



Paul Weller

West Sussex Fire & Rescue

“I always thought talking about your emotions was sign of weakness, but it's not. It shows strength of character”



When Paul Weller visited Jubilee House to help him cope with life-changing surgery and the loss of his two best friends, he declined 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. I was there for my injury, so that’s what I focused on. I didn’t realise how much I was bottling things up.”

After a second surgery, Paul had to leave the brigade and his role at Hayward’s Heath: “It felt like I was saying goodbye to a lot of things all at once. All I could focus on were negatives.”

Things came to a head when Paul found himself on the cliffs of Beachy Head with a coastguard helicopter above him and a police car behind him. He realised he had a choice: he could choose to give up or he could ask for help. He decided once more to reach out to the Charity. But this time, he was prepared to talk. And once he started, Paul surprised himself with how easy he found it.

“I’d always thought talking about problems and being emotional was a weakness, but it’s not. It shows strength of character. I was missing being a firefighter, but during my stays, I was part of the community again.”

Paul also managed to defy the odds with his rehabilitation, and through the physical support he received, managed to not only learn to walk again, but has run marathons and completed sponsored bike rides to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity.

“I can’t speak highly enough of the Charity,” he says. “In the fire service, people worry how it looks to admit what they see as weaknesses. But 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.”

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/paul-weller

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