

Telephone Campaigns FAQs

The Fire Fighters Charity is the UK's leading provider of services that enhance quality of life for serving and retired fire service personnel and their families. Our vision is to make a positive difference by supporting people in the fire and rescue community when they are in need.

1. Why does The Fire Fighters Charity carry out telephone fundraising?

Our three centres in Devon, Cumbria and West Sussex offer rehabilitation programmes to serving and retired members of the fire and rescue community, as well as recuperation breaks that provide the chance to relax in peaceful and tranquil surroundings, which can aid emotional recovery following illness, injury, or bereavement.

It costs £9m every year to meet the needs of our beneficiaries, and with no regular government funding, we are completely reliant upon donations from the general public and the fire and rescue community. In order for us to improve our services year on year, it is vital for us to have a reliable source of income that we can depend on.

Telephone fundraising is a cost-effective way for us to engage with our supporters. It enables us to ask for support by direct debit, which helps us to ensure long-term funding for our Charity. We have been successfully talking to existing and potential supporters by telephone since 2005 and the long-term security of these donations gives us the ability to plan ahead and use our money as effectively as possible. We don't do any cold calling. All of the people we call will have had an interaction with The Fire Fighters Charity at some point.

2. Who are you calling?

We contact people who have stopped their monthly gift. We have found that many of the people we talk to are happy to support us again with a regular gift. We also regularly contact beneficiaries who have visited a centre either for rehabilitation, recuperation or on a rental break, but do not currently give a regular gift. We find that many beneficiaries who have visited a centre and see what we do are happy to start supporting us with a monthly direct debit.

We also contact our regular donors to ask them if they would consider increasing their gift. Regular donations ensure the long-term funding of the Charity and allow us to plan for growth. It is through the stability of our regular donations that we have been able to plan the building and implementation of the third rehabilitation centre at Littlehampton.

3. Why donate to the Fire Fighters Charity?

Any amount you can afford helps us to provide practical assistance and solutions to make a real difference to the lives of members of the fire service community. Here are just a few examples of the benefits your donation can provide...

- £6** a month via our Regular Giving scheme allows us to take advantage of the Government's Gift Aid policy, so we can claim an extra 25% (£1.50) at no cost to you or to the charity
- £12** buys a peak flow meter enabling our rehabilitation team to measure how well our beneficiaries' lungs are working, helping us provide the best possible support for those with respiratory conditions
- £50** allows a fire service employee and their family to attend a day's recuperation at one of our centres following cases of injury, illness, or bereavement
- £100** can pay for a piece of specialist rehabilitation equipment at one of our centres
- £300** covers the cost of our confidential helpline for a day, providing a vital source of impartial support for firefighters in need and their families
- £1,200** makes it possible for an injured firefighter to attend a week's intensive physiotherapy at one of our state-of-the-art rehabilitation centres

£5,000 funds the provision of an electric-powered wheelchair to a beneficiary in need; this provides all the benefits of a manual wheelchair without the need for carer assistance, greatly improving the individual's independence

4. Do you do this through a telemarketing agency?

Yes. We work with two experienced and established telephone fundraising agencies called Ethical and Pure Fundraising. Both agencies employ teams of fully trained and supervised fundraisers working on our campaigns throughout the year raising funds on our behalf. Using agencies allows us to contact hundreds of our supporters every year at a low cost, which makes this a very cost-efficient way of fundraising.

We take great care to make sure all of our fundraisers are trained to be as knowledgeable as possible and understand the work that we do. They receive regular training sessions from us to update them on our work. We are looking at including volunteers (Service Co-ordinators) in this training process and as part of the feedback process in the future to ensure that the fire service community is truly understood by the fundraisers. As well as training, they receive our newsletters throughout the year. We take pride in the quality, experience and enthusiasm of our telephone fundraisers and go to great lengths to ensure they are well-trained ambassadors for The Fire Fighters Charity.

5. Are your fundraisers paid?

Yes, our professional fundraisers are paid a wage to fundraise on our behalf. They are always paid a set hourly rate, and are not working on a commission model. We do this to try to ensure that our fundraisers are motivated by our cause and not by the monetary incentive of working for commission. We are very careful to make people feel reassured – our fundraisers are not given personal financial targets. We also follow strict codes of practice set out by the Institute of Fundraising.

We only use paid fundraisers where we are sure we will receive a profitable return on our investment in them. This means that the cost of paying the fundraiser is outweighed by the number of donations we receive, ensuring this is an effective way to raise funds.

6. Some people do not like this type of fundraising. How can I be sure it is being done properly and people are not being pestered into making a donation?

As mentioned in 4, we use experienced telephone fundraising agencies who adhere to strict quality control criteria. We operate a rigorous complaints procedure to ensure any instances of over-zealous callers are fully investigated. Many telephone calls are recorded, and we have gone further than the industry norm and stop calling at 8pm in the evening rather than 9pm and don't call people over the age of 70 instead of the industry norm of 75. One of the advantages of using the telephone is that we can establish a dialogue with our supporters, find out more information from them or sign post them to other ways of supporting the Charity or accessing our services.

7. Who can I contact about your fundraisers?

Fundraising via the telephone is a fantastic and cost-effective way for us to speak to our supporters, and we are grateful to everyone who takes the time to speak to us. But we do understand that not everybody likes to be called at home, and if you do not wish to be contacted in this way just let us know by contacting our Customer Care team on: 01256 366566 or by email on: CustomerCare@firefighterscharity.org.uk.