



## Ben Fildes

Merseyside Fire & Rescue

**“I used to think these are my problems, I’m a man, I’ll sort them, but I realised it’s okay to talk to other people and it’s not a weakness to ask for help”**



When work-related stress saw Ben Fildes' childhood dream of being a firefighter come tumbling down around him, he was at breaking point. Afraid he would be told to 'man up' for talking about his feelings, two weeks spent at Jubilee House taught him not to be afraid to ask for help.

“Before going there, I honestly felt ready to just end things,” says Ben. “I was just desperate someone would help me, but felt like no one cared. When you’re stressed and depressed, and it’s all going on because of the only job you’ve ever wanted to do with your life, it’s hard to know what to do next. I was at breaking point.”

After reluctantly agreeing to contact the Charity, a few weeks later, Ben made his way nervously to Jubilee House in Penrith.

“I felt like a failure being sent away for counselling,” he says. “This was about ten or so years ago, when a guy talking about his feelings wasn’t to be looked upon, so I was really nervous. But actually, it was absolutely brilliant. The people, the centre, the facilities, the surrounding area, I couldn’t fault any of it.”

Ben opened up to fellow beneficiaries and the psychological team, and rather than be judged or laughed at, he felt heard, and found the knot of tension he’d been living with for so long started to loosen: “I used to think these are my problems, I’m a man, I’ll sort them, but I realised it’s okay to talk to other people and it’s not a weakness to ask for help. At the time I went to Jubilee house, I was at my lowest point and my trust issues were through the floor. But if anything, being there with all these awesome people actually made me realise the benefit of asking for help. On top of that, I’d never realised just how good exercise is for your mental health. Keeping me active kept my head screwed on. Ten years later I’m still here. And that’s something I just couldn’t imagine at the time.”

[www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/ben-fildes](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/ben-fildes)

## Need help?

Call our Support Line today on 0800 389 8820 or visit [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/support](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/support)