

# Shout!

Official magazine of The Fire Fighters Charity

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



## Introducing MyFFC

A wellbeing, fundraising and social media first for the fire services community. Make MyFFC your own.

### Covid Recovery Programme

How we're helping those with long-term Covid complications

### Living Well Groups

All you need to know about our face-to-face and online groups



# No Winter Raffle for 2021

We have made the decision not to hold a Winter Raffle this year due to difficulty sourcing enough suitable prizes during the pandemic. Thank you to everyone who has supported us by purchasing raffle tickets in the past. In place of buying tickets this Christmas please support us with a donation either online, over the phone or by sending a cheque using the details below.

[www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/donate](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/donate)

01256 366566

The Fire Fighters Charity, Level 6, Belvedere, Basing View, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4HG.

Charity registered in England & Wales (1093387) and Scotland (SC040096).



# Editorial



Hello, welcome to the Autumn issue of *Shout!* and to the start of an exciting new era for The Fire Fighters Charity. The launch of *My Fire Fighters Charity* – which you'll discover more about in the coming pages – represents a seismic shift in the way we will reach, support and engage with you and every other member of the UK's incredible fire services community.

The site and portal that we have created will, we hope, become a thriving online

community, offering uniquely specialised health and wellbeing support, as well as a social media platform that will allow you to communicate with each other and with us.

*MyFFC* is a place for you to collaborate, share ideas, discuss, debate, encourage, congratulate and find the answers to the health and wellbeing questions that interest you. Like having *The Fire Fighters Charity* in your pocket, we want you to benefit from the expertise and knowledge we have built up over decades, accessible to you in a simple and easy manner. So, read about the site here in *Shout!*, jump on your computer or mobile device to register, and then tell us what you think.

You'll notice throughout this issue of *Shout!* that many of the articles you read here will be complemented with further multimedia content or opportunities to engage deeper on *MyFFC*. This is because we will be creating new content for the site all the time, ensuring that as many people as possible can enjoy it.

So, while this issue of *Shout!* might be a little lighter than previous issues, you'll be able to enjoy a huge wealth of new content on *MyFFC*. Reducing the size of *Shout!* also saves the Charity a great deal in regards to print and mailing costs which, after a year in which our fundraising income has been so severely hit by Covid, is a sensible decision for us to take. It will ensure that

we can continue to send you a magazine and develop *MyFFC* to reach many more people.

However, this issue has plenty to keep you occupied, so grab yourself a cup of tea and enjoy. We've got some fascinating case studies, insight into our new Covid Recovery Programme, tips for coping with back pain, the latest from our Living Well Groups and more.

I hope you enjoy the magazine and I'll see you on *MyFFC*.

All the best,

Dr Jill Tolfrey  
Chief Executive

## Contents

- 4 Shout! about it**  
All the latest news from The Fire Fighters Charity.
- 7. Life partners**  
Why our corporate partners are so important to us.
- 8. Introducing MyFFC**  
All you need to know to get up and running on our new community.
- 12 Regular donors update**  
The latest from our income generation team.
- 13 Cornwall CFO Kath Billings**  
Cornwall's Chief on her career, the Charity and the pandemic.
- 15 A helping hand**  
Station Manager Phil Maynard on giving back to the Charity that helped him to address hereditary health concerns.

- 18 Covid Recovery Programme**  
Find out about our new programme to support those living with the long-term impact of Covid-19.
- 19 Back in business**  
Top tips and exercises to help you with your back pain.
- 20 Eat for your joints**  
Dr Greg Lessons on how the food you eat can help you to improve the health of your joints.

- 21 Things are looking 'op'**  
The importance of staying positive before and after joint surgery.
- 24 Continuing Stu's Legacy**  
How a tireless group of friends and colleagues are seeking to continue the fundraising legacy of Stu Crebbin.

- 27 Legacies**  
Why leaving a gift in your will could be one of the best decisions you ever make.
- 28 Living Well Groups latest**  
Find out what's happening at our face-to-face and virtual events across the UK.
- 30 Festive fundraising**  
Challenges, tips and advice to help boost your fundraising this Christmas.

Register for MyFFC today



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# Clear out YOUR cupboards and support our Charity



To find your nearest donation point go to  
[www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/recycle](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/recycle)

Your fire station needs your old clothes, shoes and bags. Each item given to our recycling banks helps to fund our services, supporting the health and wellbeing of our fire and rescue services community.

Find out more [recycling@firefighterscharity.org.uk](mailto:recycling@firefighterscharity.org.uk)  
[www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/recycling](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/recycling)

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*Shout!* about it Contact the editorial team on [shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk](mailto:shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk) or 01256 366566

# Shout! about it

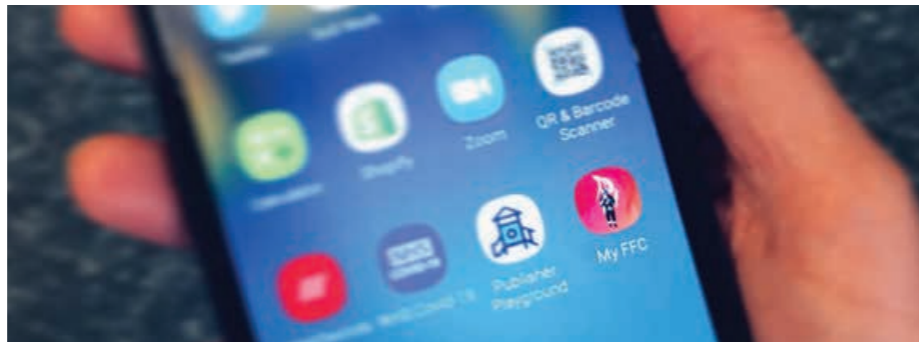
Here's where you'll find out what we and our supporters have been working on over the last six months. We're always on the look out for interesting stories and if you've got something newsworthy that you'd like to Shout! about, let us know: [shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk](mailto:shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk)

## New MyFFC portal launched

We are delighted to announce the launch of *My Fire Fighters Charity*, the new health, wellbeing and social media portal for the fire services community.

Available to all serving and retired members of the UK's fire services, as well as all other eligible beneficiaries, our supporters and fundraisers, the new app and website aims to help its users access health and wellbeing information, as well as enabling them to keep in touch with others across the country.

Head of Marketing and Engagement at The Fire Fighters Charity, Tim Beynon, said of the new site: "We're so excited to finally welcome our beneficiaries and supporters to *MyFFC*. We've created a virtual hub for the fire services community where users



can find health and wellbeing information, specific to their needs.

"But it's far more than just a repository for some incredible, specialist content. *MyFFC* is also a social community, where our users can interact with each other and

with us here at the Charity. Allowing us to reach thousands more people, we can't wait to welcome our new users."

Find out more about *MyFFC* on page 8 and register at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc)

## Covid Recovery Programme launched

We have launched a new Covid Recovery Programme at Marine Court, our centre in Littlehampton, which is specifically designed to meet the needs of beneficiaries suffering with the long-term effects of Covid-19.

The programme includes a five-day residential stay, with everything from specific exercise plans to workshops and the opportunity to meet with a psychological therapist or welfare caseworker for advice and further signposting. You can find out more about the programme on page 18. You can enquire about support through *MyFFC* by visiting the 'Access Support' tab or by calling our Support Line on **0800 3898820**.



## Emergency Services Show 2021

We had a fantastic time at the Emergency Services Show in September and central to our time there were a series of inspirational wellbeing talks.

The Charity's Health Improvement Lead, Dr Greg Lessons, spoke of the critical importance of nutritional interventions for firefighters, while our Wellness and Behaviour Change Coach, AJ Whitaker, also presented a talk named My Enemy, My Friend – The Menopause.

We also had an engaging 'in conversation with' panel discussion with Ruth Powell, Director of Engagement and Fundraising, as she spoke to Chief Fire Officer Neil Odin and Assistant CFO Alison Kibblewhite on the subject of mental health and wellbeing.

Thank you to everyone who joined us at the Show.



## New Outpatients Programme

We have introduced an Outpatients Programme at Marine Court - and soon to be introduced at Harcombe House - which is specifically designed for beneficiaries in the local area to access support through a series of short, two-hour sessions which can fit in around their work and family commitments.

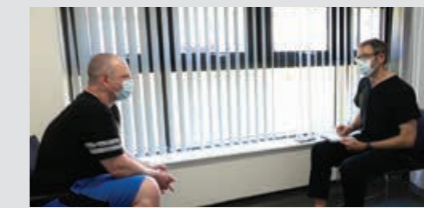
Our Assessment Practitioner Team take the time to chat with our beneficiaries to understand their needs and what support we can offer. Once it's determined a beneficiary will benefit from the programme, they are welcomed for a series of around four to six sessions which are tailored to suit each individual's specific needs.

The Charity's Physiotherapist Peter Raistrick, who has been working on the programme, explains: "We do a very thorough assessment so we get a good

picture of what the problem is and we get to formulate a really good treatment plan that they can go away with."

While the programme itself is aimed at supporting beneficiaries with physical injuries or concerns, the team are also available to chat to about anything else that may be concerning you.

You can enquire about support through *MyFFC* by visiting the 'Access Support' tab or by calling our Support Line on **0800 3898820**.



## Start planning your Christmas fundraiser

We're calling on you to get into the festive spirit as early as possible and start planning your Christmas fundraising challenges over the coming weeks, particularly if you're hoping to do something in a public place – as this may need a permit.

Spread the word and see what you can come up with to end 2021 on a high. Remember, what you do is entirely up to you! Whether it's a Santa Dash, Santa's Grotto, festive car wash, run, walk, climb or anything else, we'd love to hear about it.

To find out more about planning a Christmas challenge, visit [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/christmas](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/christmas) and

you can read more about our Christmas fundraising events on page 30.

Remember to share your ideas and progress in our Fire Family Challenge and Challengers group on *MyFFC* too!



## Join the Blue Light Get Active Challenge

Join our campaign to inspire and support all emergency services across the UK by signing up to get active, physically and mentally, this October. In doing so, you'll not only be helping our Charity, but also Police Care UK, The Ambulance Staff Charity, the Air Ambulance Service and Children's Air Ambulance. You can choose your challenge - anything from a 1k walk to running a marathon or even committing to daily acts of kindness.

To find out how you can get involved throughout October, visit [www.bluelightgetactive.com](http://www.bluelightgetactive.com)

#bluelightgetactive



## Thank you to our amazing fundraisers

This year we've seen some incredible challenges from our fundraising volunteers, beneficiaries and families. Put simply, we couldn't continue to provide the support we do without you.

There are far too many of you to list here, but to name just a few: Jamie Alcock completed a 650-mile shire horse drive, from Gloucestershire to Elgin in Scotland, in memory of his brother. He raised more than £50,000, to be split between us and Police Care UK.

A group of six firefighters from Oxfordshire FRS took on a LEJOG challenge, cycling 1,100 miles from Lands' End to John O'Groats, and raised more than £19,000 – to be split equally between us and Bowel Cancer UK.

And fire and rescue services right across the UK marked the 20th anniversary of 9/11 with events in their local area, from huge stair climbs to walks and more, remembering the 343 firefighters who tragically lost their lives on the day.

We've also seen a firefighter propose to his now-fiancee on the finish line of an epic challenge, colleagues from Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service rescued an injured walker mid-way through a mountain climb and kids as young as 11 giving up their free time to push themselves to the limit in their own challenges. A huge thanks to ALL of you!



## Smile this Christmas

With Christmas looming large, it's almost time to hit the shops once again. However, for those of you who prefer to shop online, don't forget that you can double up on your giving this year by shopping through Amazon Smile, rather than the normal Amazon site.

Amazon Smile is an Amazon programme that donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases to a charity of your choice. So be sure to visit <https://smile.amazon.co.uk>, where you can browse and buy all the same gifts, choose The Fire Fighters Charity as your charity of choice and give to us at no extra cost to you.

# Competent DIYers wanted

Choose between full-time or flexible part-time paid opportunities

Exclusively recruiting serving and retired people from the Fire & Rescue, Police and Ambulance Services to provide vital relief caretaker and site support for local schools



Freedom to schedule working hours around your shifts or other commitments.  
 Option to job share. Work usually within 30 minutes of your home.  
 Assignments generally range between 1 week and 6 months.

No qualifications required but you should be a competent and confident home DIYer.  
 Full training provided on site for each assignment.

Support schools on a temporary worker (zero hours) PAYE contract benefitting from reliable payment, mileage (over 10m), annual leave entitlement and paid lunch breaks (full days).  
 Alternative self-employed contract is available, existing trades please enquire for details.

Tasks vary with each assignment and might include: security (open / lock up), deliveries and portorage, perimeter security checks, setting up meeting rooms, checking fire escapes, supervising cleaning staff, regulatory checks (training provided), liaising with contractors, minor repairs and maintenance.

Register online to receive alerts when schools near you need help:  
[www.tibservices.co.uk](http://www.tibservices.co.uk)

# Life Partners

Here's an insight into the many ways we work with corporate partners to help fund our services and how you can put organisations and companies in touch with us.

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS



Ensuring we can continue to be there for the entire fire services community – offering health and wellbeing support for all individuals – is only possible thanks to the generosity of our supporters, namely the thousands who donate to us on an individual basis and, importantly, organisations and companies who choose to partner with us.

These organisations help us in a number of ways, from fundraising and awareness raising, to gifts in kind and grants. Vitally, however, each relationship is a two-way partnership, with every organisation we work with also benefitting from its association with The Fire Fighters Charity.

Our Fundraising Team works closely with each company, regardless of its size, to develop a bespoke partnership package, whether it's in support of a specific event, as a nominated Charity of Choice or as a sponsor.

But we're always on the look out for new corporate partners, so if you know of an organisation or company that would like to support us, and which could benefit from association with us, point them towards this page of our website to find out more:

[www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/corporate](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/corporate).

To find out more about becoming a Charity partner, visit [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/corporate](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/corporate) or email: [corporate@firefighterscharity.org.uk](mailto:corporate@firefighterscharity.org.uk)

### How to get involved:

There are many ways in which companies can fundraise for, work alongside or benefit from partnering with us. They could, for example:

- **Take on a fundraising event:** Whether it's a bake sale or bike ride, companies can take on a range of challenges or events to suit their workforce, all while boosting employee engagement.
- **Make us their Charity of Choice:** By making The Fire Fighters Charity their Charity of Choice, organisations would be directly helping to support the very people that keep us – and their customers/clients – safe every day.
- **Consider gifts in kind:** This is a valued and often personal way of supporting our Charity - while providing the opportunity for companies to promote their products more widely.
- **Become a sponsor:** Whatever the size or wherever the location of a business, we can provide sponsorship opportunities at a local, regional or national level.

### Meet some of our partners:

We have been fortunate enough to be supported by some fantastic sponsors and supporters over the last few years, both at a regional and a national level. Here are just a few:

**ELVIS & KRESSE**  
Accessories made from reclaimed materials



You can find many more of our partners on our website.

### Join MyFFC

To join our community of supporters and share ideas of ways to get involved and raise money, register for MyFFC at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc)

# Appy Days

We catch up with the team behind our new My Fire Fighters Charity website and app to find out what it's all about and why you need to register today.

After a year in development, we finally launched the My Fire Fighters Charity (*MyFFC*) app in October, becoming the first organisation of its kind to offer the fire services community a free wellbeing, fundraising and social media platform that is open to everyone.

Accessed via a web browser on your desktop computer or through our Android and iOS apps, *MyFFC* is an online home for the entire fire services community, including those who work for fire services, those who are retired, their families and our supporters. It offers you a wealth of advice and information, allows you to access support from the Charity quickly and easily, and it offers you the chance to meet other members of the fire services community from across the UK.

Tim Beynon, the Charity's Head of Marketing and Engagement, led on the development of *MyFFC* and is excited about the difference it could make to people's lives; "This is a real first for us and has the potential to help thousands more people with their health and wellbeing, as well as allowing them to stay connected with each other and with us," he explained. "As a charity, enhancing the health and wellbeing of our fire family is why we exist and the introduction of *MyFFC* means that we can now complement the

face-to-face support offered to thousands, with life-changing digital support that can be shared with hundreds of thousands."

Boasting an extensive library of wellbeing and fundraising content - written by the Charity's experienced practitioner and fundraising teams and tailored for the fire services community - *MyFFC* allows users to follow topics that interest them and to explore related content. Director of Beneficiary Services, Sharon Bailey, explains more:

"Nothing like this exists elsewhere for the fire services community," says Sharon. "We've created this content with our community in mind, which means that - while you may be able to find information on many of the subjects elsewhere - you can have confidence that everything you read or watch on *MyFFC* has taken you into account, whether you're working, retired, have left the Service or are a family member of one of our beneficiaries. As such, the advice and information we are sharing considers factors such as the physical and mental health challenges that come from firefighting, the impact of shift patterns, how working as a retained firefighter can impact family life, the obstacles facing those who have recently retired or the pressures that come from working in control or support offices.

"We can do this because we have the experience to do so. Our practitioner team understands the fire services community and your needs. So, we want to share this expertise with you through *MyFFC* and also use this exciting new tool to hear directly from you in regard to the information you would like from us."

Expanding further on this last point, Tim picked up on the diverse ways in which *MyFFC* users can interact with each other and with the Charity through the new portal: "In essence, this is Facebook for the fire service community," he said. "Many of the engaging aspects of traditional social media sites can be found on *MyFFC*, with users having confidence in the fact that the site is managed and moderated by the Charity. Furthermore, everyone who joins *MyFFC* is asked to commit to a set of terms and conditions, and a netiquette policy, that has been designed to ensure that the site is a safe, friendly and welcoming place for all.

"Thereafter, users can find and follow others, join groups on specific areas of interest - including our regular fundraising campaigns - discuss content, ask questions, share their own media, run polls, share ideas, win badges, score engagement points and tell us directly what they think about it all. Indeed, we want the site to evolve and grow based on what our users tell us."

This high level of user-driven engagement means that *MyFFC* is also the perfect vehicle with which to share our latest fundraising activities with you all. As such, you'll find a range of groups for those interested in taking on a car wash or a challenge of their own, looking for ideas or keen to share some top tips to help others. Full details of all our groups can be found on page 11.

Fundraising Manager, Kerry James, is in no doubt as to the benefits *MyFFC* could bring for all fundraisers: "Whether you're a first time fundraiser or someone who's run 10 marathons and washed a thousand cars, *MyFFC* is a fantastic place to find a new challenge and help others to discover theirs," explains Kerry. "Our incredible fundraisers are some of the most inspirational and inventive people I've ever come across, so to have a space where they can all come together, share ideas, collaborate and inspire each other is fantastic. I can't wait to see what they come up with and am looking forward to being a part of it."

A thriving online community, enhancing the wellbeing of the UK's fire family and bringing people together, *MyFFC* will only grow and improve over the months and years to come. Register today to be a part of it from the very beginning.

## MyFFC - What you need to know

### What is it?

A new website and Android/iOS app from The Fire Fighters Charity, offering health, wellbeing and fundraising advice, as well as a social experience to bring the UK's fire services community together.

### How do I register?

You can register for *MyFFC* today and access the site via desktop or through the Android or iOS apps.

Click here for more: <https://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc>



### Connect with the team

All those mentioned in this article can be found on *MyFFC*. You can direct message them or join them in discussions across the site.

To connect with anyone from the Charity, keep an eye out for the the *MyFFC* app icon on their profile images.

# Getting started in seven steps

Here's a brief overview of the seven things you can do to get up and running with MyFFC

Like having The Fire Fighters Charity in your pocket, we want your experience of MyFFC to give you everything you would expect from us, whether you're looking for support, advice or fundraising ideas.

We also want MyFFC to be your online meeting place, to chat with other members of the fire services community with whom you share common interests. Whatever your role, interest or stage of life, we're sure you'll find others to share your enthusiasm with here.

So here are seven steps to get you up and running:

## Step 1: Complete your profile and settings

Accessible through the user menu next to your name, you can click 'edit' next to your profile information to update your details, add a photo and help others to find you. You can also choose what elements of your profile are visible to others by changing your user settings - accessible through the same dropdown user menu. Scroll further down the settings page and you can also change how often you wish to receive email notifications from MyFFC. So, all power to you, customise your experience as you wish.

## Step 2: Check out our content or access support

Visit 'Library' to explore our ever expanding library of unique wellbeing and fundraising content, written by our in-house practitioner and fundraising teams to specifically meet the needs of the fire services community. Each article is also tagged with its appropriate topics, so you can view and follow each of these topics to see more articles on that theme.

If you can't find something that you are interested in, or which you would like to know more about, just get in touch with us through the 'Contact us' page and we'll create it for you.

And, of course, we are here to support you. So if you feel you could benefit from our help today, head to 'Access Support' and complete the simple form to access support.

## Step 3: Join some groups

Our groups are at the social heart of MyFFC, they are the places where you can go to meet others who share a specific, common interest. Just go to 'Groups,' scroll through the list of available groups and choose which ones you wish to join.

Great places to share ideas, to seek advice on fundraising, to meet peers and colleagues from across the UK and to feel like you are a part of a national fire services community, our Groups are driven by you, so enjoy and make the most of them.

## Step 4: Get searching

The search bar at the top of MyFFC is a powerful tool to find the people, content, groups or information you're after, use it whenever you're not sure where to find what you're looking for.

## Step 5: Tell others

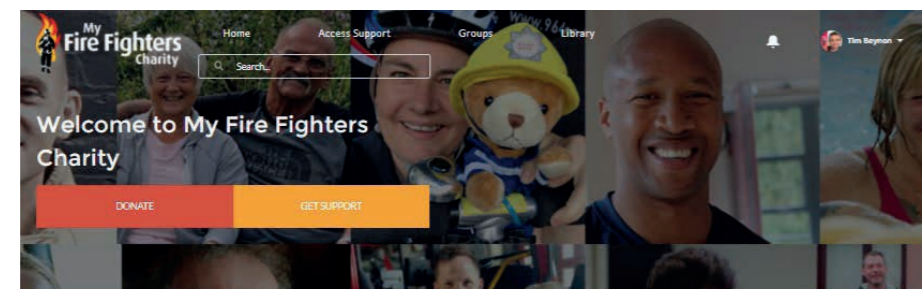
If you're enjoying MyFFC, help us to grow the site by telling others across your Service or fire services friendship group all about it. The more people we can attract to the site, the more people we can help to live healthier and happier, which is exactly what we are here to do.

## Step 6: Tell us

We know we're not going to get everything right with MyFFC from day one, so if you think there's something missing, something broken, something out of place or something that's puzzling you, tell us about it. So, get in touch through the Contact Us page or engage with us in Groups. Members of the MyFFC team will also be on hand and active across the site too.

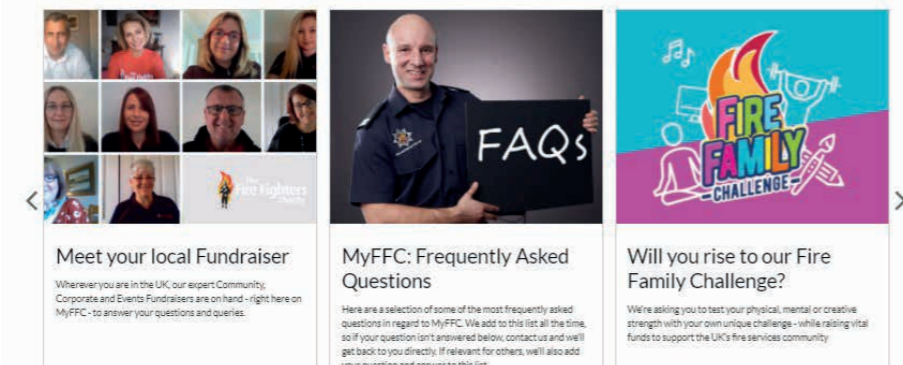
## Step 7: Come back for more

We want MyFFC to grow and expand in the months and years to come, so please keep coming back, engaging with our content, meeting others in our groups, accessing support when you need it and being a part of a growing and, we hope, thriving new online community.



### Our latest content

Here's what's new on My Fire Fighters Charity today...



# Guide to Groups

There are a broad selection of MyFFC Groups to choose from, all designed to bring people together from across the UK to discuss and share ideas on specific subjects or topics. Here's a brief overview of just a few of the groups on offer to all who register.

**Getting started:** As its name suggests, this is a great group to join when you first register for MyFFC. We'll share tips and advice to get you up and running on the site and be on hand to answer any questions you might have.

**News and updates:** A must for all members, here is where we'll post all our latest news and updates, including what's happening across the Charity, what's new on MyFFC, what's coming soon and the events and activities you won't want to miss.

**Runners, riders, walkers and more:** Attention fundraisers, this one's for you. If you're planning, taking part in or have

completed a fundraising challenge, here's the place to talk about it, get fundraising tips and support others.

**Living Well Groups:** Complementing our incredible online and face-to-face Living Well Groups, this group is for anyone who has ever attended or those who'd like to find out more about what they're all about.

**Monthly Giving:** Thank you for regularly donating to us, if you'd like to find out how you can meet others who regularly give through their payroll or by Direct Debit, dive into this group. We'll share the stories of those who donate and also tell you about the difference your donations are making.

**Retired from the fire service:** Whether you retired 30 years ago, or yesterday, this group is for everyone who has completed their time in the service, but is still keen to be a part of the fire services community. Meet others, make friends, be a part of a UK-wide Watch of retired FRS personnel.

**Spouses, partners and dependants:** If you're other half is a member of fire and rescue service personnel, or if you're a dependant, here's where you can meet others like you, share your experiences and support each other.



## Meet your Group Owners

All our groups are supported by a member of the MyFFC team. Your Group's Owner will be listed under the 'Group Details' - so drop them a message directly if you have any questions or further thoughts.

# Give it a go

The latest from our income generation team on how you can regularly give and make a life changing difference to thousands.



## Lottery gift vouchers launched

You can now buy gift vouchers for the Fire Fighters Lottery so you can give others a chance to win while choosing a gift that supports our Charity.

The vouchers are simple to purchase online by scanning the QR code or visiting the link below. Then choose the number of chances and how many monthly draws you want to buy as a gift.

Buy Lottery Vouchers by scanning the QR code below or visiting [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/lotterygift](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/lotterygift)



Once you've completed your purchase, the voucher will be emailed to you ready for you to either forward to your friend or print to give to them in person. Your recipient can then redeem their voucher online by following the link, entering their voucher code, and confirming their contact details.

Our Lottery jackpot is up to £25,000, along with a second prize of £1,000 and thirty £50 prizes up for grabs. Since it was launched in 2002 there's been over 7,000 winners with a total of £4.8m worth of prizes won and over £12m raised for The Fire Fighters Charity.

## Pandemic proves point

Thank you for continuing to support us with your monthly donations. The challenges of the last year and a half have highlighted how vital your donations are.

Your donations ensured that we continued to be there for those in need throughout these challenging times despite the fall in income due to the cancellation and delay of fundraising activity. The pandemic has been challenging for us all and we've seen an



## A piece of CAKE

Fire stations across the country are well known for their love of a brew and a piece of cake – but one firefighter saw the potential to turn the much-loved overtime cake tradition into an incredible campaign in aid of the Charity.

Nathan Ashe, a wholetime firefighter with London Fire Brigade, came up with the idea for our 'Text Cake' campaign last year as a way of encouraging his colleagues to donate to the Charity in place of bringing in stacks of cakes – and the initiative raised £6,000, both via text donations and through online donations, in its first year alone.

"The idea came about last year," says Nathan. "I was coming off duty and there was a Watch coming in for the day shift. There was about four of them on overtime and each of those four people brought in cakes.

"I thought, 'this is getting silly now'. By the time I came back on duty, the cakes were all still in the office, all gone to waste."

Nathan came up with the idea of asking his colleagues to donate the money they'd normally spend on cakes to The Fire Fighters Charity directly. He spoke to our Income Generation team and within a week we had

increase in requests for support as a result. With your ongoing monthly donations, we can continue to develop the support services we provide to our fire and rescue service community past, present, and future.

If you don't already you can sign-up to monthly donations by card, direct Debit or PayPal via our website at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/donate](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/donate).

Thank you so much for your support we cannot do what we do without you.

kickstarted the campaign, by creating a number for people to text in to.

If you'd like to donate through the campaign, you can text the word 'CAKE' to 70660 to donate £5. You'll then have the option to add Gift Aid, but once you've chosen to do this once, you won't need to do it again for any future texts you send.

Alternatively, you can visit [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/donate](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/donate) and mention the word 'CAKE' in your reason for donating. Thank you.



Download this poster and others at <https://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/fundraising-posters-and-images>

# We're a 999 family

Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service's Chief Fire Officer, Kathryn Billing, shares her passion for supporting the Charity and how her Service has responded to the pandemic.



I was privileged to join Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service in 2000 and there truly isn't a day that goes by where I don't think about how lucky I am to have this vocation, as well as the opportunity to make a difference to our Service, council, communities and the wider fire sector.

Throughout my career, I have undertaken a number of roles across the Service. I started my career as retained, I have worked in training - which I loved - and have had several service delivery roles.

To give you a little bit of an insight into my life: I am personally passionate about inclusion and it is at the heart of who I am. I enjoy spending time with friends and family and am grateful, after 20 or so years of being in the fire service, to have a wide network of friends who regularly visit Cornwall...and I am sure it's not just to see me!

Living in Cornwall I appreciate exploring our beautiful county, either walking, running or just having a coffee and a cake while sitting on a beach, usually Godrevy. I love to challenge myself and keep myself fit with both cardio and weight training and, when I am not doing that or out and about, I like to spend time at home with Bob, my cat, who is indeed good for my wellbeing.

Throughout my whole service life, however, The Fire Fighters Charity has been central to all that I have done. You always know you are privileged to be a part of the 999 family and it is exactly the same when it comes to The Fire Fighters Charity family too.

I have been involved with the Charity in different roles over the years, some of which I was better at than others. I wasn't, for example, the best service treasurer, but I gave it a good go! However, one thing that

**"I am proud to champion and support others across Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service with their incredible fundraising activities... and wow do our teams have some wacky, but great ideas."**

has remained consistent is my enjoyment for fundraising.

The most successful challenge I've been involved with was the Moonwalk in London. It was fab to combine raising money with spending time with diverse people from across our Service. And today, I continue to do what I can, even if it means getting out my acting skills and doing some social media posts to support campaigns and promote the services of the Charity.

More recently, in my role as the Chief Fire Officer, I am proud to champion and support others across Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service with their incredible fundraising activities... and wow do our teams have some wacky, but great ideas. One of my favourites from recent times has to be swimming to raise money, in a blow-up water dam, on a leash, all while a car wash was going on at the same time. Brilliant.

Throughout our response to Covid, I have been so proud of the way in which Cornwall and our fire service has stepped up to support the health, safety and wellbeing of not only our communities, but each other. Working together to make Cornwall safer is our vision and the way we have all

collaborated, virtually and in person when possible, to focus on a common goal has been outstanding.

However, Covid has certainly impacted on people's wellbeing, which I was pleased to discuss in the Charity's recent *Brew With A Crew* campaign. The importance of physical face-to-face interaction with each other and our communities is something which has been missed and the campaign, which encouraged people to come together over a cup of tea, embraced that. So we look forward now to getting back out there, engaging with each other and of course raising money for the Charity.

One important point to remember, which someone once said to me, is that we all need to look after The Fire Fighters Charity so that others in the future have the same privilege that we have right now. Together, we can ensure we look after the Charity and its legacy, as those before us have ensured that it is there to look after us today.

Support it in any way you can, as you never know when or why you might just need the amazing Fire Fighters Charity's team and services.



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For group enquiries, email [groups@rivieratravel.co.uk](mailto:groups@rivieratravel.co.uk) or call **01283 742 322**

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PHIL MAYNARD

# A helping hand



We've supported Phil Maynard, a Station Manager in West Sussex FRS, for years - firstly with his mental health and more recently following a hip replacement. Now he's going above and beyond to show his appreciation.

**F**irefighters spend their lives taking care of other people and putting their wellbeing before their own - something Phil Maynard, 49, a station manager with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, says is just part of who they are and what they do.

So when it came time for him to address his own health concerns, he was blown away by the support on offer to him and his colleagues through the Charity.

Phil had always enjoyed an active lifestyle, having worked as a fitness instructor before his time in the fire service more than 29 years ago, as well as swimming nationally and being a competitive martial artist.

However, his health took a major knock in 2013 when he was diagnosed with Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia Type 1 - a rare, hereditary cancer-causing condition. Tragically, he found out about it just a month

before his brother passed away from the same condition.

"I was diagnosed a month before he died and then went on to have all the tests and surgeries related to that," says Phil. "I had surgery on my neck and had all my parathyroid glands removed, half of my thyroid, a part of my thymus removed, I've had a lump removed from my chest, and my pancreas is covered in tumours. I've also got tumours on my adrenal glands as well."

Around the same time, Phil made his first contact with the Charity, having heard about the mental health support on offer to beneficiaries like himself. He visited Marine Court, our centre in West Sussex, for support - something he says was "enormously beneficial."

"You can't underestimate the value that comes with taking yourself out of your normal daily situation and putting yourself

in a situation where you are the one being cared for," he adds. "I think most of our lives, certainly in this career, we spend looking after other people and it's very rare we have that opportunity to be looked after ourselves, and it provided that for me."

In the years that followed, Phil kept the Charity at the forefront of his mind, telling colleagues about the help he'd received. But while he says it had been transformational for his mental wellbeing at the time, his physical health had begun to deteriorate.

"I was aware that I was having problems with my hip, getting up and getting moving was painful," says Phil. "The first connection I made to my condition was when I went in to enquire about hip replacement surgery and the surgeon informed me that there was a bone growth that I'd had since I was about five years old that had caused deterioration in the hip."



“It was only then that I reflected back and realised that when I ran or swam I always had trouble with my hip, but I’d never paid much attention to it. The condition I’ve got affects my bone minerals and so it had essentially developed into arthritis, plus I had cysts on the joints. I eventually had the replacement surgery in September 2019.”

Phil was referred to a ‘Hip School’ through Guy’s Hospital in London, where he was receiving care, and was given a series of exercises to do before and after the surgery. Doing exercises like this, he says, is essential when it comes to joint surgery as they work to strengthen muscles around the joint to better aid recovery.

“Luckily I’ve got a really great other half who then made sure I did the exercises!” says Phil. “It doesn’t feel beneficial at the time, because the exercises are focusing on the small muscles and support and strengthening, so you don’t feel like it’s doing much, but when you’ve had the surgery it makes all the difference in the world.”

“It was things like calf raises, lateral raises, sliding my leg in and out on the floor, very minor movements that don’t seem like much but they’re strengthening all the muscles round the hip.”

“I went back for a check-up a month or so after my surgery and as I walked in, the person before me – who had had an operation the same day as me – was in a wheelchair because they hadn’t done the exercises. They’re absolutely key.”

Phil had reached out to the Charity before the operation and was booked in for a week’s stay at Marine Court shortly afterwards, to help him on his physio journey.

“I was on crutches when I first came to Marine Court, and by the end of the week I was off them,” he says. “I had a combination of support, as part of the main group, and also had one-to-one sessions with the physios and exercise team who gave me really specific, targeted exercises based on what I needed to strengthen my joints.”

“I also had all the hydrotherapy sessions and we went out to the seafront for walks which tripled in length during the week of me being there.”

But the stay proved beneficial for more than just his physical strength, as Phil says he also received mental health support too – having, unknowingly at times, struggled on and off following his brother’s death.



**“I think most of our lives, certainly in this career, we spend looking after other people and it’s very rare we have that opportunity to be looked after ourselves, and it provided that for me.”**

“It’s a reassurance knowing I could reach out for further support, should I need it,” says Phil. “Then I went again a couple of months later for work on my hip and it improved again.”

Since then, Phil has continued visiting Marine Court as an outpatient on our new Outpatients Programme, which was introduced following the pandemic. The programme is designed to meet the needs of certain beneficiaries in the immediate area who may have a busy schedule and can be helped through shorter, two-hour sessions, rather than a week-long residential stay.

“I already knew first-hand the great work the Charity does at the centres and the benefits of it, so with my current working

lifestyle, Outpatients fits in much better for me because I live quite close to the centre so I can come down once a week or so and supplement my current physio,” says Phil.

“The first time I came I was greeted at reception and the exercise and physiotherapists came and took me through to the consultation room. They talked through what had happened with me, what I was struggling with now, and they ran me through a range of movement tests and looked at where my muscle weaknesses were – so they could target those.”

“Now I’m building muscle strength up constantly through the programme the physios at Marine Court are giving me, including the app [Salaso] which has regular

guidance, and I’m in the gym three or four times a week. It’s also important to rest as well, which they ensure you understand.”

Keen to show his appreciation for the support he’s received over the years, Phil became one of our Service Coordinators last year and now helps to organise fundraising events in his area.

“I felt it was a good way to pay back for all the benefits I’ve received,” he says. “I feel that I’ve benefitted a lot from the Charity and this was a good opportunity for me to give back.”

However, going a major step further, he’s also set up his own business – completely dedicated to the Charity – called Helping Hoodies. It has been one of our valued corporate partners ever since.

“About 15 or 20 years ago in West Sussex we used to sell hoodies to our staff with the badge on, and we gave the proceeds to Charity,” says Phil. “That fizzled out and I wanted to reinvigorate it and bring pride back into our service.”

“I think it’s important that we have a sense of belonging, it’s a natural human trait, we’re tribal creatures, and I think that a badge signifies that in our services.”

“I thought I’d sell roughly 20 hoodies to West Sussex and that would be it, job done, but I realised quite quickly that 20 hoodies wouldn’t give much of a donation to the Charity so I asked other services and



### Mental health support on MyFFC

MyFFC has a wealth of information, articles and content on mental health, covering a broad range of subjects. Use our search tool and browse topics to find exactly what you’re looking for, or apply for support yourself simply and easily. You can also watch a video of our interview with Phil in the *Shout!* group. Register at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc)

**“To have experienced the Charity’s support is the only way you truly appreciate what’s on offer. To think you have that for life, to me, is incredible. I don’t know any other Charity that provides that service, for life.”**

people I knew if they’d come onboard. It’s snowballed from then.

“We’ve now got more than 36 different organisations onboard and shipping out as far as the Cayman Islands. We’ve sold over 3,000 hoodies to date. In April we donated £11,770 and we’ll make another donation in November.”

Looking to the future now, Phil says knowing the Charity is there for him for life is a huge reassurance, particularly as he believes there’s a strong likelihood other joints – particularly his other hip – could be impacted by his condition.

“It’s essential to speak to professionals like those at Marine Court to try and prevent any compensatory issues,” says Phil. “As an example, I wear orthotics now in my trainers as one of my legs is slightly longer than the other following my surgery. They have a slippery surface and we’ve managed

to establish that that was causing pain in my lower leg when I’m doing the treadmill test, because my toes are clawing trying to keep stable in the shoes. Just by changing the insoles, I’m able to do that test relatively pain free now.

“To have experienced the Charity’s support is the only way you truly appreciate what’s on offer. To think you have that for life, to me, is incredible. I don’t know any other Charity that provides that service, for life.”

“When you come down to a centre and meet people from other services, whether working or retired, and see the impact and effect it’s having on them – even if it’s just being part of that group again of likeminded people, away from whatever is causing them stress in their day-to-day life or having their pain addressed or being looked after – is just such a fundamental, wonderful thing. It’s something we should be, and I am, grateful for.”



# NEW COVID RECOVERY PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

We recently launched a new programme dedicated to supporting beneficiaries who are experiencing long-term impacts of Covid-19. Here, we take a closer look at what's involved.

**R**estrictions may have eased across the UK, but for many people, the huge and devastating impact of Covid-19 can still be felt months after they first contracted the virus – with some going on to develop what's now known as 'Long Covid.'

Seeing the impact this has had on many of our beneficiaries over the last 18 months, we responded and rapidly developed a Covid Recovery Programme, aimed specifically at supporting fire and rescue service personnel who are still struggling following a Covid diagnosis.

Initially rolled out at Marine Court, it includes a five-day residential stay with a holistic programme created for each individual, along with a series of workshops on everything from nutrition to stress and sleep – as well as online sessions before and after the stay.

Beneficiaries are offered the opportunity to meet with a psychological therapist or welfare caseworker to discuss additional support that may be available to them, both within and outside the Charity.



Physiotherapist Peter Raistrick, who has been working on the programme, explains: "Participants have a timetable and the structure tends to mix a number of physical sessions – be it their individual, tailored exercise programmes or some relaxation work, perhaps a bit of yoga, some breathing exercises and some hydrotherapy - with workshops on things like stress and anxiety



and, if they wish, time with a psychological therapist or welfare caseworker.

If you would like more information about the symptoms of Long Covid, please visit [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/) and if our programme is something that interests you, please contact us on **0800 3898820** to see how we could support you.

to the Charity and he was later offered a place on the programme.

"Coming on this course has been reassuring, it validates in some ways the experience I've gone through," says Dan. "As a retained firefighter, when you're off sick, you're not a bum on a seat. You're just taking up a space that they can't fill. I felt like a fraud for a long time, so that was hard."

Dan is now looking ahead and focusing on his recovery, with the thought of being able to play with his son more as he gets better a constant driving force.

got progressively worse he later spent a short stint in hospital in the July, as his weight plummeted.

"At that point my wife and I had to go and live with my parents for a while, because I just couldn't do anything," he adds. "We'd just had our son as well and I couldn't really do normal things. Things have definitely got better since I was in hospital, but when it came to 2021, I overdid it a little at Christmas and I paid the price in January. I got very low and I did reach out to the Brigade at that point."

Dan's line manager suggested he spoke

## Meet Dan

Dan Coward, a retained firefighter with Hereford and Worcester FRS, attended the programme earlier this year after first catching Covid-19 in March 2020. He has been dealing with the aftermath of it ever since.

"My initial infection was horrendous, it was very much not knowing if you're going to wake up the next day – terrifying," says Dan. "Then after that it came in waves."

Dan initially dealt with the virus at home, as hospitals were so packed, but as he

# BACK IN BUSINESS

Tips to help ease back pain, from Nursing Services Lead, Kath Savage

**B**ack pain can be felt anywhere from your neck to your hips, but there are some things which you can do to relieve any pain you're experiencing.

It's important to try to stay as active as you can and continue with your day-to-day activities. Try some simple exercises such as swimming, walking, yoga, and pilates at first.

Back pain usually gets better

on its own without the need to seek medical advice. However, it's important to see your GP if the pain stops you doing your day-to-day activities, it doesn't improve over a few weeks, it gets worse or it affects your mental wellbeing.

If you feel you'd benefit from the Charity's support, visit Access Support via MyFFC – [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc) - to make an enquiry, or call our Support Line on **0800 389 8820**.

## BACK EXERCISES:

Below are a few simple back exercises and stretches to try from home.

*When undertaking exercise or wellness activities of any kind, please also ensure that you do so in an appropriate and safe environment, taking all necessary measures to ensure your personal safety and that of those around you. We recommend consulting with your doctor before beginning any new exercise programme.*



## Watch the videos on MyFFC

To watch a video demonstration of each of these exercises, head to MyFFC and search for 'Back in Business'. You can register for MyFFC via [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc)

## COBRA STRETCH

1. Lie on your stomach with your arms in a 'push up' position.
2. Keep your pelvis in neutral, then slowly push up with your arms so you lift your chest up off the floor until you're resting on your elbows (or as far as you can go comfortably). Hold for a few deep breaths then lower the upper body back down to the floor by controlling through your arms. Repeat 5 times.



## PELVIC TILT (LYING)

1. Lie on your back on a mat with your knees bent and feet flat, with your arms across your chest or resting on the mat.
2. Gently roll your pelvis so that your lower back flattens into the mat. Then roll your pelvis so that you feel your lower back arching away from the mat. Repeat 10 times.



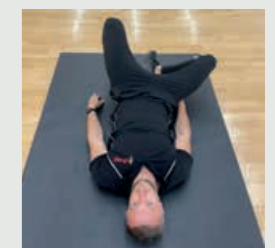
## MERMAID (SIDE STRETCH)

1. Stand with feet hip distance apart.
2. Slide the left hand down the left leg as you slide the right hand up the side of the body and then overhead, reaching towards the ceiling with your uppermost arm. Reach as far as you feel comfortable.
3. Return to start position and repeat 5 times on each side.



## HIP ABDUCTION/EXTERNAL ROTATION

1. Lie on your back on a mat with knees bent and feet flat on the floor, arms by your side as shown
2. Slowly drop one knee out to the side as shown
3. Stop when you feel any twisting or rotating in your back and return to the start position
4. Keep the start position throughout the movement. Repeat 5 times on each side.



# EAT FOR YOUR JOINTS

Health Improvement Lead, Dr Greg Lessons, reveals how a few simple changes to your diet can improve the health of your joints



### ADDING MORE PROTEIN

The amount of protein a person requires from their diet varies depending on their level of physical activity and their age. To maintain muscle mass, the average adult requires about 0.8 g of protein per kg of body weight, per day (0.8 g/kg/d). As we age, our bodies become less efficient at repairing and building muscle - in fact, from the age of 30 we lose an average of 1% of our muscle mass per year - so older adults may require as much as 1.6 g/kg/d. The protein should be spread as evenly as possible throughout the day and across each meal. Rich food sources include meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, nuts, seeds, beans and pulses.

### REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

As well as cardiorespiratory exercise, you should include at least two sessions of resistance exercise per week in your routine, which stimulates that all-important muscle replenishment. Training with weights, resistance bands, body weight exercises (calisthenics) and yoga are all forms of resistance exercise.

This regular physical activity will also help to prevent excess accumulation of body fat that occurs with aging, which will reduce the impact of wear and tear on the joints whilst reducing the likelihood of chronic low-grade inflammation associated with poorer joint health.

### PACK IN MICRONUTRIENTS

Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables (at least 5 portions per day) will provide plenty of vitamin C, which is essential for the body to make collagen. Collagen forms part of the cartilage that protects the ends of the bones in joints. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables will also help to reduce inflammation in the body. Meanwhile, Omega 3 fatty acids help to reduce inflammation, with the richest dietary source being oily fish (mackerel, salmon, sardines, trout and herring). It is recommended you eat two servings of fish per week (at least one of which should be oily).

**W**e all rely on our joints being healthy to keep us moving throughout our lives. However, wear and tear at work and in our personal lives can put added strain on them, particularly as we get older.

A few simple changes to your diet can have a huge impact on your overall joint health. Here are some key tips to consider when it comes to your day-to-day lifestyle.

### CONTROLLING BODY WEIGHT

Preventing excess weight gain is the most effective way of maintaining joint health. This means keeping body fat within a healthy range and maintaining lean muscle, both of which are achievable by staying active, eating a balanced diet and ensuring adequate protein intake. This in turn helps maintain muscle and repair connective tissue, which supports our joints. Obesity is the main modifiable risk factor for osteoarthritis, so staying on top of your weight is hugely important.

### Fiery salmon fish cakes

Serves 4 (8 fish cakes)

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 800g skinless and boneless salmon fillets
- Small bunch of coriander, chopped
- Chilli flakes (as much as preferred)
- 10 cm piece of ginger peeled and finely chopped

#### METHOD:

1. Finely chop half the salmon and chop the other half into larger (1cm) pieces.
2. Mix all of the salmon with the other ingredients on a chopping board and season with black pepper.
3. Separate the mix into 8 even portions and form into patties.
4. Fry on a medium-high heat in a little oil for 2 mins each side.

Energy (kcal)	CHO (g)	Protein (g)	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Sugar (g)	Salt (g)	Fibre (g)
505	1.9	42	36	6	0.5	0.33	1.6



### Join Greg on MyFFC

Greg hosts a nutrition group on MyFFC, covering all areas of nutrition. Join his group, share your own recipes and find out more, all you need to do is register via [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc)

# THINGS ARE LOOKING 'OP'

Our Wellness and Behaviour Change Coach, Sally Walker, discusses the importance of positivity before and after joint surgery.



**P**reparing for musculoskeletal or joint surgery can be challenging, especially if you are used to being physically active. Then when it comes to the recovery period afterwards, there may be more uncertainty as you face weeks and possibly even months more of inactivity.

Perhaps your surgery has been delayed following the pandemic? Or you're struggling with chronic pain and still have months to go before your op? Whatever your situation, it's important to recognise that there can be a huge impact on your mental wellbeing.

Research shows that a healthy psychological attitude throughout the process has a positive impact on your recovery, so it's worth taking some time to experiment with different ideas and techniques to support yourself prior to and after your surgery.

Here are a few tips you might want to consider:

- 1) Use only reliable medical sources to find out more about your surgery and recovery process if you would like to, such as your GP and reputable websites such as the NHS. It might be wise to avoid chat groups or online forums.
- 2) Don't be afraid to ask questions or discuss concerns with your medical team at all stages of the process. They are there to support you and this can be extremely helpful in ensuring a positive outcome. Reassurance is very important and has a massive impact on overall wellbeing - in particular, anxiety levels.
- 3) Practice regular relaxation techniques such as progressive relaxation. Experiment to find out what works best for you. MyFFC, has a number of guided techniques you can access as a starting point.
- 4) Nurture a hobby that you can maintain during recovery. It's often difficult to find something that works for you if most of your hobbies are physical. Experiment to find something fulfilling. Perhaps listening to music, reading, watching a new TV show, craftwork, learning a new language, puzzles etc.
- 5) Practice mindfulness and mindfulness meditation. Research shows that regular mindfulness practice can help manage pain as well as reduce anxiety and stress levels. MyFFC, has some mindfulness meditations you can try out.
- 6) Take time out to practice deep breathing (from your diaphragm) each day, both prior to surgery and during recovery, if safe and comfortable to do so. This will engage the parasympathetic nervous system to help you feel calmer.
- 7) Use positive self-talk and visualisation. Imagining a positive outcome and using positive language can make all the difference.
- 8) Talk through any worries with someone you trust. You don't have to cope alone, don't be afraid to ask for help.
- 9) Be realistic in your expectations, allowing yourself time to recover. Everyone is unique and will cope in different ways and have different timescales for recovery, so cutting yourself some slack is key.
- 10) Acknowledge any feelings and emotions you have before and after surgery. Remember, it's normal to have many of them.
- 11) Connect with nature where and when you can. This can include anything from sitting outdoors or near an open window and breathing in the fresh air, to watching and listening to birds from your chair and going for a short, gentle walk when you are able to. You can also develop your gardening skills and enjoy it as a new hobby, ensuring you're working within your physical capabilities at that time.



### Find out more on MyFFC

Once you've registered, head to our content library and search for topics including: mental health, mindfulness, self-care, relaxation and others, for lots more information on how to achieve a positive mindset. Head to [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc) to register.

## Festive Favourites and New Designs for 2021

You can support The Fire Fighters Charity with our selection of Christmas Cards.

1. Firefighters with the Tree
2. Christmas Boots
3. Pigs in Blankets
4. Down the Chimney
5. You Know it's Christmas When... Part 1 & 2 now £4.00



Visit [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/shop](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/shop) or call 01256 366566. Packs are £5.00 each including postage and packaging.

## Bespoke replica fire helmets

An exciting new collection of replica fire helmets is available now.

Exclusive to The Fire Fighters Charity, these replica helmets are available in two styles: the MSA Safety Gallet F1 XF and the Rosenbauer Heros Titan Helmet, in yellow or white. They can be personalised for the recipient with rank markings - from firefighter to Chief Fire Officer - and there's the option of having a personalised BA Tally or Engraved Plaque. Service Medal Ribbons can also be applied on request.

£230.00 + P&P.

Go to [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/shop](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/shop) to find out more.



## Festive treats

Stuck on what to buy your loved ones this Christmas? We're here to help. We have gifts to suit all budgets, from The Fire Fighters Charity mugs to luxury accessories and engraved crystalware.

### Engraved Crystalware and Tankards



Beer Tankard from £31.50

Pair of engraved glasses £60.30

### Elvis & Kresse

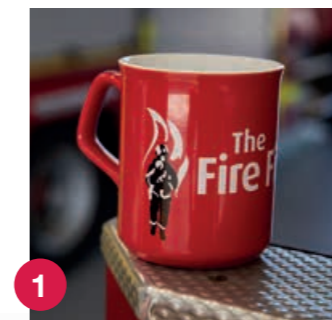


Wallet from £75



Purse £110

1. FFC Mugs - Red or Black £5.00
2. Travel Mug - Silver or Black From £5.95
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4. Lapel Pin - FFC or Thin Red Line From £1.00
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# Continuing Stu's legacy

More than 30 colleagues from Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service climbed 10 peaks in just 24 hours in memory of their friend Stu Crebbin, a devoted supporter of the Charity.

**A** team of fire and rescue service colleagues have continued the incredible fundraising legacy left by their friend, who sadly died earlier this year, with a series of events - including climbing 10 peaks in 24 hours in his memory.

The group of more than 30 personnel from Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service completed the Brecon Beacon 10 Peaks Traverse in August, despite horrendous conditions throughout, as a tribute to Stu Crebbin.

Stu was a dedicated supporter of the Charity throughout his career and helped organise and take part in the same challenge last year - despite having to undertake intense chemotherapy and immunotherapy sessions in the lead-up to it. The challenge involved climbing the 10 main peaks within the Brecon Beacons National park - around 42 miles of mountain terrain with 3,100 metres of ascent.

Tragically Stu passed away in March this year at the age of 46, after a 12-month battle with colon cancer. Keen to honour his memory and continue his legacy, Spencer Jones - a close friend of Stu's - helped to organise a team of firefighters and support

staff, as well as members of Stu's family, to take part in the challenge once again.

Having raised an incredible £11,384 for the Charity last year, they're hoping to beat that amount this year. On top of the mountainous trek, Spencer planned six car washes throughout August, with more events to follow.

"This is very much to continue Stu's legacy, we were very close friends, so it's very personal," says Spencer. "When I went across to visit him to see how he was doing following his initial diagnosis, we decided there was a chance to raise awareness of Stage Four cancer and mental health.

"Doing the challenge last year gave him something to focus on, which was tremendous. Sadly he's not here anymore, so this year it was a memorial walk for people across the service who knew Stu and were very fond of him.

"Stu was inspirational to so many people. The Charity was very close to his heart, he personally had used the Charity's services historically and it's something he wanted to - and has - fully supported throughout his career. So, it feels fitting that we organise an event to always remember him.

"I've been helped by the Charity myself for a previous back injury and others have used it too, for physical or mental health, so it's something we'll always have a vested interest in trying to repay in some way.

"I feel incredibly proud. There were so many people across the Service taking part, some of them having practically never seen a mountain before, all to pay tribute to Stu. Nobody moaned, everybody got their head down and completed the challenge."

Spencer now plans to organise a different event every year in memory of Stu, covering anything and everything from cycling to canoeing and more.

"The spirit and zest for life Stu demonstrated in the latter months and weeks of his life, especially his dedication to The Fire Fighters Charity, is something that he himself would like to see live on," Spencer says.

"The outpouring following Stu's death from fire and rescue services and colleagues across the country was overwhelming and showed what a popular and inspirational individual he was - far beyond just the fire service he worked for. He made his mark, genuinely cared for people and stood up for what he believed."

Stu's sister Sam completed the challenge too and says seeing so many of her brother's colleagues turn out in his memory was hugely moving.

"It was amazing, I really enjoyed it - I didn't think I'd be able to do it, and it was hard, but it was really, really good," she says. "The weather was horrific... I don't even think it was bad luck, I think our Stu thought, 'there you go!'"

"I spoke to every one of his colleagues that did it and they were all lovely and all had a story to tell about him. They didn't know me and all know each other, so I thought it would be overwhelming but it wasn't, it was really lovely.

"Myself and my mam had a conversation with our Stu a few weeks before he died and he said he didn't want any flowers, he didn't want anything - if anyone wanted to buy anything or do anything, the money had to go to The Fire Fighters Charity. He was really fond of it.

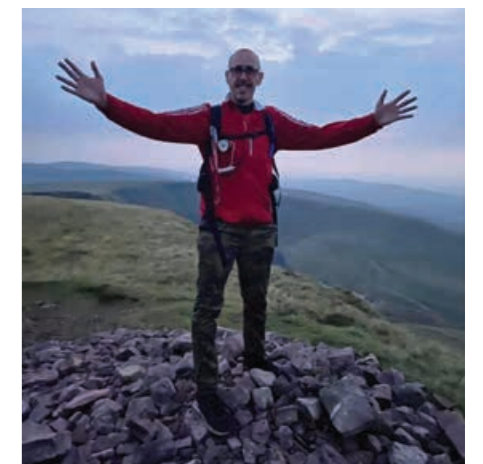
"Then all the money he'd raised the year before he said he wanted continued, so that's why Spencer's organising all this. It was really important to Stu for that to be continued.

"We've thought about the fact that the Charity's there for spouses and dependants since too. We don't need the Charity ourselves, but there are people out there who need it. Myself and my mam moved down to Worcester to care for Stu in his last few months, and we could afford to do that - but some people can't. It's not just about cancer, he was a firefighter and he has that service available and so do dependants. It's things like that you think, you do want to help the Charity so other people can benefit from it."

Stu's family also said in a statement before the event: "Stu was dedicated to raising money for The Fire Fighters Charity and specifically asked for donations to be made to this charity on his behalf, so we know he would fully support and love this event. We would like to express how honoured we are at this event being undertaken in memory of Stu."

As part of Spencer's tribute to Stu, he also commissioned an impressive sculpture of a phoenix to be made and auctioned off. It was created by ex-firefighter and blacksmith Steven Ellis Cooper.

To donate to their page, visit <http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/stu-crebbin>



**Be inspired on MyFFC**  
Meet other incredible fundraisers, discuss your next challenge, share tips and find out what others are up to via our library of content, or in any of the fundraising or events groups on MyFFC. Register today at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc)

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Bequeathed takes you through the process of making a will online in simple steps. Once you've completed an interview to draft your will, someone from a Bequeathed partner legal firm will advise you on how best to go forward in a free 30-minute appointment, in person or over the phone.

Alternatively, if you'd prefer to have a telephone consultation rather than making your will online, please call our Customer Care Team on 01256 366 566 to arrange an appointment.

**Already included a gift to us in your will?**  
Please let us know so we can thank you and keep track of how many people have pledged gifts to us. Send an email with your details to [legacies@firefighterscharity.org.uk](mailto:legacies@firefighterscharity.org.uk)

## Nigel's Story

Retired Firefighter Nigel Brown has the fire service ingrained in his family history. He explained why he is gifting part of his father's estate to the Charity, as a thank you for the years of support they've received from our Charity.



Retired firefighter Nigel Brown has seen first-hand how the Charity can help beneficiaries.

As a way of showing their gratitude, his family have pledged to gift part of his father's estate to the Charity.

Not only has he received support from the Charity's health and wellbeing experts before and throughout the pandemic, but his mother, father and daughter have all been helped over the years too.

He says: "The Charity has helped our whole family, so we wanted to give something back. I know how much a donation like this means to The Fire Fighters Charity, and what it can make possible. I plan to leave money to the Charity in my own will too."

# Living Highlights

The latest from our online and face-to-face Living Well Groups

## Catch Up With Clare



**We chat to Communities Development Lead, Clare Hannaford, about our Living Well Groups and how they've evolved over the last 18 months...**

**What are Living Well Groups?** Living Well Groups (LWGs) essentially offer a social opportunity to our retired fire services community. Face-to-face groups are hosted by volunteers and meet monthly, generally in a community fire station for a couple of hours. During this time there's plenty of tea and coffee available and we have a chat, plus there's often a guest speaker who may have come from a charity or a local community project to talk about what they're doing.

**Who can attend?** Any retired beneficiary of the Charity can come to a group, so if you worked for a FRS for five years in any capacity, or you're a partner of someone who did, you can come along. This includes widows and widowers.

**What are they for?** LWGs are a great way for our retired community to stay in touch with each other and The Fire Fighters Charity. Because we hold the meetings at community fire stations, we take

the opportunity to engage with the local fire and rescue service too and they will often give us a talk and a tour of their fire station, which our beneficiaries find really interesting, especially when we get to look round the appliance bay!

**How can someone join?** If we're starting a new face-to-face group, we will invite anyone that we think is eligible by letter, but we don't have everyone's details so we also post on social media and we ask potential participants to bring their FRS friends as well. And now, of course, you can find out more and join our LWGs group on MyFFC too. That's a great place to start.

**Why are the Groups so beneficial?** Maintaining social connections as we get older can guard against feelings of social isolation and/or loneliness. Studies have shown that regular involvement with a group, where you have a sense of belonging, has been shown to have a positive effect on

health and wellbeing, even when you have a chronic or multiple health conditions. It's an important message and I think isn't shouted loudly enough - meeting up with your mates, making new friends and staying socially engaged can be hugely beneficial for all ages, but we are more likely to lose connections as we age for many reasons, and it can feel daunting to make new ones. That's where LWGs can be helpful, it's an easy way to stay in touch and maybe a springboard to considering other possibilities.

**What key changes have been made over the last 18 months?** Groups were moved to a digital platform when the pandemic meant we temporarily wouldn't be able to meet up face-to-face. We've evolved over that period of time, so we now offer nationwide meet-ups online. We have beneficiaries who join us from France and Gozo as well as all corners of the UK. Going digital has meant that during the various lockdowns we have been able to offer health

education talks and regular mobility classes, as well as the general chat that we've done weekly for a long time now.

**What are your plans for the Groups?** I'm currently contacting FRSs to get an idea of when we might be able to go back into fire stations, this will depend on each individual FRS and as soon as we are able to operate safely we'll get going again. However, the success of the digital groups and the ability to reach people wherever they live has really inspired us to look at how we might support our retired community further and we're developing some online special interest groups that we think will appeal to our beneficiaries.

**What would you say to someone who is considering taking part?** There's no commitment to attend groups, whether they're face-to-face or digital, you can dip in and out of them, so there's really nothing to lose and potentially much to gain!



## A vital connection

**For retired firefighter Owen Spiers, overcoming the alcohol addiction he'd battled for more than 20 years was one of the hardest things he thought he'd ever have to do. But when he was later diagnosed with MS, it led to another addiction – this time to over-the-counter medication – and it sparked years of mental health struggles.**

Luckily, following his long career with Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Owen, 52, knew of the support the Charity could offer. He has subsequently been helped by several of our expert teams over the years – including our Living Well Groups – and the video consultations he's had recently have proved particularly instrumental in his recovery.

He says of the groups: "They

are very much an opportunity to connect with other fire service retirees. When I first went on, it was a cup of tea and a chat, and I got a chance to meet people – it's a community. The last year has left a lot of people feeling isolated and the groups are a great chance to re-connect. When I retired, the lockdown happened quite soon afterwards, so they definitely helped me."

You can read Owen's full story by going to: [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/owen-spiers](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/owen-spiers)



## Models for Heroes needs you!

**We are looking for participants to take part in our first special interest Living Well Group. We are delighted to be able to offer a digital, model-making group, facilitated by the amazing Models for Heroes, who support former and current Armed Forces and Emergency Service personnel within the UK and promote model making as a therapeutic, meaningful activity.**

We are looking for up to 12 participants who are part of the retired fire services

community to take part in our group, meeting one evening per month by Zoom to make models. The sessions will be guided by a Models for Heroes volunteer and will last for about one and a half hours. All levels of experience are catered for, so even if you've never tried it before you can take part and a model will be posted to you before we start the sessions.

To get involved direct message @ClareHannaford on MyFFC, email [channaford@firefightercharity.org.uk](mailto:channaford@firefightercharity.org.uk) or call 07970 107933.



## Thank you to Wimbledon Foundation

The Wimbledon Foundation has provided a massive boost to the Charity by donating £30,000 for the second year running – as part of a three-year pledge to support our Living Well Groups and the direct delivery of wellness and behaviour change coaching into fire and rescue services.

We were first introduced to the Foundation by London Fire Brigade, all thanks to its stewardship support at The Championships. Fire service personnel assist spectators with everything from finding their seat to staying hydrated. In recognition of this important role, the Foundation has supported us ever since.

**Join our LWG group on MyFFC**

Register for MyFFC today at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc) and join our LWG group to meet others and find out more about what's happening with Living Well Groups near you.

# Spruce it up

Our Christmas fundraising is back and we're once again encouraging stations, community groups, companies and individuals across the UK to get their fundraising bobble hats on this festive season.



### Fire Family Christmas

We're getting into the festive spirit early by launching our 2021 Fire Family Christmas – and we're calling on all of you to get involved. Bring some much-needed Christmas cheer to friends and family and give back to your fire services community at the same time with a Christmas fundraising event.

Whether you're looking to challenge yourself physically, get involved in your community, show off your creativity or just do something new to support the Charity, we have plenty of inspiration and hints and tips to help you to make your event a success. Here are just a few:

### Drive Through Santa Visits

Bring some Christmas joy to the little ones this festive season and invite families to a Drive Through Santa Visit. Decorate the appliance bay, get the Christmas music on and have the Crew dress up as elves, reindeers and, of course, Santa.

### Santa's Sleigh

If you've been good this year, ask Santa and his reindeers to help collect donations on his sleigh around your town or village.

### Elfie Challenge

On the 1st of December, when the Elf-on-the-Shelf returns, watch out for him causing havoc on Station. The more you raise the naughtier he becomes. Post updates on social media of Elfie's antics and share your JustGiving page to raise funds. What will your Elfie get up to?

### Virtual or face-to-face Carol Service

Call on your local choir to support with a Carol Service that can either be organised face-to-face, or be recorded in advance or streamed live in December with a JustGiving Page asking people to pay what they can.

To find more festive ideas and details on how to get started, visit [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/christmas](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/christmas)

Whatever you're up to with your festive fundraising, don't fir-get to tag us on social media or use hashtag #FireFamilyChristmas so we can follow your amazing event.



### Share festive ideas on MyFFC

Register for MyFFC today at [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc) and join our fundraising groups to meet others and share your festive fundraising ideas.

### Fire Family Santa Dash

Due to the great success of our first Fire Family Santa Dash last year, we're once again dusting off our Santa hat and reindeer onesie and asking you to join us by running, jogging, walking or dancing a distance of your choice for your Charity any time this December. You can dash around your local neighbourhood, along the beach, on a treadmill, around the drill yard, or even in your back garden.

- Adults - Entry is £13 per ticket, with the optional choice of an 'I'm feeling festively generous' - round me up to £20
- Under 16 - £5 (under 5s free)
- Pound for a Pooch - £1

Share your photos on social media using hashtag #FireFamilySantaDash and we'll be with you all the way!

To get involved in the Fire Family Santa Dash, look out for updates on our social media accounts or go to [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/christmas](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/christmas)



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100064	<b>Premium Professional Compost - 2 x 40 Litre Bags</b>	£19.98		
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