opened in 1995, so this is a massive move forward," says Director of Beneficiary Services Sharon Bailey.

If you think you could benefit from the support of our nursing team, get in touch today by calling the Support Line on **0800 389 8820**.



National Car Wash League now twice yearly

In order to say thank you to the people working tirelessly to organise and run car washes for the Charity, we've decided to split the National Car Wash League into two, giving you twice as many chances to get your hands on our top prize. The first half will consider all money raised from April 2019 to September 2019 and the second half will run from October 2019 until March 2020.

"We're always so impressed with the lengths people go to in order to make their car washes a success, that we wanted to say thank you," says Regional Fundraising Team Manager Natasha Mason. "By dividing the League into two parts, we can recognise more crews for their support and present more prizes to say thank you."

We will also be presenting hampers and

Book Review Firefighters of Belfast: An Uplifting Portrait of Human Courage

The years 1969 to 1994 were particularly difficult for Northern Ireland, and what would become known as 'the Troubles' would test the firefighters of Belfast to their limits. This book provides a record of that time from a firefighter's perspective, combining thorough research and contemporary records with first-hand accounts from people who were involved, bringing these significant events to life through the words of the people who lived through them. Firefighters of Belfast is ultimately an uplifting portrait of human courage and resilience during the most difficult of times.

To purchase this publication, go to: www.luath.co.uk



trophies for the stations raising the most nationally in each League, hampers for stations in each region raising the most in each league, and trophies for the brigade that raises the most in each region for each league.



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A Royal Honour

By Andrew Lynch, Chair, The Fire Fighters Charity

A Royal visit doesn't happen every day and Monday 9 September was a proud day for everyone associated with and supported by The Fire Fighters Charity. A visit by His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge, in recognition of the work of The Fire Fighters Charity and on behalf of our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, is testament to the high standing in which our Charity is held and the incredible work we are doing to support the mental, physical and social wellbeing of the UK's fire services community.

From a personal perspective, 9 September was also a proud day for me. I have always considered my position as Chair of The Fire Fighters Charity to be a great privilege and being afforded the opportunity to lead The Duke on a tour of our newly refurbished Harcombe House site – alongside our Chief Executive, Dr Jill Tolfrey – was a real honour. I was incredibly proud to introduce him to our employees, who so expertly

showcased the work we do, and to some of the beneficiaries we have supported.

Indeed, those who shared their personal stories with HRH said far more than I ever could in regards to the impact we are

organisations requesting his support. However, he chose to visit us, at Harcombe House, to help in shining a spotlight on the work we do and as an example to others of the difference that can be made when you dedicate time,

“Being afforded the opportunity to lead The Duke on a tour of our newly refurbished Harcombe House site - alongside our Chief Executive, Dr Jill Tolfrey - was a real honour.”

having, and it was clear to me that he was moved by their accounts.

For me, however, this visit represented far more than a simple endorsement of the work we do to support the UK's fire services community. It was no coincidence that it coincided with National 999 Day and, on such a significant day, I am sure The Duke would have had a number of invitations from

money, resources and people to supporting the mental health, physical health and social wellbeing of those who dedicate their lives to helping others.

To this end, it was also an honour for us to host representatives of other emergency services at a reception at Harcombe House in the presence of His Royal Highness. He was keen to further the conversation in regards to how emergency

services can work together to support each other and benefit from the kind of services that we provide to the UK's fire community. The success of this part of the day and the ongoing conversations that we are now having with colleagues from other emergency services is a legacy of which The Duke, and all of us, can be rightly proud.

Finally, I would like to thank all those members of The Fire Fighters Charity team who worked so hard to ensure that 9 September was a success. Every employee, at our head office, across our three centres and in communities across the UK has played their part in the development of our Charity, as has everyone who has donated to us or fundraised in support of us over the past 76 years.

A landmark day and one that will live long in the memory, 9 September 2019 marks the start of the next chapter of The Fire Fighters Charity. We must ensure that we maintain the high standards we have set ourselves and continue to strive for greater things. I have no doubt that we will.

Royally Recognised

Monday 9 September, 2019, will be remembered as a milestone date in the life of Harcombe House and in the history of The Fire Fighters Charity. Here Shout! reflects on the visit of His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge and a day that shone a light on the work we do to support the UK's fire services community.



The rain may have been falling over an immaculate looking Harcombe House in early September, but spirits were far from dampened as final preparations were made across the newly refurbished Devon centre for the arrival of a very special visitor.

Having undergone a major overhaul over the preceding months, the last lick of paint had been applied, the tools and hard hats had made way for fresh flowers and finery, and the entire site looked ready for an exciting future.

A scene of thriving activity therefore met all those who arrived at Harcombe House on the morning of Monday 9 September. While the police swept the building with sniffer dogs and search teams, local dignitaries

and representatives from other emergency service organisations congregated alongside staff, beneficiaries and members of the press in a beautifully decorated marquee in the grounds of the House.

A buzz of excitement filled the air as the clock ticked down to the arrival of His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge at 11.35am. The culmination of months of planning and the result of a long standing working relationship between The Fire Fighters Charity and The Royal Foundation, the visit had been agreed to recognise the work of the Charity and to mark Emergency Services Day.

Having a close personal affinity with the emergency services from his time as a Search and Rescue pilot, and having





“First, I came here and learned to talk to strangers. And now here I am talking to the future king of England. I still can’t get over it. Quite genuinely, he was an absolute gentleman.”

worked hard to promote positive mental health across society as a whole, a visit to Harcombe House was welcomed by The Duke. His Royal Highness expressed an interest in finding out how we support the UK’s fire services community with its mental, physical and social wellbeing and was keen to use the opportunity to embrace a broad conversation across the whole emergency services community in regards to supporting all those who work in the blue light sector.

The visit was therefore agreed and plans were put in place to showcase the work of the Charity and the redevelopment of Harcombe House, as well as to host a special reception for members of other emergency services and related organisations. The Duke would, in one morning, see for himself how we support our beneficiaries, how a £1.8m investment in Harcombe House will enhance our mental health provision into the future and meet representatives from other blue light organisations.

Crucially, however, the visit would also give The Duke the opportunity to meet individuals, couples and families who we

have supported and worked with across the Charity over recent months. All had generously given up their time to join us for the day, many travelling hundreds of miles and rearranging plans in order to be a part of the occasion.

So at 11.35am, as the heavens opened over Chudleigh in Devon, His Royal Highness pulled up outside the main entrance to Harcombe House, quickly ducking out of the rain and into the reception area. Greeted by local civic dignitaries, Chair of The Fire Fighters Charity Andrew Lynch and Chief Executive Dr Jill Tolfrey, an unexpected interruption came in the form of four-year-old beneficiary Isla Shaw who burst through a door into Reception, directly in front of The Duke.

“She’d been really good and patient, and we were waiting for the royal party to arrive,” explained Isla’s mum, Shona. “She managed to pick the exact moment to run down the corridor as Prince William got there and was shaking hands with all the head people in the Charity. As I ran round the corner after her, there she was, introducing herself to Prince William. I’m

feeling mortified and she’s having a whale of a time! So she got the first introduction to him, and shook his hand, and he was absolutely amazing with her.”

From Reception, His Royal Highness made his way up the stairs to the newly created art therapy room on the first floor. Preceded by a gaggle of press who took their positions in one corner, The Duke made his way into the room, warmly greeting everyone and taking a seat next to retired firefighter Richard Baldwin and art therapist Daisy Rubenstein. Richard’s wife, Sue, and the Bills family – Dan, Kelly and children Joshua, Mia and Isla – were also seated around a table festooned with an array of paints, plasticine, pencils and sketch pads.

Daisy outlined the principles behind art therapy and how it is used to support the mental health and wellbeing of beneficiaries, and His Royal Highness took time to talk to everyone as they got creative around the table.

“I talked to him about the service, the job and our home lives,” said Richard, who wears prosthetics after losing both his legs due to common variable immune deficiency

“I spoke to him about how many times I’ve engaged with the programme, the different experiences I’ve had and the effect it’s had on the family.”

and leukaemia. “You can tell he’s a man with a family. I think he was first class. I told him a quick summary of my story and he asked to have a look, so I showed him my legs! Being able to speak with him and share my story meant so much.

“First, I came here and learned to talk to strangers. And now here I am talking to the future king of England. I still can’t get over it. Quite genuinely, he was an absolute gentleman.”

Firefighter Dan Bills, meanwhile, reflected on the encounter, saying; “He asked Mia what she was making, and when she said a unicorn horn he said that his daughter, Charlotte, also loved unicorns, which Mia was really pleased about. He talked to Josh about Wimbledon, and said he remembered it because he was there! It was just brilliant, an amazing experience, and it was just so lovely seeing him talk to our kids.”

From the art therapy room, Jill, Andrew and Dr Pennie Blackburn, Specialist Practitioner, Mental Health, escorted The Duke into a room where a psychoeducation workshop on the cycle of change was

taking place. Typical of the kind of group sessions commonly held at each of our centres, Jill and Pennie took the opportunity to explain to The Duke further about the holistic approach to support used across the Charity, and how the one-to-one sessions are complemented by group activities and workshops.

The next stop on His Royal Highness’s tour of Harcombe House saw him meet a group of beneficiaries to find out more about their specific stories and how The Fire Fighters Charity supported them. Taking a vacant seat in the circle of beneficiaries, The Duke chatted to firefighter Mike Dowden and his family, retained firefighter Dave Shaw and his family – including the prematurely introduced Isla, who he greeted with a familiar smile – firefighter’s partner Angela Bell and firefighter Mark Richards, who spoke so openly about his own mental health battles during our 2018 Christmas fundraising campaign with The Telegraph.

Speaking after his chat with The Duke, Mike commented: “I spoke to him about how many times I’ve engaged with the programme, the different experiences I’ve had and the effect it’s had on the family.

He was really nice, so relaxed and down to earth. And that’s the great thing about him, you feel comfortable talking to him, he’s very personable. We know his background too of course, we know how passionate he is about mental health, so you feel really comfortable in opening up to him and talking to him. It was just a really good experience.”

Leaving the group, His Royal Highness made his way to the gym where a number of beneficiaries were using the equipment, participating in a tai chi class and, in the case of John Couzins, strapped into an anti-gravity treadmill. The 66-year-old retired firefighter had been using the high-tech device to support his recovery from knee surgery and, greeting The Duke with a handshake he endeavoured to explain how the machine – which simulates reduced gravity by lifting an individual’s weight off of their lower body – has helped him. Clearly fascinated, exercise therapist Abbie Morris, offered His Royal Highness the chance to try it for himself, but he reluctantly declined.

Speaking after climbing out of the treadmill, John said: “When I first came to Harcombe House, I was walking around using sticks, and it was my time on the anti-gravity

treadmill that helped me get off them. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would one day be back on that treadmill, having a chit chat with Prince William! It was really good to talk to him, I told him about my condition, how I used to struggle to walk. He said he was familiar with the machines as he'd seen them used in the forces, and we had a little bit of banter together. I felt so pleased to be able to take part in the event. When I was asked if I'd like to be involved I thought it would be nice to be able to do my bit to help raise awareness and funds for the Charity. But then chatting with him and being interviewed by the press afterwards, and having people phone me up saying they'd seen me on the news, I felt very proud to have been asked."

Elsewhere on his walk around the building, The Duke was met by six-year-old Harry Plaskett, who offered him a hand drawn picture. Dad, Cheshire firefighter Stuart, explained: "When Prince William walked past, Harry stopped him because he'd drawn him a picture last night, a portrait, which said 'To Prince William, love from Harry Plaskett' He stopped and spoke to Harry, commented on the drawing and took it with him, which was amazing. Seeing my family talk to the future King has been awesome. Beforehand, they were so



"When I first came to Harcombe House, I was walking around using sticks, and it was my time on the anti-gravity treadmill that helped me get off them. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would one day be back on that treadmill, having a chit chat with Prince William!"

excited, Oliver, 10, was running around and being all giddy. Then when he turned up, Oliver was just in awe. They all were, they just stopped, all a bit star struck. It was lovely, just to see him chat away, and see how good William was with them. It was a once in a lifetime experience."

A local Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service crew from Bovey Tracey Fire Station, meanwhile, carried out drills and functional training in the courtyard, demonstrating how this kind of practical physical activity is used to support firefighters in regards to their fitness to return to duty.

As the rain had scuppered plans to host a reception for colleagues from other emergency services and blue light organisations in a specially constructed marquee within the gardens of Harcombe House, a warmer and drier room was

instead found within the building. The cosy reception saw representatives from Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Surfwell, Devon Air Ambulance, South West Ambulance Trust, RNLI, Dartmoor Search and Rescue, Police Care UK, The Ambulance Staff Charity and crisis volunteer representatives from the Shout crisis text line, which is supported by The Royal Foundation and for which a blue-light specific service was officially launched on the same day.

From the reception His Royal Highness stopped to sign the Harcombe House Visitors' Book before grabbing a brolly to keep dry as he made his way to the marquee, where staff, beneficiaries and all those had been earlier involved in showcasing the work that we do, gathered to greet him.

After a few words of welcome from Chair, Andrew Lynch, and with a well-practiced pull of the curtain string, The Duke unveiled a plaque commemorating his visit in recognition of the work of The Fire Fighters Charity.

Speaking after the unveiling, Andrew turned to The Duke, saying: "On behalf of everyone at The Fire Fighters Charity, I would like to thank you, sir, for your time today and for unveiling this commemorative plaque for us, which will take pride of place in our main reception area.

"I hope that – through meeting some of our incredible beneficiaries – you have been able to see the impact of our work for yourself. Indeed, I am sure you will agree, that the people you have met today are living proof of the need for us all to continue to invest in, and work together in, supporting the mental,



physical and social wellbeing of those who work to keep the rest of us safe.”

Further applause followed and, after kindly posing for a group photo with everyone present, His Royal Highness waved goodbye to the assembled masses and made his way to the awaiting convoy, which – after a final handshake with Jill and Andrew – whisked him off to his next appointment.

The assembled press stayed to speak to beneficiaries and gather the interviews they needed, with the resulting coverage reaching millions of people across the world within a matter of hours.

It had been a day to remember for everyone.

In the days that followed the visit, Chief Executive, Dr Jill Tolfrey, summed it up perfectly: “I was honoured to introduce His Royal Highness to some of the people we have supported and to showcase the work that we do. We share common objectives with The Royal Foundation and I know that The Duke is as keen as we are to raise awareness of the need to support the mental and physical wellbeing of the fire services community.

“We had some lovely feedback from Kensington Palace the day after the visit too, they told us that The Duke hugely enjoyed his visit and was really impressed with the obvious impact that The Fire Fighters Charity and Harcombe House has clearly had on so many lives. They

also told us that he enjoyed the ‘warm, easy and heartfelt’ conversations he had throughout his visit. So, on behalf of everyone at the Charity, I would like to thank all those beneficiaries who so generously gave their time to join us for the day.

“Of course, The Duke visited us at Harcombe House, but this visit was to recognise the incredible work of everyone throughout the Charity – and all those people we support on a daily basis – across the whole of the UK. We are a family and, had we not worked so hard over the years and decades to impact the lives of so many people, we wouldn’t have been recognised in the way we have been this September.”

“On behalf of everyone at the Charity, I would like to thank all those beneficaeries who so kindly gave their time to join us for the day.”



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Fundraising focus

So many people take on amazing challenges for us all year round. Here we say thanks to those who've completed theirs and wish good luck to those who haven't.

Thank you...

West Norwood Red Watch Firefighters

In June, the West Norwood Red Watch firefighters cycled over 200 miles in three days from their fire station in South East London to Harcombe House in Devon. They have raised nearly £4,000 for us to date.



Scarfel Pike Climb

Firefighters from Morecambe Fire Station climbed Scarfel Pike to commemorate the life of Watch Manager Ian Dodd who sadly passed away recently. Our fundraiser Alan Knell also joined them in full fire kit for this incredible challenge, and together they raised £1,622.



British Firefighters Challenge

Congratulations to all the firefighters who took part in the British Firefighters Challenge in July. A big thank you to Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service for hosting the event, with help from firefighters Rob Budge and John Gregory, and the volunteers and participants for your dedication and hard work in raising over £5,000.



Broadgate Tower Run Up

On 20 July, 15 firefighters raced up the 877 steps, over 35 floors, of The Broadgate Tower in The City of London, some even in full kit and breathing apparatus. Their spectacular effort raised a total of £1,648.12.



Red Bull Soapbox Race

This summer, Hot Runnings, a team of London firefighters, took part in the Red Bull Soapbox Race at Alexandra Palace.

The team used a converted Team GB bobsleigh, which was painted official fire engine red by LFB, and even had a blue light and neenaw siren!

Hurling down at great speed, the team successfully made it to the finish line in spectacular style and came home in seventh place, raising an amazing £1,500.



London Marathon 2019

A massive thank you to all 36 participants who took part in the London Marathon 2019 and raised an outstanding £60,185.71 for us. We hope the sore legs and dodgy toenails are fully recovered by now.



National Car Wash Champions

In just one year, your efforts to organise, promote and run car washes across the country have raised nearly a quarter of a million pounds. Since last April, you've raised an amazing £244,000 worth of funds that we can put directly towards supporting the mental, physical and social needs of the fire and rescue community.

Congratulations to Slough Fire Station who are the winners of our 2018/2019 National Car Wash League, raising an incredible £3,618.35.

So, on behalf of everyone you have already helped, are helping right now, and will help in the future, thank you so much.



Odiham Fire Show

This summer, hundreds of spectators visited the Odiham Fire Show in Hampshire, admiring an incredible range of fire engines on display. Complete with vintage vehicles, a range of stalls and fun activities for all the family, Odiham Fire Station raised an incredible £14,126. The event was held this year in commemoration of its main organiser Mick Paull, who passed away in January last year. Thank you to everyone who came along to make it such a special day.



Good luck...

The Vitality Big Half 2020

We would like to wish everyone taking part in The Vitality Big Half the best of luck.

Following much of the world-famous London Marathon route in reverse, The Vitality Big Half is a community running festival for everyone, the 13.1-mile race starts by Tower Bridge and finishes at the iconic Cutty Sark, passing through the boroughs of Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Lewisham and Greenwich.

Participants will get support every step of the way from the cheering crowds and live music along the route.

Find out more: www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/vitalitybig



Sahara Mini Adventure

Christopher Morrison is taking part in the Sahara Mini Adventure for us on the 31 October - 4 November, 2019 by trekking through the Sahara Desert. To date he has already raised over £1,470.50.



Boxing Clever

Training is now well underway for a one-night-only Boxing Show taking place at the First Direct Arena in Leeds on Friday 20 December 2019.

The ticket-only event will feature firefighters and other staff from across West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, all hoping to box their way to victory and raise money.

To get your tickets, visit: www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/firefight



We would just like to wish everyone taking part in an upcoming event the very best of luck. Thank you for your ongoing support, hard work and dedication. Whatever you are planning a bike ride, walk, run or bake sale, we'd love to hear about it. Tag us on social media or email details to: shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk



Look Who's Talking

Suffering a life-changing injury and losing his two best friends in separate accidents, former West Sussex firefighter, Paul Weller, found himself on a cliff face, contemplating taking his life. Stepping back from the edge, he sought support from The Fire Fighters Charity and believes that opening up about his feelings made a life-changing difference.

Having been a firefighter for 10 years, Paul Weller never expected it would be an injury sustained during a football match that would change his life forever.

Falling awkwardly during a game in 2012, Paul broke his leg in six places and ruptured his Achilles tendon. Having undergone a major operation to fix his foot, he was told he would never be able to run or play football again. On top of this, he was also coping with the loss of his two best friends, who had both died in separate accidents in close succession.

"It was a really difficult time for me," says Paul, who now works as a Terminal Manager at Gatwick Airport. "I bottled things up and everything got on top of me."

Nine months after his operation, Paul's old crew manager suggested contacting The Fire Fighters Charity to see how we could help. Having reached out for support he made three visits to Jubilee House, our centre in Penrith, Cumbria. There, he focussed on his physical injury, declining

"I'd always given a regular donation in my salary when I was a firefighter, but the Charity gave me so much, I felt I had to do more. I am aware how expensive it is for them to do what they've done to help me, so if I can give some of that back in any kind of way, I will."

the offer of psychological support, a decision he now admits was a mistake.

"I didn't like talking to people about my problems, and just thought I could cope," he explains. "I was there for my injury, so that's what I focussed on. I've always been someone who doesn't talk. I let things build up inside and try to deal with them myself. But nine times out of 10, I don't deal with them. And I didn't realise just how much I was bottling things up."

His doctors agreed he needed another operation – making it 11 in total – eventually having a full ankle replacement. He was then told he would have

to leave West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and his role at Hayward's Heath station, where he had spent the best part of a decade.

"That was probably the hardest part, and all I could focus on were the negatives," he says. "I was struggling with the last images I had of my friends who had died and I couldn't face going back to the station to see colleagues because being around the lads reminded me too much of what I was giving up. I also used to play football at quite a decent standard and losing that was a big thing. It felt like I was saying goodbye to a lot of things all at once."

Things reached breaking point



when Paul found himself on the clifftops at Beachy Head with a coastguard helicopter above him and a police car behind him. After a talk with one of the chaplains at the cliff edge, he realised he had a choice to make: he could choose to give up or he could choose to ask for help. And there was one person who made this decision an easy one: his daughter, Ivy.

"I'd got to the point where realistically, I was at the end. I wanted to end things. But

thinking about Ivy, she was the thing that kept me here. I knew I had to make a change."

He decided it was time to reach out to The Fire Fighters Charity once more. Paul attended further sessions at Marine Court, our centre in Littlehampton, where, for the first time, he started talking to a psychological therapist.

"People always have a lot of advice in these situations, and kept telling me to talk to people, but if you're not that kind of person, it's very difficult. With the counselling at Marine Court, what worked for me was facing into that awkwardness; they'd literally sit in silence until you said something. And I found once I started talking, I didn't stop. I always thought talking about problems and being emotional was a weakness, but it's not. It shows strength of character.

"During my sessions with the counsellors, they explained how I was living with the impact of all these events– the injury, my friends' deaths, not being able to go back to work – and gave me ways to cope with the long-term management of these traumas."



“In the fire brigade environment, people are often worried how it looks to admit what they see as weaknesses. But with events like Grenfell and the attention on mental health, people are opening up a lot more.”

Having started opening up, Paul surprised himself with how easy he also found it to talk to other beneficiaries, even though they were practically strangers: “I’d been missing being a firefighter so much, but during my stays at Jubilee House and Marine Court, I was part of the fire brigade family again. Everyone is going through their own troubles and they’re all dealing with stuff, but you talk to each other, and that really helps.”

Paul also managed to defy the odds with his rehabilitation. Through the physical support he received, including sessions on the ‘amazing’ anti-gravity treadmill, he managed to not only learn to walk again, but in 2018 he ran a half marathon as part of our #My75Miles challenge. Since then he has also completed a triathlon and bike rides, all to raise funds for the Charity.

Wanting to go one step further, in January Paul started a non-profit organisation called Blue Light Events with his partner, a police fire arms officer at Gatwick. Together, the couple raise money for emergency services charities while raising awareness of the different pressures and stresses people in the public sector face.

“I’d always given a regular donation in my salary when I was a firefighter, but the Charity gave me so much, I felt I had to do more. I am aware how expensive it is for them to do what they’ve done to help me, so if I can give some of that back in any kind of way, I will.”

Despite only being around for eight months, Blue Light Events has already raised over £10,000 for their chosen charities, and it gives Paul a much-needed connection to the fire service. Continuing his new-found ability to open

up about his feelings, Paul also uses his own story to encourage others to seek help if they need it,

“In the fire brigade environment, people are often worried how it looks to admit what they see as weaknesses. But with events like Grenfell and the attention on mental health, people are opening up a lot more. We need to do that. If I could go back in time and talk to myself back then, I would tell myself to ask for help sooner. Everyone is struggling, so we all have to admit when we need help. I’m so glad I did. I can’t speak highly enough of The Fire Fighters Charity and everyone who helped me.”

If you’re struggling with adversity and can’t imagine a way out, let us help. Call our Support Line today on **0800 389 8820** or contact us via our website at **www.firefighterscharity.org.uk**.

Cash in the Cold

As the nights get longer and the cold weather draws in, it can be a struggle to find the time and energy for fundraising. However, the winter months provide a golden opportunity to raise money in a variety of different ways. Here we take a look at ideas and opportunities to boost your fundraising tallies during the autumn and winter.

October

As the clocks go back and the autumn leaves fall, thoughts inevitably turn to Halloween. Time may well be short in terms of arranging anything too complicated by the time you read this issue of *Shout!*, but quick turnaround fundraising events across your family, fire station, local street or friends could add a feel good factor to your Halloween. A pumpkin carving competition would be easy and cheap to put on – simply ask for an entry fee for all competing carvers, use a portion of your takings as a prize and donate the rest. A scariest front garden or window display competition could take the same format. Check out www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/fundraising for further information and advice.



November

Bonfire Night is always a busy time for fire and rescue services, but as well as keeping people safe on the night, there are also ways in which services, stations and individuals can raise money and awareness of The Fire Fighters Charity. Every year – in line with fire and rescue service messaging – we encourage people to attend an organised fireworks event, rather than choosing to have their own fireworks at home. With home fireworks sets costing anywhere from £20 to over £300, we ask people through our social media channels to #DonateYourFireworks. In other words, pay to attend an organised event and donate the money you would otherwise have spent on a box of home fireworks. If you'd like to use the hashtag and encourage your local residents to do the same, we'd be hugely grateful, and we'll hopefully stop people from getting injured at home.

December

Every year we hold a Christmas Fundraising competition for stations across the UK, supporting and encouraging them to dust off the collection buckets and get creative with their fundraising over the festive season. Search for 'Christmas Fundraising' on our website – www.firefighterscharity.org.uk – and see for yourself how stations raised tens of thousands of pounds in 2018 through Christmas floats, collections, sleigh rides, grottos and even donkey collections. The competition will open again shortly, so keep an eye on the website for support materials and advice on how to get the most out of your Christmas fundraising drive.



February

Even the most romantic of us surely baulks at the sight of supermarket shelves crammed full of hearts, chocolates, flowers and cards, all designed to make us spend as much as we can on our loved ones on Valentine's Day. Why not take an anti-commercial approach this year and veto the tat in favour of holding a fundraising evening or event for us, or simply making a donation instead? Away from the roses and Milk Tray, February is also the ideal time to top up your National Car Wash League fundraising before the first half of the competition closes in March. So agree a date and help clean the winter grime off your local community's cars by promoting and holding a car wash. You could even combine it with Valentine's Day and give every car owner who donates a complimentary rose (ideally provided free of charge from a local supplier). Check out www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/carwash for more information on holding a car wash event.



January

The turn of the New Year is always a hard time for fundraising as the big Christmas blowout means that few people have money to spare before payday at the end of the month. That's one of the reasons why we launched our January Textile Recycling competition a few years ago, to help people give something back at a time when money might be tight. If you're an individual or family, taking part is easy; simply dig out your old clothes, textiles and shoes, find your nearest recycling bin on our dedicated map – www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/recycling – and chuck them in. If you'd like your fire station to take part, or if you'd like to enquire about getting one of our shiny yellow recycling bins on your forecourt, get in touch with Sales Manager Kevin Biles at kbiles@firefighterscharity.org.uk. As for other ways to welcome in 2020, why not plan a new fundraising challenge of your own, visit www.firefightercharity.org.uk/challenge for more details of the kind of events you could sign up for or organise over the next 12 months.

Things to remember

- Whatever you're doing, make sure you make it very clear where donors' funds are going, through clear signs or posters. If there is a cost element, please make it clear that all profits will go towards The Fire Fighters Charity.
- The Charity has an 'in aid of' logo that should be used on all promotional materials for fundraising events. You can find it on our website or by contacting the

Customer Care Team on customer care@firefighterscharity.org.uk.

- Any food being sold or offered as prizes needs to have any relevant allergy information clearly stated.
- Don't forget to ask people to complete a GiftAid form, in their own handwriting, so we can claim an additional 25% on their donations. www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/giftaid for much more on this and

downloadable forms.

- Enlist the help of volunteers, as many hands make light work.
- Don't forget to complete a 'Fundraising Event Notification Form'. The Fire Fighters Charity Public Liability Insurance provides cover up to £10M, but you need to inform us of the event by completing the form. Find out more on our website: www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/events



Sleigh to go

Father Christmas has a busy fundraising schedule throughout December, joining fire and rescue services across the country to ride an assortment of festively festooned sleighs. In Grantham it's been a tradition for more than 30 years, so we caught up with Crew Manager, Pete Scarlett, to find out the secrets to Santa's success.

For three decades the children of Grantham have wrapped up warm and lined the streets to catch sight of Santa and his sleigh. Escorted by the town's firefighters –wielding fundraising buckets for The Fire Fighters Charity – the occasion has become as traditional as the turning on of the Christmas lights. Loved by youngsters and parents, the station has also raised thousands of pounds over the years, topping £6,000 in 2018 alone.

While Grantham Fire Station regularly tops our Christmas fundraising competition, its long established dedication to supporting Santa has required the hard work of successive

generations of firefighters, like current Crew Manager Pete Scarlett.

"Over the years, we've noticed we have to knock on doors less and less as people are already outside their homes waiting for us," says Pete, who has been involved since joining 32 years ago, and has been organiser of the event for the last seven.

"The town has gotten used to what we do, but they're still so generous. We're an enthusiastic team but we also have a town that is enthusiastic in its support of the Charity."

The fire station's fundraising started in the 1980s with

firefighters collecting with buckets. Then someone suggested using a wagon to help fundraising and, with the carpentry skills of some of the then-crew, they created the float that they still use today. It features Father Christmas on his sleigh, on a rooftop, and is always a firm favourite with the crowds.

"We rely on the enthusiasm of the station to make it a success, but a lot of people have used the Charity and love giving something back," Pete explains. "I myself spent time at Jubilee House after knee surgery three years ago. It was absolutely fantastic; within a fortnight of applying I was in Penrith, and I was back at work a week later.

I cannot praise the staff enough for their commitment, experience, knowledge and ability to help people get back to work."

Pete uses his own experience to keep up the enthusiasm for fundraising each year, especially among newer or younger recruits who may not think the Charity will ever be there for them: "That's the thing about The Fire Fighters Charity, anyone can use it at any point in their career, so it's good to advise people about it, while raising money. People have to appreciate what the Charity does for us, and that the benefits we get out of it are far greater than the effort it takes to make our contribution. Anyone might



have to use the service at any time. So we should all do our bit now."

Each year the crews usually spend a week Christmas collecting, two days in a supermarket and five days on the float, with duty crews taking responsibility for each shift, plus volunteers from the on-call crew, families and friends. Supported by extensive social media promotion, turnouts are always good and a sense of community is enhanced through the sharing of posts, photos and tweets around their events.

"We always strive to raise more than the year before, and firefighters love a bit

of competition," says Pete, before admitting that they can't always plan for the unexpected. "It doesn't come without the odd hitch though; one year we had a shout in the middle of our rounds, and we had to park the float. Just over an hour later we returned in blizzard conditions to find Santa still sat in his sleigh looking like a snowman!

"It takes a lot of organisation, liaising with the Council, organising the route, getting volunteers to sign up etc. It is stressful, but it's worth doing. I'm handing over the sleigh reins this year, so hopefully I can enjoy it a bit more. I am very proud of my achievement organising this event, but I'm more proud of

the commitment the crews give to pounding the streets of Grantham in all weathers."

Anyone wishing to escort Santa around their own neighbourhood for the first time can contact us at fundraising@firefighterscharity.org.uk for information on how to go about organising a sleigh ride, grotto or any other kind of Christmas fundraising. Our Community, Corporate and Event Fundraisers around the UK are also always on hand to offer advice and a helping hand with coordinating your events. Find out who your local Fundraiser is by visiting www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/fundraisers

Top Tips: Using social media to boost your event

- 1. Build up the hype**
Get people excited. Show them pictures of your station getting ready for the event, use teaser images to gain interest or build intrigue. If you're building something or decorating something, show progress shots.
- 2. Think cross-platform**
Use all social media platforms to help spread the message far and wide. There's Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and many more ways of helping to get your event out there. And don't forget to tag local press and businesses so they can help spread the word.
- 3. Video is your friend**
Film videos or Boomerangs to help build up more excitement. Get someone to do a live video of your event and tell people where to find it, do short films of people talking to camera before the event, or upload little clips that help bring your event to life.
- 4. Hashtag fundraising**
Use hashtags on your images and videos on Instagram or Twitter. Hashtags create unique search fields that will enable anyone in the world to find your photo if they click on the same hashtag. Try and use at least 10 hashtags for every image, as that's 10 different chances of someone stumbling across your post. Think outside the box, look at suggestions online or copy other people who are doing it well.
- 5. Post or share Charity content**
Help raise awareness of where money raised will be spent. There are heaps of real-life stories on our website of all the fire and rescue personnel and their families being supported by the Charity each day, maybe use a different one each day for a countdown to the event?

Christmas Cards 2019: Festive favourites and new designs

You can support The Fire Fighters Charity with our selection of Christmas Cards including fun new designs for 2019.

This year we have a wonderful collection of festive favourites and fun new Christmas card designs to get you in the spirit. All packs have 10 cards with envelopes and are £5.00 each including postage and packaging. To order, please visit: www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/shop or call: 01256 366566.

Festive Favourites



1. Fire Engine with Present



2. All Spruced Up



3. Four Candles



4. Humorous Twin Pack – Rudolph's Sleigh & Santa's Tree



5. Christmas Bunting



6. Santa Flying on his Sleigh While Stocks Last



7. Looks Like Rain Dear While Stocks Last

New Designs for 2019



8. Firefighters Tree



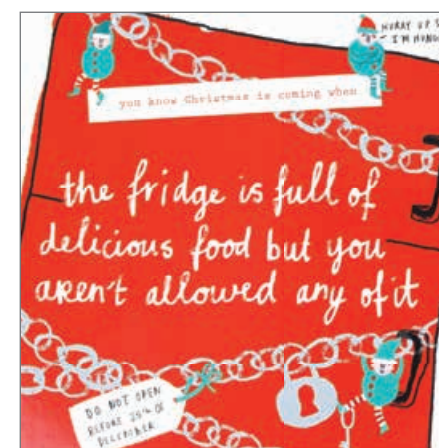
9. Merry Sniffmas



10. The Robinsons



11. You Know It's Christmas When..Part 1
(Twin Pack – You've Eaten all the Chocolate / Ugly Jumper)



12. You Know It's Christmas When..Part 2
(Twin Pack – The Fridge is Full" & "Wrapping Presents)



**Clear out
your
cupboards
and help a firefighter**

To find your nearest donation point go to
www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/recycle

Your fire station needs your old clothes, shoes, bags and linen. Each item given to our recycling banks helps to fund our services, supporting fire fighters in need across the UK.

Find out more recycling@firefighterscharity.org.uk
www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/recycling

Registered office: The Fire Fighters Charity, Level 6, Belvedere, Basing View, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4HG. Charity registered in England & Wales (1093387) and Scotland (SC040096).

Events Save the date

Whether you run, walk, bike or bake, there's bound to be a fundraising event for you over the coming months, here

23 to 24 May 2020: Edinburgh Marathon Festival 2020

Established in 2003, Edinburgh Marathon Festival is Scotland's largest mass participation running event, with over 35,000 runners and 100,000 spectators.

From the 5K, held in the stunning Holyrood Park, to the one of the UK's fastest marathons, there's something for everyone.

Come and be part of Scotland's BIGGEST running festival!

How to enter: Register

your interest online: **www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/RunEdinburgh**

Entry costs and minimum fundraising:

23 May 10K challenge: £38 fee and £415 raised

23 May 5K challenge: £68 fee and £262 raised

24 May Marathon: £145 fee and £162 raised

24 May Half Marathon: £23 fee and £77 raised



November and December 2019: Christmas Fundraising

It's almost that time of year again... Register your station's fundraising activity in the run up to Christmas and if you raise the most money, you'll win a super hamper full of goodies.

We have lots of ideas of how you can raise money for the Charity and support your colleagues in need. Posters and images can be downloaded and customised to promote your fundraising event at your workplace or on social media.

Make a real difference and extend the festive cheer in your local community.

How to get involved: Find full details, including a Christmas

Fundraising Guide: **www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/ChristmasFundraising**

If you are considering taking part in an event to raise money for the Charity, we are here to help.

Visit our website to find your local fundraiser: **www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/FindAFundraiser**



Various dates between 4 and 9 June 2020: Mount Toubkal Challenge

Join us for a challenging trek against the backdrop of stunning scenery and breath-taking views across North Africa.

We are working with Tribal Tracks on a bespoke Mount Toubkal Challenge that is being provided exclusively to the Charity.

Mount Toubkal is in Morocco and is the highest mountain in North Africa. Morocco is exotic and has spectacular scenery, whilst only 3.5 hours away from the UK. The challenge will help to bond and cement supporters together, whilst raising money for us.

Charlie Richards, ex-Army

Officer, will be your dedicated Tribal Tracks advisor for this trip and will be with you every step of the way, ensuring that every single detail of the tour runs smoothly, from start to finish.

How to enter: Find full details and register your interest: **www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/TrekToubkal**

Option 1:
Entry cost: £300 per participant
Minimum fundraise: £1,700 per person

Option 2:
Entry cost: £300 per participant
Minimum fundraise: Self-funded, no set sponsorship required



Ellie Dilworth
[@elliedilworth77](https://twitter.com/elliedilworth77)

Got the vest...now to train for the Vitality Big Half! @thefirefighterscharity



Planting the future

Why we're looking to our gardens and green spaces to help address the mental, physical and social needs of the fire services community.

Our mental health challenges are as unique as we are and the methods we use to work through them can be too. For some, a run can be the tonic needed to work off stress or anxiety, for others it can be spending time with friends and family; losing oneself in a movie or book; participating in a yoga class; painting or playing music. These are the mindful distractions that take us away from the things that cause us stress, they instil a sense of calm within us and enable us to take a step back, to recalibrate and face the challenges ahead with a clearer mind-set.

For many, that place of calm and escape is found outdoors, trowel in hand and gardening gloves on. Indeed, the fact that UK households spent around £7.5 billion* on garden goods in 2018, is testament to the fact that we are a nation of garden lovers. However, as well as improving the appearance of our outdoor spaces, research has repeatedly shown that our green fingered inclinations can also help us to recover our physical and mental wellbeing, as well as providing us with a host of social and fiscal benefits to boot.

Forty-five minutes of gardening, reports suggest, can be equivalent to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, with other health benefits cited in countless pieces of research including; improved strength, endurance and flexibility; reduced risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity, and improved sleep. Socially, time in the garden has also been proved to enhance family relationships and strengthen friendships, while financially, home grown food can save us money when compared to the supermarket.

Earlier this year, the health benefits of gardening bore further fruit when the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) partnered with the NHS to launch a scheme encouraging

GPs across the UK to prescribe gardening activities to patients with dementia or mental health concerns. Discussing the innovative scheme, Guy Barter, Chief Horticulturist at the RHS, told The Telegraph: "Gardens, in all their myriad forms, promote good health and wellbeing, but their designs can also be tweaked to serve a specific purpose."

Barter was referring to the way in which gardens can be created for different educational, recreational or therapeutic needs and the RHS pilot scheme has already seen patients at the NHS Simmons House Adolescent Psychiatric Inpatient Unit



referred to a local allotment association in Highgate, London.

Professor Tim Kendall, national clinical director for mental health, NHS England, supported the RHS scheme, also telling The Telegraph: "Gardening is good for our mental health as it offers physical exercise, which improves depression and anxiety, and also helps people find companionship and support. This is why the NHS is supporting social prescribing schemes which include gardening, to help people stay fit and healthy in ways that go beyond pills and medical procedures."

The evidence is overwhelming; gardening and time spent outdoors is good for our overall health.

Committed to enhancing our mental health support services to meet the increase in demand that has been seen over recent years, the practitioner teams at The Fire Fighters Charity are now exploring ways in which we can incorporate the benefits of gardens, gardening and horticulture into the way we support the fire services community with its mental health, as well as with its physical health and social wellbeing

"Supporting people with their mental and physical health goes far beyond the traditional treatment room approach," explains Sharon Bailey, The Fire Fighters Charity's Director of Beneficiary Services. "Every person we support is different, so we need to expand and diversify the ways in which we support them too. Sensory and mindfulness gardens have been proven to support recovery and the provision of these at our centres – providing safe spaces in which people can find peace and enjoy the benefits of time outdoors – will give people more options to find what works for them."

"Other charities, like Help for Heroes, have been offering horticulture courses for some time to support veterans recovering from injury and psychological trauma. We know that gardening can be an effective form of



exercise, but the research has shown that it can bring about mental wellbeing too.

"So we would like to explore how we can support our beneficiaries to get hands on in the garden, cultivating, planting, growing and harvesting plants and food for use in our gardens, and ultimately in the food they may well be eating."

With discussions already underway as to how the outdoor spaces at Harcombe House, Jubilee House and Marine Court could potentially accommodate new gardens, Mark Evans, The Fire Fighters Charity's Director of Fundraising and Engagement, explained what is needed to turn these plans into a reality.

"Creating these incredible spaces will undoubtedly take both money and expertise," he said. "This is why we are currently looking to secure the backing of recognised experts in the fields of horticulture and mental health, as well as the financial support of partners who recognise



"Gardening is good for our mental health as it offers physical exercise, which improves depression and anxiety, and also helps people find companionship and support."

the benefits that these gardens can bring to the UK's fire services community.

"By consulting and working with experts, like the Royal Horticultural Society, who have proven experience of creating gardens and spaces to meet specific needs, we can ensure that our gardens are uniquely placed to meet the complex needs of our beneficiaries. Indeed, we are enormously grateful for the support and inspiration of the RHS Gold Medal winning designer Paula Napper who is working closely with the team at Harcombe to realise this vision for the Charity.

"Going forward, we would love to bring a consortium of partners together to support this project into the future, working with them to showcase the difference that gardens and horticultural therapy can make.

"In short, we want to break new ground, figuratively and literally, and I am confident that we can create some life changing gardens for our beneficiaries by doing so."



Join our garden party

If you're interested in helping us to realise our ambitions in regards to the development of innovative new gardens and horticultural opportunities at our centres, we'd love to hear from you.

Perhaps you are a horticultural expert yourself, or represent a business that could potentially support the build, development or maintenance of our gardens. Perhaps gardening and the great outdoors is particularly close to your heart and you'd like to help us by fundraising or sponsoring the project?

Whatever your reason, if you'd like to help us to nurture our gardens project and help it to grow you can get in touch by emailing us at shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk

*Oxford Economics, 2019



Spirit of Spring

The Spirit of Fire Awards returns in Spring 2020, with 12 awards set to be handed to deserving winners from across our supporter base.

Marking the extraordinary and inspiring ways in which people have supported The Fire Fighters Charity since our last awards ceremony in 2018, nominations for Spirit of Fire 2020 are open until 3 January.

Originally scheduled for autumn 2019, the decision to postpone our awards ceremony was taken earlier this year in order to ensure that a reception at No.10 Downing Street, or a suitably prestigious alternate venue could be secured. This has meant that the window for nominations has been extended until the new year, allowing nominators the chance to consider all that has been achieved by fundraisers over the full duration of 2018 and 2019.

Tim Beynon, Head of Marketing and Engagement at The Fire Fighters Charity, said of the extended deadline: "This is great news for our supporters and means we can now recognise all the incredible feats that our fundraisers have overtaken since

January 2018. It also means that we have more time to ensure that we can make Spirit of Fire 2020 a fitting tribute to their achievements.

"All the nominations that we received before we postponed the event – and there were plenty of them – will still count and the extended deadline will now just mean that our judging panel is hopefully going to have a much harder job when it comes to deciding our winners."

To nominate the person, team, business or young person you most admire simply visit www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/spirit and complete our nomination form. Here's a reminder of the award categories.

Supporter of The Year – Fire and Rescue Service

Awarded to the UK fire and rescue service that has contributed the most in regards to its dedication and support of The Fire

Don't forget

- Nominations are open to anyone across the UK's fire services community, whether serving, retired, wholetime, retained, a beneficiary or a member of the public with a personal link to the fire community.
- You can nominate the same nominee for more than one award if you wish, but we would ask you to complete a new nomination form for each award you wish to do so.
- Shortlisted nominees will be decided upon by merit, rather than by number of nominations.
- All nominations will be assessed by a panel of judges from across the fire community.

Fighters Charity. The Service's contribution does not, however, have to be solely monetary or related to its fundraising performance as the judging panel will take into account factors such as how a service's support may have changed or evolved over the period, as well as different contributions made by teams within each service. The size or location of a service is also not taken into account.

Supporter of The Year – Firefighter

Awarded to the firefighter who has demonstrated the most outstanding support of The Fire Fighters Charity. Open to both serving wholetime and serving retained firefighters. The support demonstrated can be through fundraising or voluntary activity, or through organisational development.

Supporter of The Year – Control staff

Awarded to the member of control staff who has demonstrated the most outstanding support of The Fire Fighters Charity. The award is open to anyone working in any capacity as a member of a fire and rescue service control room team. The support demonstrated can be through fundraising or voluntary activity, or through organisational development.

Supporter of The Year- Retired

Awarded to the retired member of fire and rescue service personnel who has demonstrated the most outstanding support of The Fire Fighters Charity. The award is open to anyone who previously served

in any capacity for a UK fire and rescue service. The support demonstrated can be through fundraising or voluntary activity, as well as through peer or community support.

Supporter of The Year – Dependant

Awarded to the spouse, child or other dependant of an eligible beneficiary who has demonstrated the most outstanding support of The Fire Fighters Charity. The award is open to all those beneficiaries who are not themselves employed in any capacity within the fire community, but who are dependent on a spouse, parent or child who is. The support demonstrated can be through fundraising or voluntary activity, as well as through peer or community support.

Supporter of The Year – Public

Awarded to a member of the public who has shown exceptional support to The Fire Fighters Charity, despite not being eligible for support themselves. The support demonstrated can be through fundraising or voluntary activity, as well as through awareness raising, peer or community support.

Supporter of The Year – Corporate

Awarded to an organisation or company which has shown exceptional support to The Fire Fighters Charity. The support demonstrated can be through fundraising or voluntary activity, as well as through partnership activities, Charity of The Year programmes or one-off activities.

Supporter of The Year – Young Person

Awarded to a young person aged 18 or under who has shown exceptional support to The Fire Fighters Charity. The support demonstrated can be through fundraising or voluntary activity, as well as through awareness raising, community or family support.

Beneficiary of Courage

Awarded to a member of the fire and rescue service community who has shown bravery and strength of character in the

face of adversity. Whether in their personal or professional lives, this award recognises the obstacles and challenges that this individual has had to overcome, or is in the process of overcoming.

Team of The Year

Awarded to the team that has done something truly outstanding and gone over and above the call of duty in the name of The Fire Fighters Charity. The award is open to any team with two or more members, that works within or represents any element of the fire services community. The support demonstrated can be through fundraising or voluntary activity, as well as through peer or community support.

Lifetime Achievement

Awarded to an exceptional individual or unsung hero who has committed over 30 years to supporting The Fire Fighters Charity and has undertaken outstanding dedication by way of fundraising and/or volunteering. We're looking for someone who deserves to be honoured with the highest award of our event.



Top tips for a successful application:

- **Allow time for your nomination.** The more information you can give us, the more information our judging panel has to assess your nominee.
- **Complete each section of the form.** Our newly designed nomination form for 2019 will take you through the nomination process step by step, so please ensure you complete each section in as much detail as you can.
- **Know your numbers.** If the person you are nominating has raised a huge sum of money or travelled a huge distance, make sure you know how much and how far. We will need to verify all financial information we receive, so please be confident in the figures you are submitting.
- **Don't leave it too late.** If you have someone in mind, nominate them now. You'll need time to gather information and complete your nomination, so don't leave it too late.



Live and Direct

Supporting us via a regular direct debit donation is the best way to ensure we can be there for you and your loved ones, whenever, however and wherever you need us.

If you've completed five years with the fire service (or two if you've been made redundant), you and those who are dependent on you are eligible for support for the rest of your lives. Let us say it again, just to make sure it sinks in. We can help you and those you love for the rest of your lives, however you need us to.

But it costs us money to be able to offer this life-long support. For those people who have spent their career donating through their payroll, we are truly grateful, but when you leave the fire service this payment stops and in most cases does not transfer to your pension. Our support, meanwhile, doesn't. So we have a simple request to make: please consider switching your regular payroll donation to a new direct debit donation instead.

Making a regular donation via direct debit is the easiest way to ensure the long-term provision of our services to you and those you care about and is a cost effective way for us to collect your donations. None of us know what life is going to throw at us and whether you donate to us or not, you're eligible for our help. But if you could consider giving us a little something each month directly from your account, it'll help to ensure that we are always here to help you navigate the stormy waters.



Make the switch

If you already make a regular donation through payroll, thank you again, but please consider moving to direct debit, it is easy to do just go to www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/regulargiving and then contact your payroll team to cancel your payroll deduction.



Meet James

We'd like to introduce you to former firefighter James Thorpe. Like many fit and health firefighters, he never thought he'd need our help. But then on the first day of his stag do in Magaluf he ran into the sea, tripped and fell. James broke his neck, becoming paralysed from the chest down.

The Fire Fighters Charity quickly got involved. Four months after his accident, James visited Jubilee House for the first time. As well as having to build up physical strength to adjust to life in a wheelchair, he also felt the psychological impact of his life-changing injury.

"I had tried to be quite positive during my rehab, and kept saying 'It's not over yet,' determined not to let it beat me," he says. "I kept pushing to get the most recovery that I could, but then at the back of my mind was always the thought that I'd never be a firefighter again. It did get me down."

James continues to be a regular visitor at Jubilee House every few months, and says he has seen a significant improvement in his wellbeing. Now he says he wishes he had done more to support the Charity while he was still a firefighter.

"When you make donations, you think you're helping someone else," he says. "So when money is a bit tight, you don't think of donating to the Charity. But when you're faced with a situation where you yourself need them, you'd go back in time and pay in every month if you could, to raise as much money as possible. The facilities available are life-changing; it doesn't matter if it's an injury like mine or a shoulder that is playing up and stopping you from working, the Charity changes people's lives. You don't think you'll ever need it, but when you do, you're so grateful it's there."

Make a difference with a monthly donation



We make a life changing difference to thousands of people in the fire service community every year. This wouldn't be possible without the people who give regular monthly donations.

Please consider setting up a regular monthly donation so we can continue to be there for those who are in need within our fire and rescue community.

Set up your monthly donation today at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/regulargiving

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Royal Patron Her Majesty The Queen





Q&A Martin Pritchard

Winner of our *Supporter of The Year – Firefighter* award at Spirit of Fire 2018, Martin Pritchard has volunteered his time and energy to support us throughout his 25-year career. We sat down with him to hear how he helps us, how we helped him, and why he thinks it's so important that we all help each other.



Q: What is your day job?

A: I work for Kent Fire and Rescue Services in a non-operational role in the Multi-Agency Task Force, working closely with Kent Police and council departments to identify and support vulnerable people in the local area. I've recently moved over after 25 years on the fire engines, but it's the same attitude to ensuring people are safe and well, and this sits nicely alongside what I do for the Charity.

Q: Talking of which, what voluntary roles have you held for the Charity over the years?

A: I've done pretty much all the roles going. I started as a Station Rep many years ago, helping to organise car washes and open days, but I always wanted to do more in the community. So I went on to become a Welfare Volunteer, working as a home visitor to support many different beneficiaries in accessing support from the Charity. I'm also now the Kent FRS Service Coordinator, liaising with stations reps, keeping them informed and helping with events and campaigns. I'm also a Company Member for the Charity, so I attend general meetings and assist both trustees and the Charity's Senior Leadership Team with its future direction. Basically, when it comes to the Charity, anything I can do, I do.

Q: Sounds like you're a very busy man! How do you juggle all that with your role?

A: I am very fortunate to have an extremely supportive SLT and our Chief Exec, Ann Millington, is a great supporter of the Charity as well. It's a lot of work, but I have two other brilliant people in the service who help; Hannah Poole and Wayne Burney. Both are also company members and we work together as a team to support the Charity in Kent. I also have a fantastic mentor in Peter Davies, who is the Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Charity. When I first joined the service, he was a local station manager. Whenever I've encountered hurdles, he's always been a great support and confidant to me.

Q: What made you want to volunteer in the first place?

A: Like a lot of people who volunteer, I had been helped myself by the Charity after sustaining a back injury a couple of years after joining. I spent two weeks at Jubilee House and was amazed at the treatment, facilities and support I received. At that time I thought my career was over, but they gave me the confidence to think otherwise, and here I am today. So I wanted to give something back, to say thank you.

Q: What do you personally get out of volunteering?

A: Getting to see the results of where our

fundraising goes and supporting people as they receive help from the Charity is amazing. When you get that feedback, someone rings you up after they've got home to tell you how fantastic it was, it keeps your motivation up, because you're seeing the fruits of your labour. It does make you feel good, knowing you've helped. You don't do it for yourself, but you definitely get a warm fuzzy feeling when things go well.

Q: What's it like visiting people in their homes to help them with their assessment form?

A: Going into people's homes, you can see the problems they're facing and what's going on with their lives. Actually being there helps you with filling it out, because they get a more complete assessment from someone impartial. You can make sure it's all done right and nothing is missed out, which hopefully gives them a greater opportunity to access the Charity's services.

Q: What support do you get from the Charity in your volunteer roles?

A: In regards to the home visits, the Welfare Case Workers are brilliant and so supportive. Whether it's pre, post or during a visit, if I ever have any questions, they are just at the end of the phone. And the fundraising team are also fantastic, sending out banners and things for car washes, even if we get in the request last minute.

Q: You're very passionate about the retired community in Kent as well, tell us about that.

A: I worry retired people get forgotten, so anything we can do to engage with them and remind them of the services, it's important we do. It's easier to do so in a county like Kent that isn't too spread out, but in more rural communities, it's even more important we do what we can to reach people.

Q: Last year you won our Firefighter Supporter of the Year at the Spirit of Fire Awards, how did that feel?

A: In a word, overwhelming. It was the kind of event I never thought I'd attend anyway, so was a real surprise just to have been nominated. Having known some of the other nominees in my category and the work they've done over the years, I was sitting there feeling fortunate that I wouldn't have to get up in front of them. And then they announced my name! It was an amazing surprise. The whole event was simply brilliant.

Q: What would you say to someone thinking about volunteering for the Charity?

A: Don't think about it. Just do it. You won't regret it.

Volunteering News

Highlighting some of our amazing volunteers and sharing opportunities for you to get involved.

Living Well Groups

Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped make our Living Well Groups a success. These have allowed us to reach out to people in our firefighting community, both serving and retired, to provide health and wellbeing advice, help spark new friendships and rekindle old ones.



British Firefighter Challenge

The British Firefighter Challenge was held in Watford on the last weekend in July and we wanted to thank everyone who volunteered to collect donations on the day of the event, helping to raise over £7,000 for our Charity.

Fire Station Open Days

Over the summer months hundreds of fire stations opened their doors to engage with the people in their community and raise money for us. A big thank you to everyone who volunteered their time to help organise fundraising activities at their open days, together helping to raise thousands of pounds.



Volunteering Opportunities

If you want to donate your time to support the Charity, we always have opportunities for you to help. We've highlighted just a few roles below but if you have any skills that you think the Charity could benefit from and you would like to get involved then get in contact with our team via the details below or visit www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/volunteer.

Station Representatives

We'd love to have a Charity Station Representative on every fire station, so if your station doesn't have one already then maybe it could be you. The Charity Station Representative role is to be the point of contact between your station, the Charity and other volunteers in your service. Station representatives keep crews at their station informed about what support is available from the Charity and act as a contact to point people in the right direction if they're ever in need of support. They also help organise fundraising activities on the station, like car washes, open days and Christmas fundraising

activities. If you're interested in becoming a Station Representative, then get in contact with us at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/volunteer or speak to your Charity Fire and Rescue Service Coordinator.

Visitor Services Volunteers – Penrith, Littlehampton and Devon

Our centres are looking for volunteers to play an important role in warmly welcoming each new intake of beneficiaries to the Charity. They will show the new arrivals to their accommodation and arrange a timed tour of the facilities. If you would like to volunteer your time to help at one of

our centres please get in touch with our team; www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/volunteer

Living Well Group Coordinators

Initially developed to reconnect retired members of the fire services community across several regions, demand is so high that we are planning to launch Living Well Groups across the whole of the UK.

Social isolation after retirement can affect many of us, but can be more keenly felt after leaving the Fire and Rescue Service. Living Well Groups have a very strong social element, offering a relaxed environment to chat over a cuppa, a positive wellbeing

focus and reconnecting members with the fire service and with The Fire Fighters Charity. Each group has two volunteer Living Well Coordinators who, guided by the group in terms of what they want to hear about or do, help organise the content for each session and invite other organisations/charities along to talk about what they may have to offer.

If you would like to become a Living Well Group Coordinator please get in touch to find out more; www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/volunteer

ME, MYSELF AND I

Director of Beneficiary Services, Sharon Bailey, explains why self-care is so important to wellbeing, and shares some tips to help you improve yours.



Taking time out for yourself on a daily basis, and finding the balance between what we need and what others need of us is vital to our wellbeing.

Of course, this is somewhat paradoxical when you work in the fire and rescue service, because your role is to support others when they are in need, even putting your lives on the line for others if it came to it. However, we know that this paradox doesn't actually exist as the safety of our firefighters is paramount to the wellbeing of the public. Safe working practices, carried out in controlled conditions, leads to the best possible outcomes for the public and the firefighters helping them.

Taking such care of ourselves away from work, however, is just as important, whatever your role; firefighter, support or control.

Self-care isn't selfish. It doesn't mean only thinking about yourself, it means self-preservation and can be as simple as taking time out of your day, even if it's just 15 minutes, to do something that's exclusively for you.

Of course, this precious time can be used in any number of ways. Reading a magazine, sitting quietly in the garden, having a hot bath or taking a detour through a park on your walk home. Alternatively, it could come from changing your routine; sitting down to eat your dinner, rather than grabbing something on the go. However you choose to take your time, it's about stopping for a moment

in order to take an active role in protecting your own sense of wellbeing.

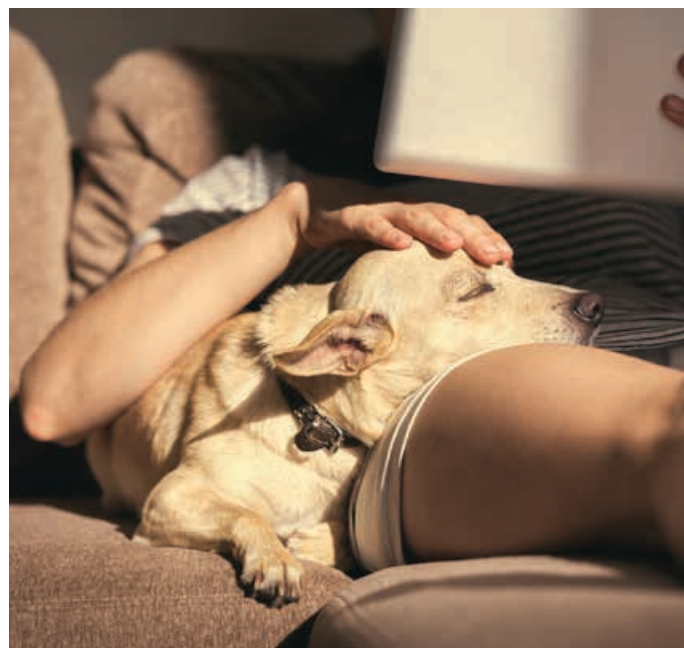
It's no surprise that how we care for ourselves affects our overall sense of wellbeing. However, there are many factors that influence our wellbeing: the lifestyles we lead, environmental factors such as housing and the communities in which we live, as well as socioeconomic factors such as education, employment and income can all influence wellbeing. Put simply, every aspect of your life influences your health and wellbeing.

This complex mix of influencing factors makes it hard for everyone to achieve their desired level of wellbeing, but the evidence shows that people who score higher on wellbeing measures do indeed live longer and are 50% less likely to have a heart attack or stroke. They make

better decisions, have higher performances at work, take fewer risks and are less likely to have an injury or accident.

There are many things you can do to enhance your wellbeing and, although some of the factors that influence your wellbeing may be out of your control, one of the most important things to remember is to be kind to yourself. Indeed, while it may feel alien to those used to helping others, self-care is important and can have a positive impact on your wellbeing.

Over the next few pages you'll find tips to help you improve your wellbeing in all aspects of life. And remember, if you're struggling and need advice, we're here. Call our Support Line today on **0800 389 8820** or visit **www.firefighterscharity.org.uk** and see how we can help with your wellbeing.



HAPPY DAYS

Specialist Practitioner- Mental Health, Dr Pennie Plackburn explains what we mean by wellbeing and how you can find your happiness.



The World Health Organisation defines mental health as being a 'state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.'

All of these things are pretty integral to life in the fire and rescue service, as they are to life in general.

If we are mentally well, we function well, we feel generally good about ourselves and about our lives. We feel satisfied with life, we feel a sense of purpose, and a sense that our lives are on the right track.

However, our psychological wellbeing is more than a measure of how we are feeling when things are going well. It is equally a measure of how we cope when things become more difficult. Just as we can feel uplifted and inspired when things go well, times of adversity can cause us to feel anxious or stressed, which in turn means that we don't function well and can struggle to cope.

So, although our sense of psychological wellbeing isn't fixed, there are practical steps that we can take to improve our wellbeing and happiness. The New Economics Foundation, for example, identified five pathways to wellbeing, simple actions you can do in your everyday life to feel good and function well:



- 1. Connect:** Social connections are important. Research has shown that social isolation and loneliness can significantly impact on health and individuals who are more socially connected are happier. So make a point of connecting with people around you such as family, friends and colleagues, or try something new to help build new connections, maybe a club or social group.
- 2. Be active:** Regular exercise doesn't just have physical benefits, it can improve your self-esteem and your mental health. Find something you enjoy doing so it doesn't feel like a chore. Government guidelines say you should aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity each week, which could include gardening, housework, walking, or exercise.
- 3. Take Notice:** Take time to discover the world around you. It can be difficult for some people to stop and do nothing, but try and allow yourself time to focus on the present and become aware of the environment around you, your thoughts and feelings. Try not to worry about what has happened or may happen. Listen to your favourite music or practice relaxation techniques such as mindfulness (see page 42 for more on this).
- 4. Learn:** Learning improves our self-esteem and confidence, it can give us a sense of purpose and help us connect with the world around us. It may be a few years since you left school, but you are never too old to learn. Try something new or rediscover an old interest and see if you can get better at it.
- 5. Give:** If you work in the fire and rescue service, you more than likely know how it feels to help others when they need it most. However, away from work you may wish to consider giving your time, perhaps through volunteering or joining a community group, or it may relate to doing something different for others. As you know, the act of giving can be incredibly rewarding, so why not try it in your spare time too.

However, while these five pathways provide a very broad overview of the route to personal wellbeing, the journey can be complex and different for everyone. So if you feel that you need help with your own mental wellbeing, we are here to help.

Find out how we can support you today. Call us on **0800 389 8820**.

WHAT'S YOUR TYPE?

Marine Court Exercise Therapists Kirsty Gladdis and Rachel Rees shine a light on the need to know facts about diabetes.



INSULIN

To understand how diabetes affects the body, we have to understand insulin. A hormone made by cells in the pancreas, insulin directly affects our blood sugar levels. When we eat, food is broken down and enters our bloodstream. If what you've eaten contains carbohydrates (which most food and drink does) these will be converted into glucose, which is used for energy. Insulin acts as a key to the door in this process, binding and moving glucose out of the blood and into the cells, where it is broken down and used as energy. This can be by muscle cells for energy during exercise, in the liver for production of bile or proteins, or go into fat cells for storage and insulation. If there is not enough insulin, this door that lets glucose into the cells remains locked, the glucose can't get through and therefore remains in the blood stream, with disastrous consequences.

TWO TYPES

Type I diabetes is most commonly seen in children and

young adults, and makes up 5% of all cases of diabetes. While it is irreversible, complications can be better managed with activity. You can find much more information on type I diabetes online, but for now, we're going to focus on the second and most common type.

Type II diabetes accounts for 95% of all cases and occurs when the body becomes resistant to the effects of insulin. This is caused by excessive carbohydrates and lack of exercise, with the pancreas trying to compensate by producing more insulin. Eventually it will be unable to keep up and glucose will accumulate in the bloodstream. Type II will be extremely progressive unless lifestyle changes are made, but it is reversible.

COMPLICATIONS

If not managed well both types of diabetes can have very serious health implications. These can include eye problems, diabetic foot (which may lead to amputation), heart attack, stroke, kidney problems, nerve damage, gum disease and other mouth issues, sexual dysfunction and cancer.

MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

To reduce the likelihood of getting type II diabetes or to reverse its effects if you already have it, the best lifestyle

choices you can make are to be physically active and have a good, healthy diet.

There is a proven link between obesity and type II diabetes, so if you are overweight you can do a great deal to reduce your chances of developing the disease by slimming down and decreasing your sugar and carbohydrate intake.

HOW DOES EXERCISE HELP?

Exercise can increase the insulin sensitivity of your cells, so when you exercise they become more efficient at using insulin to control blood sugar levels, thus requiring less of it. Studies have shown exercise and diet can prevent the development of diabetes and reverse its effects in people with pre-diabetes, a condition that develops into full-blown type II diabetes if left unchecked.

Research suggests diabetic or pre-diabetic adults should engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week, with no more than two consecutive days without activity.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

The benefits of using exercise to treat type II diabetes are vast. It can prevent coronary artery disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease. Regular exercise can also help reduce elevated bodyweight and improve lipid profiles. So it's best to choose physical activity you enjoy and that you can engage in regularly, to ensure you stick with it for the long term. Thirty minutes of exercise a day can reduce your chances of getting diabetes by 40%*.

Find out your risk of developing type 2 diabetes with a lifestyle assessment at <https://riskscore.diabetes.org.uk/start>

DESMOND is a NHS diabetes education and self-management initiative for those with diabetes and the newly diagnosed. It is for people that need to identify their own health risks and need help with setting their own goals. Contact your GP if you think it may be helpful. <https://www.desmond-project.org.uk/>

*If you have a chronic condition or disability, talk with your healthcare provider about what types and amounts of physical activity are right for you before making too many changes.

MONEY MATTERS

Welfare Services Lead Carrie Pearce offers some advice on debt and what to do if you find yourself in over your head.



make arrangements to clear any priority arrears as soon as you can.

WHAT ARE PRIORITY BILLS?

- Mortgage or rent
- Council tax
- Child maintenance arrangements (CSA)
- Court fines including County Court Judgements
- Tax or National Insurance
- TV Licence
- Utility cost (Gas & Electric)

If you are struggling to meet the costs of your priority debts it may be possible to:

- Talk to your mortgage provider to see if they can offer you a lower payment on your mortgage. You may also be able to switch to an interest-only mortgage for a short period of time
- Look at your monthly budget to really understand what your spending looks like and seek support with this from a recognised debt advice charity or use a debt advice tool to help.
- Contact your creditors and arrange a debt payment plan

WHAT ABOUT OTHER DEBTS AND WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SECURED AND NON-SECURED DEBT?

A secured debt is one where an asset such as your house or car serves as the collateral or security against non-payment.

Getting approval for a secured debt is generally easier than a non-secured debt as the lender has less to lose financially if there

are defaults on payments as they can repossess goods and sell them to recoup their money.

A non-secured debt carries more risk for the lender and often the interest rate is higher for this reason, debts due to missed payments will be referred to a debt collection agency.

I AM WORRIED ABOUT MY DEBTS HOW CAN I GET HELP WITH MANAGING MY DEBTS?

If you need help with managing your debt or are struggling to manage your money there are a number of debt advice charities that may be able to help with finding a solution to meet your needs. They can help with many aspects of financial advice including:

- Money advice / help with budgeting

- Debt advice
- Debt management plan (DMP)
- Individual voluntary arrangement (IVA)
- Debt relief orders (DRO)
- Bankruptcy Advice
- Financial consolidation
- Mortgage Advice
- Equity Release

ORGANISATIONS THAT CAN HELP

www.nationaldebtline.org.uk
www.stepchange.org
www.citizenadvice.org.uk/debt
www.debtsupporttrust.org.uk
www.payplan.com

HOW CAN WE HELP?

We are here to help support you when times are tough due to unforeseen circumstances or emergency situations. Our Welfare Caseworkers can help in a number of ways and can support with;

- advice and signposting information
- onward referral to help with debt management
- hardship payments (but cannot pay debt)
- maximising income through Welfare benefits advice.

To find out how we can support you, call our Support Line on **0800 369 8820**.



MASTERING MINDFULNESS

What is mindfulness and why is it good for us?

Psychological Therapist Kerry Hodgkinson on why it's so important we all take the time to stop once in a while.



We often think and do in auto-pilot; we rush around feeling the pressure to get things done, but this means we are not present in the moment. Our minds are busy thinking about yesterday, tomorrow, next week, next month. We're too busy being busy!

AS YOU ARE READING THIS, WHERE IS YOUR MIND WANDERING TO?

How often do we multi-task, assuming that this is an efficient way of getting things done? Research has shown that our brains are not as good at handling multiple tasks as we think they are and in fact some suggest that it reduces productivity!

All of this rushing around, multi tasking and busyness of minds can impact on our mental health too, potentially leading to an increase in stress and anxiety. So how can mindfulness help our health and wellbeing?

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness aims to reconnect us with ourselves, allowing us to become aware of our emotions, feelings and actions, giving ourselves time and space to do this. It facilitates us to be connected with both mind and body, to be aware of ourselves along with what is going on around us, and to move away from the busyness of our minds and therefore the stress of it.

SO HOW DO WE DO IT?

Mindfulness can be used in your everyday life and doesn't have to take a lot of time or effort.

Here are some examples of mindfulness activities you can try today:

Breathing: Breathe in and out as you normally would and notice each inhalation and exhalation, notice your lungs expanding and notice when your mind wanders and bring it back to your breath. How was this different to the breathing you do everyday?

Body scan: Spend a minute bringing your awareness to your body. Starting with your feet and moving upwards, notice any sensations, how does it feel where you are sitting/standing? Which part of your body was the easiest and most difficult to focus on? Where did your mind go?

Mindful walking: Walk slowly, be aware of the sensations on your feet and in the muscles in your legs. Notice what you are thinking, notice where your mind wanders and bring it back to your walking.

Mindful eating: Observe what you are eating and give it your full attention. Notice the textures of the food, smell it, notice the taste and notice the speed at which you chew your food – slow it down!

Mindful listening: Listen to what is around you, be aware of new noises within a minute of mindful listening, or notice if noises change

Mindful emotions: As you sit, notice your breath. Move your attention to any emotional sensation you may be feeling. Be interested. How does it feel? If it had a shape what shape would it be, is it hot, cold, pleasant or unpleasant. Notice how it changes as you focus your attention on it.

Mindfulness is something we can do every day to reduce stress and anxiety, so why not give it a go?

Further reading

BOOKS:

Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World – Mark Williams

Frazzled: Ruby Wax

ONLINE:

Headspace: Treat your head right. Easy to use guided mindfulness app for phone or tablet. www.headspace.com

'Calm' app: reduce anxiety, sleep better, feel happier: www.calm.com



BREAST CANCER IN MEN

We think of breast cancer as being a disease that only affects women, but this simply isn't true. Two of our nursing team, Sharon McNaughton and Helen Mattinson explain why breast cancer should be a concern for all of us, and how to spot the signs.



CAN MEN GET BREAST CANCER?

The short answer is yes. Men can and do get breast cancer. And while cases of breast cancer are fewer in men than women, it is important to raise awareness of male breast cancer, as around 390 men are diagnosed with the disease each year in the UK alone.

WHAT IS BREAST CANCER?

Breast cancer begins at a cellular level when an individual cell mutates to form an abnormality. These cells then begin to divide and multiply, in time creating a cluster of abnormal cellular formations known as a tumour. Often this is what is felt when someone goes to their GP saying they've found a lump. It is important to note that not all lumps mean cancer and symptoms can be the same in breast cysts etc.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK, but its causes are numerous and

diverse. Research has found that inherited genes can play a role in someone developing it. While for women, around 3% of breast cancer cases in females are caused by faulty genes, in men, gene risk accounts for between 10% and 20% of cases.

Age naturally increases an individual's risk of developing breast cancer too. For men this is the single biggest factor with most cases being reported in males between the age of 60-70 years. Radiation exposure during earlier adulthood – maybe through a working environment – can increase the risks, due to the long-term effects radiation can have on healthy tissues.

Some breast cancers are also stimulated to grow by the hormone oestrogen. All men produce small amounts of oestrogen, but if males have higher levels of oestrogen within their system this can increase the risk. Factors that increase oestrogen may raise the number of cases of breast cancer among men, which include liver damage/liver Cirrhosis, Klinefelter syndrome (a rare condition where men are born with one extra chromosome) and obesity.

Obesity, smoking, lack of exercise, alcohol and stress all have a negative effect on holistic health, so it goes without saying that these lifestyle choices also increase both men and women's chances of developing breast cancer. Reducing these in our lifestyle will help us take care of our health.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The most common symptom for both men and women with breast cancer is a lump in the breast area. This is nearly always painless. Other similar symptoms can include:

- oozing from the nipple (a discharge) that may be blood stained
- swelling of the breast
- a nipple that is pulled into the breast (called nipple retraction)
- a lump or swelling in either of your armpits
- a rash on or around the nipple
- a sore (ulcer) in the skin of the breast

WHAT CAN I DO?

Know your body! Get to know what is normal for you and take

the time to check yourself. If you notice signs of any of the above or have any concerns seek medical advice as soon as possible. As with all cancers, the earlier it is found the easier it is to treat.

Treatment depends upon numerous factors, so the consultant will perform scans, bloods and biopsies to gain a better overall view and to gauge the type, size and cellular makeup and to gauge if the cancer has spread to any surrounding tissues.

CAN THE CHARITY HELP?

While we're not cancer experts, in the event of a diagnosis for you or your loved one, we are here to support you however we can. If your diagnosis leads to a loss of earnings, for example, our Welfare team may be able to help, and if you think you'd benefit from talking to someone, our psychological specialists are on hand to listen. You may benefit from a residential stay with us, and if you have complex health needs, our nursing team can provide round-the-clock care to help you get the most out of your time with us.

If you think you could benefit from the Charity's help, get in touch. Call us today on **0800 3898820** or visit our website at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk



Shout+

Retire, renew, refresh, review and rewind

FLASH BACK



Photo courtesy of Niall Osman and Totnes Fire Station

A photographic flashback to a moment in time, supplied by the Shout+ community. This issue's contribution comes from Totnes Fire Station, courtesy of Niall Osman, of some innovative fundraising from the 1970s.

This photo shows Totnes Fire Station's sponsored manual pumping, using only a stirrup pump, held in the town in the late 1970s to raise money for the then Fire Services National Benevolent Fund (now The Fire Fighters Charity). Here he explains what's going on in the picture.

"Every year Totnes organised some sort of sponsored event to raise money for what was then called The Fire Services National Benevolent Fund. For several

years we were one of the top money-raising stations in the Brigade. One event that was well remembered was running out and making up fire hoses around almost the full circumference of Totnes. You can imagine how many times the hose was run. Half the station personnel ran out the hose in turns, and the other half followed behind making them up.

"This picture was taken in the Civic Hall forecourt. The idea was to raise money by hand pumping

as much water as possible over a period of time. We constructed a temporary dam using short extension ladders and salvage sheets, initially filling the dam from the appliance tank and pumping from buckets back into the dam.

"The firefighters pictured in the photo, from left to right are: Dave Fisher, Stan Hannaford, Brian Stevens, Ib Rassmussen, Tommy Bertlesen, Steve Howrihane, Niall himself, and Geoff Gell, with Paul Hageman taking the water out of the dam."

Send Us Your Snaps

We've all got special photos from times gone by, perhaps of past colleagues, events, incidents, awards, occasions or celebrations. If you'd like to share yours with our retired community, you can do so by emailing it to shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk. Be sure to include a brief description, outlining why the photo means so much to you, and we'll try to publish as many as we can in our next issue.

NARF CORNER – The latest from the National Association of Retired Firefighters.



Ian Ferguson, Editor of NARF News, on why joining a retired association could be good for your health and wellbeing.



I've been asked many times; "Why should I Join NARF? What's in it for me?" They are common questions, but with many answers and, like most things in life, everyone who joins an association like NARF does so for their own reasons. Whether it's to keep in touch with old colleagues, to keep abreast of what is happening across the fire and rescue service, or simply to get out of the house for a cup of tea with friends, associations like NARF offer something for everyone.

From the second you join the fire service, like it or not, you are part of a family; an international, worldwide fraternity that looks after each other and provides collective support for all who belong to it. Furthermore, membership of this family doesn't cease once you retire from active duty, you will remain part of the fire services family forever and NARF seeks to help you feel a part of that family into retirement.

Our mission statement at NARF reads as follows: "The National Association of Retired Firefighters is the organisation that is dedicated to safeguarding the interests of every former fire and rescue service employee and their families." So belonging to an

organisation that is committed to championing your wellbeing into retirement – and which works closely with The Fire Fighters Charity as part of that mission – inevitably brings a whole host of benefits.

At a local level this could be as simple as offering advice and support to someone who has a concern over their pension, or it might be a case of directing someone to The Fire Fighters Charity's Support Line for support with their specific mental health, physical health or social needs. Indeed, it always surprises me how often people assume that their eligibility for support from The Fire Fighters Charity ends when they retire, so being able to educate them that this isn't the case and that they are indeed eligible for life, is an important part of what we do.

Also at a local level, branches hold regular meetings, which allow members to get together over a pint or a pot of tea and receive information from the branch officials about both local and national issues that keep them informed as to what is happening. It also allows them to meet up with their former colleagues again and keep in touch with them, have a chat and a laugh, put a few fires out and keep that bond going, which is so important.

Nationally, NARF has affiliations with many pensioner organisations, Age UK for example, and we also have seats on the Public Service Pensions Council (PSPC) which deals with many issues that affect ex-public sector workers and of course The Fire Fighters Charity. These all help to make sure that when you retire, you have access to a valuable bank of resources.

NARF currently has between 7,500 and 8,000 members, both nationally and internationally and we have two types of membership; branch membership and individual membership.

Branch membership means that you will be attached to your local branch and will be kept informed by your branch secretary. Individual membership, meanwhile, is available to those who possibly live too far from their branch or don't wish to be attached to a branch. Instead, they will be kept informed by the individual membership secretary.

If you'd like to join NARF (membership is open to ALL ex-fire service employees) please go to the NARF website on www.narfire.org.uk and fill in the online application form and someone will get in touch with you.

Charity starts at home

From our roots supporting the bereaved families of firefighters killed during World War II, we've always supported fire and rescue service personnel and those closest to them. Here we take a closer look at the many ways we continue to support families and loved ones across the UK.



Trying to describe the different ways we can support families is like trying to describe how many different types of family there are. Our support is as individual as the people who come to us, and this is just as true for the ways in which we support family groups.

Our Welfare team treats every case differently, calmly and kindly assessing the needs of each family. So, rather than sharing examples of the sorts of ways we could help you and your family, our Welfare team share some of the ways they have helped real families in the past.

A former firefighter with ongoing mental and physical health conditions had been left homeless and was living in a shed, meaning he did not see his family. We helped provide financial advice to get him into a council flat and gave him vouchers to furnish it, so he could once more spend time with his family.

We paid for the moving costs to help a family where three of its four members have complex health needs get back to their support network at the other end of the country, after they moved down to the coast thinking it would be good for them, but found the opposite.

For a family whose young son has complex neuro-behavioural conditions we helped to arrange an assistance dog who has transformed his world. The dog has helped his moods and communication skills, and the family has seen an improvement not only in his interaction but also his sleep, which has taken a huge amount of worry off of his parents' shoulders.

One family told us that they would have to withdraw their children from school in September because they were in such financial hardship that they couldn't afford to send them there. We bought school uniforms and also provided food vouchers to ensure that they could keep meals on the table.

A firefighter given a terminal cancer diagnosis and his young family have been invited for recuperative breaks at one of our centres, to give them some much-needed time together away from hospitals, stresses and worries in order to make some happy memories together. We've also supported them with financial assistance towards covering the cost of transport to endless hospital appointments to ensure family money isn't taken away from the children's wellbeing.

The five-year-old daughter of a firefighter has such complex health needs she needs to be constantly monitored, as well as having autism and other behavioural conditions. We arranged funding for a specific piece of medical equipment that saved her life, as well as inviting her family to our Child and Family week to give them some much-needed time together. We also transformed their garden into a safe space for her to play in, all taking some of the worry off of her parents' shoulders.

When one firefighter's baby boy showed signs of development issues that affected the growth of his skull, we provided a specialist helmet for him to wear that supported his bone and tissue to grow naturally. Now he is a happy toddler and you would never know he had this serious condition when he was a baby.

For another family where both teenage sons have autism and one has Asperger's and the other has Tourette's Syndrome, we've provided a listening ear, advised on their statutory entitlements and signposted them towards other specialist charities. We also invited them to one of our centres, where they could enjoy some peace, quiet and time together.

We've bought a specialist computer for a family with a dyslexic child, meaning he could stay in mainstream school, rather than having to move to a special-needs school with its associated financial and emotional implications.

The grown up daughter of a firefighter suffered such crippling anxiety that she struggled to leave the house. She was invited to spend time at our residential centre in Penrith, Jubilee House, where she learned a simple coping mechanism to manage her symptoms, which she says changed her life.

Welfare Service Lead, Carrie Pearce

"It's difficult to quantify what we actually do for families, because no two offers of help are ever the same. We make sure we give families the tools to ensure a better quality of life while they focus on whatever is going on with them. It's not always hands on, sometimes advice and a listening ear is enough. When all

feels like it's falling down around you, sometimes just having someone to talk to who can help come up with solutions is all a family needs. It's a collective thing, being able to look at the whole picture and the impact on the whole family unit."

If your family is going through hardship and you would like us to see if we can help, get in touch. Ring our Support Line today on 0800 389 8820 or visit our website to enquire about support.

SFRS City of Glasgow @scotfire_glasgow

Stage 9 of the static cycle of Lands End to John O Groats complete. Just over 4k raised for @firefighters999 !! Relatives of firefighters who died in the Cheapside disaster came along to show their support today #firefighterscharity





Hi everyone, great news, the writers of Shout! have given me my own pages! It means I can finally share all the puzzles, facts and jokes I've been gathering over the years, starting with this lot. I hope you enjoy them and if you've got any that you'd like to share on these pages too, you can email me at blaze@firefighterscharity.org.uk. Have fun!



Blaze Bear

Wordsearch and Rescue

I've hidden 10 firefighting words inside this grid, so get your pens out and test your search skills.

LADDER	BREATHING	FIRE
HOSE	APPARATUS	ENGINE
EXTINGUISHER	AXE	EMERGENCY
HELMET	TALLY	

E P D I Z H Q F N A N W K R F
V X Q V J S G P P N W X K U E
U M T V H R Q P Z J I L O S B
D R B I U O A F P J H Z X Q V
J Z E X N R S E V F E O J K F
K L E D A G N E T J B F B L I
C W F T D I U K Q F N N R E R
D K U F G A G I O H H G E X E
J S A N T H L O S S L Y A Z F
Y Y E X E Z C H U H C U T J M
L E W A M T A L L Y E X H R E
Z N X D L C L L N S T R I R X
L E X F E L W Z K Z A F N R J
J Y L P H Q M A M F H I G N O
M Y C N E G R E M E J T A O B

Ten To Spot

I love this photo from a brilliant day scooter-riding with super fundraiser Kim Robson, but can you spot the 10 differences between the two images?



Congratulations Rhydlion

Rhydlion Howell, aged 7, from Kenfig Hill, South Wales drew this BRILLIANT picture of me at a house fire to win a competition in the last issue of Shout!. Thanks Rhydlion, your prize is on its way.

Blaze's Banter

I love a good joke. Here are a few of my favourites. What's yours? Email me your jokes and I'll print them here in the next issue: Blaze@firefighterscharity.org.uk

What do you get if you cross a fish with an elephant?

Swimming trunks

Knock knock,
Who's there?
Stopwatch!
Stopwatch who?
Stopwatch you're doing
and open this door!

Why did the golfer wear two pairs of pants?

In case he got a hole in one

Bonus Blaze

There are five mini Blaze Bears hidden on other pages in this issue of Shout! Can you find them all?



Blaze's Big Battery Challenge

This month I'm challenging you to count all the smoke alarms in your house and to test the batteries in each of them. You'll need an adult to help you, but each of your alarms should have a test button for you to push. If nothing happens when you push the button, you'll need to replace the battery. Your smoke alarms should be tested at least twice a year, but there's no harm in testing them every month to be safe. Be prepared though, they're noisy as they need to wake you up if you were asleep.



Autumn activities

The autumn and the winter can be a bit windy and wet, but I've always loved getting out and about, jumping in puddles and going on adventures with my friends. It's really important to get a bit of exercise every day, even when the weather's miserable. So here are five ways you can be active this autumn, why not ask an adult to come with you and try them:

- 1. A winter walk:** It might sound simple, but why not grab an adult, some friends and even your brother or sister, and set off to walk somewhere you've never walked before. Just make sure you always have an adult with you.
- 2. Geocaching:** If you've never done it before, Geocaching involves searching for hidden treasure while out on your favourite walk. Ask an adult to find out about it online, download the app on to their phone and take them with you to head off in search of your first cache.

3. Gardening: There's still plenty to do in the garden, even over the winter months, so see if you can dig out your gardening gloves and help your grownups.

4. Wildlife watching: Whether you live in the countryside or the city, there is wildlife all around you. Why not research

what birds and animals might live in your local area and then head out to see if you can spot them?

5. Photo tour: As the leaves on the trees change colour and fall, it's a perfect time of year to take photos of the great outdoors, so set out on a photo tour of your local area and see what amazing scenes you can capture.



Win your own Blaze Bear

I love seeing pictures of myself, especially when I go out and about with some of our fundraisers! So this month all you need to do to win your own Blaze Bear cuddly toy is to send me a picture of...well...me! You can use pencils, paints, felt tips, or anything else you like to create your masterpiece. You could draw me taking on a crazy challenge or chillaxing by the pool, it's entirely up to you. I'll get the website whiz kids to put all your pictures on The Fire Fighters Charity's website and I'll print my winner in the next issue of Shout! Ask an adult to email your picture to shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk. Good luck gang.



Win an ODEON Cinema Family Fun Pass

ODEON
FANATICAL ABOUT FILM

We all love a trip to the cinema and this month, courtesy of our friends at ODEON, we're giving you the chance to win the opportunity to take your friends or family to see the latest big screen blockbuster. ODEON has kindly given *Shout!* readers the opportunity to win four cinema tickets to be used at ODEON venues across the UK.

To win this great prize, simply email your answer to the question below, together with your name, address and contact phone number to: shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk.

Question: Harcombe House originally opened in support of fire service beneficiaries in the same year as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* was released across cinemas - what was the year?

- A) 1979
B) 1981
C) 1988

The winner will be picked at random from all correct entries received on or before 31 March 2020 and will be notified via email or telephone.

The tickets can be redeemed directly at any ODEON cinema except ODEON Lounge Cinemas and ODEON Luxe Cinemas. Vouchers cannot be redeemed online.

Your information: The information you provide will be used by the Charity to fulfil your request. Your details may be used to keep you informed about the Charity – please call 01256 366 566 if you do not wish us to contact you.

Shout!

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2 x Chilli Con Carne



2 x Coq au Vin



2 x Lamb Hotpot



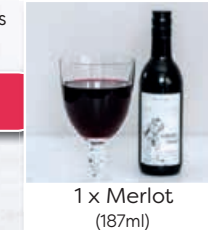
2 x Lasagne

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Mr Wilkes from Buckinghamshire

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