

Shout!

Official magazine of The Fire Fighters Charity

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk

Remembering Our Patron

Looking back on
Queen Elizabeth II's
69-years as Patron
of our Charity



Seven decades of support
Patron throughout her reign

Memories and moments
The Queen's fondness for the fire service

“ The school has a warm, happy and positive feel to it and it’s rewarding to be part of it ”

TRUSTED PEOPLE NEEDED TO HELP, SUPPORT AND PROTECT LOCAL SCHOOLS



Have you got the DIY skills to help?

We look for experienced friendly people with transferable skills from a variety of professional backgrounds including firefighters, police, military, engineers and teachers (with many others).

We provide vital relief caretaker and site support to schools across the UK.

No formal qualifications required, but you should have confident and capable DIY skills and a willingness to go the extra mile.

- Rewarding work supporting schools.
- Utilise transferable professional skills.
- Usually within 20 minutes of home.
- Assignments typically range 1-6 months.
- Achieve your work/life balance.
- Online training provided prior to start.
- On-site induction before each assignment.
- Reliable PAYE payment, holiday entitlement.
- Mileage (over 10m), paid lunch breaks (full days).
- Choose between flexible part-time or full-time paid assignments.

Tasks vary with each assignment and might include; security (open/lock up), deliveries and portage, 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/work



Editorial



Welcome to the Autumn/Winter issue of *Shout!*

As I write these words, I do so a matter of days before the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, our loyal Patron for the past 69 years. Her loss is felt by us all, across the UK’s fire and rescue services community and here at The Fire Fighters Charity. We have always been incredibly proud to call the Queen our Patron, grateful for the affection in which she held the fire services community and for the support she showed to us over so many years.

This sad news comes after a challenging few months and as we face fresh challenges this winter with the cost of living

situation. So, I remind you all that we remain here for you.

Our teams are committed to doing whatever we need to do this winter to ensure that you and your family can weather the cost of living storm. Our Welfare Services Lead, Carrie Pearce, has written a great article on page 20, detailing some of the ways we can support you and outlining where and how you can access further help.

As ever, we want to make sure that you have the information and tools you need to see you positively through the challenges you face, whatever they may be. So, please do pick up the phone, get in touch through MyFFC at any time, or take advantage of the great

content and courses we have available for you.

Indeed, in this issue of *Shout!* we have a special pullout poster that details many of the ways we can support you, your colleagues and family. Please take a look and feel free to pin it up on your noticeboard at your station or in your office.

Elsewhere in this issue, we celebrate 20 years of the Fire Fighters Lottery, take a closer look at our 2022/23 Winter Appeal, focus on Women’s Health, reveal our Christmas card collection and much more.

On page 10, meanwhile, you can find out more about a service that few people realise is open to them – the chance to take a break at one of our

centres if life has taken an unexpected turn. So, if you’re going through a difficult period and just need some time away, read about how we can help through a break at one of our centres.

Remember, you’re never alone. Wrap up warm this winter, stay safe and enjoy the issue.

Dr Jill Tolfrey
Chief Executive

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

Shout! about it

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

Heartbreak's summer of support

UK outdoor theatre touring company, Heartbreak Productions, kindly chose to support us through collections that took place at performances throughout its summer run of *Jane Eyre*, one of its four productions this year.

The company recreates classic shows in outdoor settings across the UK and chooses a charity to support for each of them.

This year, it spread awareness of our vital work in over 50 theatre locations – with a moving speech at the start of each performance about the difference our supporters' donations make.

Emma Hodgkinson, Director and Adapter of the production, said: "It has been an absolute honour partnering with The Fire Fighters Charity and getting to meet service men and women from up and down the country."

To see a video of the actor's powerful speech on stage, visit www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/heartbreak.



Wellbeing Hub launches

There's been some fantastic developments on MyFFC since the last issue of *Shout!* - the most exciting being the launch of our new Wellbeing Hub.

Featuring a library of free interactive online resources, tools and courses covering a broad range of health and wellbeing topics, it is exclusively available to you through MyFFC.

The Wellbeing Hub offers you three levels of information and support:

- **Bitesize**, which take a couple of minutes to read and browse through
- **Find Out More** sessions offer a bit more in depth information but can still be completed easily over a cup of tea
- And **Online Courses** where you can take part in multi-week Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) courses, covering topics in detail and providing techniques and tools to help you move forward positively.



With courses on addiction and anxiety, to dealing with trauma, menopause or debt, you can reach the Wellbeing Hub now through the Access Support section on MyFFC.

Register for MyFFC today at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc



Our Patron passes away

On 8 September, 2022, our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II passed away. Following the sad news, Chair of The Fire Fighters Charity, John Baines, and Chief Executive, Dr Jill Tolfrey, made the following statements:

"Her Majesty The Queen has been a dedicated supporter of The Fire Fighters Charity, formerly the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund, for almost her entire reign. On behalf of all Trustees who have served on the Board of our organisation over the past 69 years, I would like to pay tribute to her incredible loyalty, support and service as our Patron. We join with the country, Commonwealth and beyond to offer our sincere condolences to the Royal Family at this incredibly sorrowful time."

Chair of The Fire Fighters Charity, John Baines

"On behalf of everyone at The Fire Fighters Charity, our beneficiaries and supporters, I offer my sincere condolences to the Royal family following the death of Her Majesty, The Queen. Her Majesty's support of the Charity over seven decades has been of great comfort to so many of those we have supported and we all join with the rest of the country in mourning her loss."

Chief Executive of The Fire Fighters Charity, Dr Jill Tolfrey



Survey shows positive Wolf book impact

More than 9,200 people across our fire services community have requested a copy of *The Wolf Was Not Sleeping* so far – and that number's rising by the day.

We have been delighted to hear some of your moving responses to the book too – with more than 250 of you sharing your thoughts as part of our recent survey.

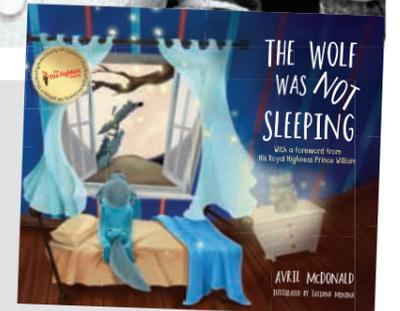
The charming children's book, by Avril McDonald, has been praised by adults and young people alike, who say it's helped open up conversations about their loved ones' work in the fire service.

One respondent said: "If only the book had been available when my family were young maybe they would not have worried about their daddy dealing with a major fire."

While another added: "A fine example of simplifying a sometimes difficult to explain subject. Thank you."

You can read more feedback at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/wolf-feedback.

We now have versions of the book available in Welsh too. You can find out more and request a copy in either English or Welsh at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/wolf.



Phone friends

This summer we launched *Fire Friends*, our new telephone befriending service, providing social support and connection to our retired beneficiaries through a regular telephone call.

Designed to provide members of our retired community with a regular friendly connection on the end of the phone, and supported by volunteer telephone befrienders – the new scheme aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

If you'd like to volunteer to be a befriender, or if you'd like to receive calls from one of our befrienders, you can find out more at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/befriender.



Why have a stairlift when you could have a real lift?



"The through floor lift fits neatly into the house and was quickly and neatly installed. It has been reliable and has enabled us to live a 'normal' home life using the first and ground floors. A stairlift would not have done so."

Mrs Goddard via Trustpilot - Jan 2021

A Stiltz Homelift will help you continue living in the home you love.

Stairlift? No Thanks

A Stiltz Homelift is an ideal and affordable alternative to a stairlift. You can now safely travel between the floors in your home while keeping your stairs the way they have always been.

Neat & Discreet

A Stiltz Homelift can be installed into almost any room in your home. A Stiltz is uniquely compact with the smallest model taking up just over half a square metre – now that IS discreet. The homelift plugs directly into a standard domestic socket and uses less power than boiling a kettle. The homelifts run on self-supporting rails so there is no need to drill into walls and the motor is fully self-contained within the lift car. Neat.

Your Forever Home

While some Stiltz customers have an immediate need for a homelift, others are looking to future-proof their existing home for when the stairs do eventually become a challenge. Don't go through the unnecessary

expense and emotional upheaval of moving house or the disruption of adapting your home for downstairs living. Save money instead; live comfortably and independently in the home you love for as long as you want, with a Stiltz Homelift.

"We've had our lift for 2 years and were so impressed with how it was fitted from our hallway to our landing in what at first appeared to be an impossible space. And in such a short time."

Mr. Eames

Peace Of Mind

Stiltz are proud to be rated 'Excellent' by their customers on Trustpilot. They use their own teams of expert installers, so you can choose a Stiltz Homelift with complete peace of mind, knowing you and your home are in a safe pair of hands.

"Excellent product installed by polite and very competent tradesmen. Fits perfectly into my home. Made a huge difference to my ability to live independently"

Mark via Trustpilot

Free, No Obligation Survey

A Stiltz Homelifts Consultant can visit your property to help you plan the best location for your homelift.

They can also answer any questions you might have, as can any of the friendly, UK-based phone team.

So, why not give your lifestyle a lift with Stiltz. Call FREE today.



The UK's No.1 Homelift

- Speedy service
- Cost-effective
- Small footprint
- Freestanding design - no wall needed
- Wheelchair model available
- Manufactured, installed and fully guaranteed by Stiltz
- 3-floor travel available



For a FREE brochure or no obligation survey
Call FREE on 0808 258 3846
or visit www.stiltz.co.uk

Shout+

Retire, renew, refresh, review and rewind

FLASH BACK

A photographic flashback to a moment in time, supplied by our retired fire services community. This issue's contributions come from Maurice Salter, Joel Gray and Alastair Martin.

Step by step

Maurice Salter, former firefighter at Romford Fire Station, sent us this photo of him carrying his colleague, John Hinton, and winning the Essex Pump Escape competition at Dagenham Fire Station in 1963.

Maurice, who retired in 1984, has fond memories of this time and recalls; "John and I would run up to the third floor where he would jump on my shoulders, and we would complete this in under 30 seconds to the ground."



All hands to the pump

Thanks to Joel Gray, retired Chief Fire Officer of the Defence Fire and Rescue Service, who sent us this photo from 1969 of his father Dennis (far right) and uncle, Harry Gatley (third from right) breaking a record by operating a 120-year old manual pump for 51 hours in Corsham.

The team pumped an impressive 500,000 gallons of water and raised £300 for us.



Fundraising trip of a lifetime

In 1989, Alastair Martin, our Secretary Treasurer (centre) and firefighters Peter Brotherstone (right) and Danny Campbell (left) visited every fire brigade across mainland UK to raise money and awareness for us.

After a year of planning, the trio set off

in a special fire engine on 27 April 1990 from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters. Over three weeks they stayed overnight at the stations they visited and logged mileage at each location.

By the end of the journey, the team had travelled 3,444 miles and raised a phenomenal £25,056 for us.



Find your Crew

Want to find your old crew mates, watch members or former colleagues? Join MyFFC today and search for those you've lost touch with.

Join the MyFFC Living Well Group for retired and former personnel, including operational, control and admin, to share stories and memories, chat, connect, and make lasting friendships.

And this Group isn't just for our older community either. Whether you served five years or forty years, MyFFC is a great place to reconnect with friends and colleagues.



We've all got special photos from times gone by, perhaps of past colleagues, events, awards, occasions, or celebrations. If you'd like to share yours with our fire services community, you can do so by emailing it to shout@firefighterscharity.org.uk. Be sure to include a brief description, outlining why the photo means so much to you, and it could be featured in a future issue.



Remembering Our Patron, Queen Elizabeth II

Having been our Patron for 69 years, we look back on the loyal support she gave to us and to the fire services community throughout her long reign.

Queen Elizabeth II became Patron of The Fire Fighters Charity – then known as the Fire Service National Benevolent Fund (FSNBF) – in 1953, the same year as her coronation.

Over the following seven decades she retained great affection for our “outstanding charity,” as she described us in a letter for our Diamond Jubilee year in 2002, and loyally supported us as one of the charities to which she had chosen to become patron.

Her Majesty regularly wrote to the Chair of our Board of Trustees ahead of our Annual General Meetings, attended our Golden Jubilee Celebration in 1993 and would often ask recipients how the Charity was doing when awarding honours to deserving members of the fire services community.

In the weeks that followed her death, many of our beneficiaries, supporters and employees, past and present, have reflected on their memories and of time they shared with our much-loved Patron.

‘A great honour’

Chief Executive, Dr Jill Tolfrey

We have been truly honoured that Queen Elizabeth II chose to be our Patron, for 69 years of her 70-year reign.

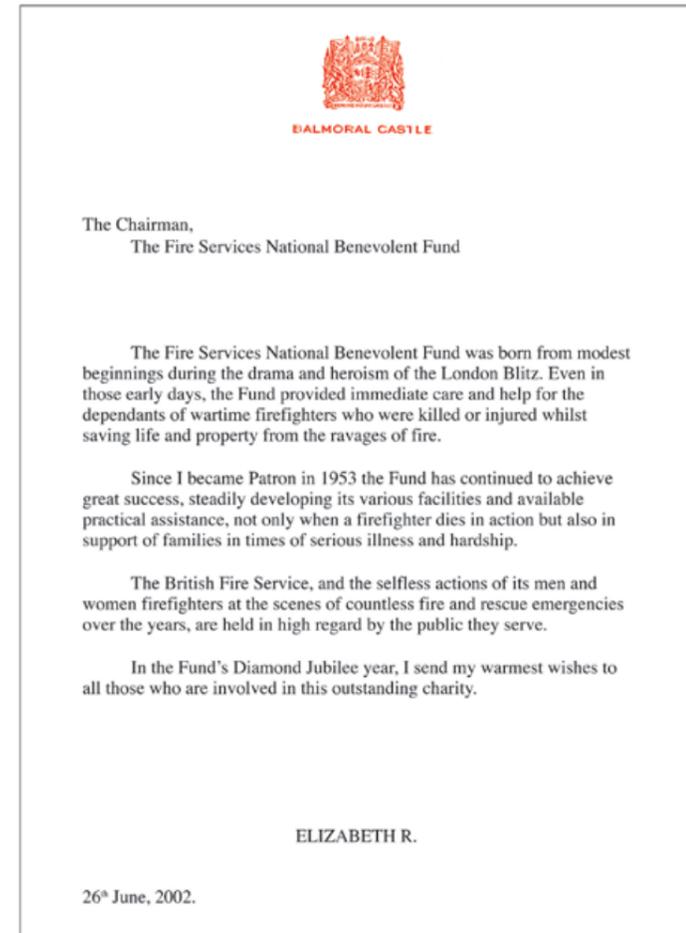
As the embodiment of public service, Her Majesty’s ongoing recognition of the work of our Charity and high regard for the UK Fire and Rescue Service brought status to our Charity and the beneficiaries we serve.

Each year Her Majesty sent her official royal greetings to mark our Annual General Meeting, and regularly asked about us when meeting recipients of national awards. In 2002 Her Majesty wrote to the Chair of the then Fire Services National Benevolent Fund;

“The British Fire Service, and the selfless actions of its men and women firefighters at the scenes of countless fire and rescue emergencies over the years, are held in high regard by the public they serve’ adding, ‘I send my warmest wishes to all those who are involved in this outstanding charity.’

Today, as we mourn the loss of our Patron, we also celebrate the legacy of her support for our Charity, we give thanks for the honour bestowed upon us and the very positive impact Her Majesty’s patronage made to those serving in the UK’s fire and rescue services.

The Queen's words...



A golden celebration

Queen Elizabeth II attended our Golden Jubilee reception at London’s Guildhall on 10 June 1993, where she met members of the UK’s fire services, beneficiaries, supporters volunteers and employees of the Charity.

She had marked her own Ruby Jubilee a year earlier and was halfway through her 40th year as our Patron.

Ian Adam, who was our Chairman at the time and former Fire Master (CFO) for Central Scotland, accompanied the Queen for over an hour as she met several beneficiaries, as well as fire and rescue service personnel from across the UK. Recalling the day, he talked of a spontaneous moment that led to laughter and a memorable photograph:

“There was a buffet ready in each room for after the Queen left, but what happened was, after the Queen and I walked from the library into a little corridor to go to the next room, the PA system announced that the buffet was open – it had not been switched off in the hallway, so she heard it.

“The Queen turned and put her hand up, and her words were something like, ‘Mr Adam will be knocked over in the rush!’

“That one mistake gave us a really spontaneous reaction from her and the photo is fantastic.”

Eleven-year-old Richard Aldridge, meanwhile, also remembers his conversation with the Queen with fondness: “I was one of the ones picked to stand in line as she walked down and spoke to people and someone had mentioned to me that it was Prince Philip’s birthday.

“Immediately, I wished him Happy Birthday when I spoke to her! She replied something like, ‘I’ll be seeing him this evening, I’ll mention that to him’.”



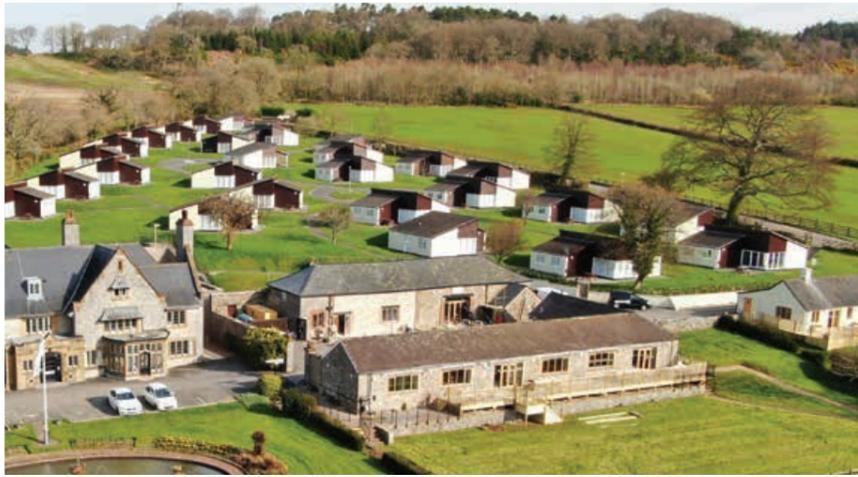
Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Earlier this summer we marked The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee with the planting of trees at each of our centres as part of her Green Canopy initiative to celebrate her 70-year reign. We also unveiled new Echo Benches alongside the trees, to support beneficiaries’ psychological wellbeing.

Coming together with representatives from local fire and rescue services, as well as beneficiaries, employees and supporters, the occasions were joyful, with cake, bunting and Union Jacks aplenty.

Needing a time-out?

We are developing the support we offer to anyone who may need some time out from the challenges of day-to-day life – no matter their age or stage in life – a break away and a chance to rest and recharge.



We know the huge pressures members of our fire services community face every day.

Perhaps you're a firefighter or a member of support staff dealing with difficult shouts? Or you're a family member of someone working in the service and you can see the impact it's having on your loved one? Or maybe you're facing a difficult time in your life due to unforeseen circumstances and feel in need of a break, whether working or retired?

We're developing the support we provide at our centres to offer anyone in need of some time out, whether on their own or with their family members, a chance to recharge.

It's difficult to know when you may be in need of a break, but recognising that need early on is so important – and a stay at Harcombe House, our centre in Devon, could prove

incredibly beneficial to you and those close to you.

These stays provide you with the space and opportunity to unwind, relax and reflect on your wellbeing and yourself. Our tranquil and peaceful surroundings provide the perfect setting for recovery, building resilience and finding those initial steps to help you move forward.

From the Autumn, for those in need of a break to rest and recharge, we will be offering a range of different activities designed to support your wellbeing. These activities, which will be offered at Harcombe House, will be optional as we recognise that for some, a period of complete rest is what's needed.

For others, however, there will be the opportunity to combine that rest with low level activities such as Tai Chi and gentle

walks - or perhaps engagement in a social activity such as a quiz, allowing you the opportunity to meet up with other members of the fire family. How many you take part in, if any, is completely up to you.

With that in mind, we'd love to know what activities you'd like to see? What would help you relax and take some time out? Let us know by emailing WelfareServices@firefighterscharity.org.uk.

We wouldn't be able to offer vital services like this without your donations, so thank you to all of you who regularly donate to us.

Please note, we also offer these breaks to rest and recharge at Jubilee House and Marine Court, without the scheduled activities.

Find out more by calling our Support Line on **0800 3898820** or through Access Support on MyFFC.

"It is a magical place, where you can just go off by yourself and reflect"

Former London Fire Brigade Inclusion Manager, Shilla Patel, visited Harcombe House during a difficult time with her mental health, and she says it proved the time-out she desperately needed.

Away from the hustle and bustle of London life, Shilla found the peace and serenity of our Devon residential centre a welcome relief. On the break, she was invited to take part in some of the activities open to beneficiaries, but also to take whatever time she needed to enjoy her own company.

"It is a magical place, where you can just go off by yourself and reflect," she says. "I'd sit outside my peaceful bungalow and listen to the birds, writing in my journal and coming up with goals for the year.

"I knew I needed to do something, to take time off to drop off the side of the world and disappear for a while, which I could do there without apology. I'd never put myself first in that way before."



Shout!



Donate your unwanted clothes

Thanks to your clothing donations our recycling scheme has raised over £5m for our Charity since it began in 2009.

Please use our online map to find your nearest donation point
www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/recycle



Winter Wonders

For almost 80 years, you've supported us through good times and bad. This winter, as we all face the harsh reality of the cost of living situation, we're asking you to do something wonderful by giving what you can to help members of our fire family struggling with their mental health.

Like all families, the UK's fire family sticks together, there for each other through life's ups and downs, never failing to pull together when times are tough. As we enter our 80th year in 2023, we'd like to thank you for being there for us, helping us to ensure that we can continue to provide that shoulder for you to lean on if and when you need it.

This winter, we know that times are tough. The cost of living crisis has meant that there's more demand than ever on every pound in your pocket. However, we'd like to ask you to do something wonderful this winter and to give what you can, when you can, to help those members of our fire family struggling with their mental health.

Just as you have been doing since 1943, we need your support today, so that we can do what we do tomorrow.

With a host of new online and face-to-face services for fire and rescue service employees, families and the retired community, we're doing more for more people across our community – and there's so much more we want to do too.

Please, if you can, set up a regular donation to us now at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/donate or by scanning the QR code below, and make a real difference to the lives of people like Billy, Shelley, Stuart, Penny, Jaspreet and Russell.

Thank you.



Billy:
"I found the courage to say 'I need help.'"

For Billy Lewis, day-to-day life just a couple of years ago was a struggle. He found it difficult to meet new people or even speak confidently with a stranger over the phone.

Now, however, he says finding the courage to ask for help has changed his life – and that's all thanks to your ongoing donations.

Billy, 25, is an on-call firefighter with Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service. He began struggling with his mental health a couple of years ago, but he fortunately knew he needed to seek help before he went further downhill and called us.

"I chatted to a psychological therapist over the phone and was also offered an opportunity to join the Reset Programme at Harcombe House," says Billy.

"The programme, in all honesty, changed my life. It really did. It highlighted things that you know are important, like your diet, your health, your sleep, but you don't really understand how important."

He adds: "I found the courage to say, 'actually, I need help'. It's massively the hardest thing you'll have to do, especially in a working environment. But as soon as I got in touch it was just brilliant."

Shelley:
"No-one had a clue I was in a bad place."

Shelley Robinson, 37, a firefighter with London Fire Brigade, first reached out for support from us around six years ago, when her mental health took a downturn during a difficult time at home.

"There was a lot going on in my personal life," she explained. "I was having night terrors four, five, six a night, so I wasn't sleeping. I wasn't going out of the house and was ordering takeaways where I could."

"I internalised it all and withdrew. My Watch didn't have a clue I was in a bad place, because I put up this front."

"I think we forget a lot in the fire service. If things in your personal life aren't going right then the trauma you face at work will impact you so much more."

Shelley luckily reached out for our support when it began to really impact her a residential stay, where she met others in a similar position and was offered support.

"Because I'd become more open with others, I saw how other people were able to feel comfortable opening up, and that made me feel better – knowing I wasn't alone," she says.

Shelley also recently got in touch with us for a second time, as she had been living for months with long-term symptoms of Covid-19, which was, in turn, impacting her mental wellbeing.

"I was invited onto the Covid Recovery Programme. It was really nice to be around people that understood," says Shelley. "The Programme was really good because it showed you what you should be doing to look after yourself."



Stuart and Penny:
"We spent so long needing a bit of help."

Stuart and Penny Jackson spent years turning down offers of support, always believing there was someone more deserving than them. But when they finally accepted a helping hand, they said it's exactly what their family needed.

Stuart, a firefighter with London Fire Brigade, began struggling with his mental health in the middle of the pandemic, after undergoing heart surgery which led to time off work.

"I'd realised that I was really struggling, mentally, with getting back to fitness and trusting my body again," said Stuart. "The Charity offered me some digital counselling which was really good."

Stuart's wife, Penny, was sadly diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma around the same time and, realising they needed a break from the stress of hospital visits, the couple joined us on one of our Child and Family Weeks in 2021 with two of their five children.

Stuart said of the opportunity: "We probably spent the last eight years needing a bit of help and spent the last seven and a half years saying no, because I've always thought there's someone else more in need. But it's okay to say yes."

And Penny shared how it was also very helpful for their daughters at the time: "They both worry when Stu goes to work, being a firefighter, and I think being here and seeing other children and mixing more, I think they're going to go home feeling a lot more confident."

Jaspreet:
"I was the most depressive person to be around."

Jaspreet Kaur, 39, a former Business and Project Support Officer with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, attended one of our Reset Programmes at the start of this year after a sudden illness threw her daily life upside down.

"One of my heart valves just decided to collapse one day without warning," Jaspreet explained. "I've never had my life suddenly stop like that before."

"The main issue for me was suddenly having no routine. My anxiety really crept up during that time and being off work for four months didn't help that. I was the most depressive person to be around at the time, I just felt helpless."

Jaspreet's boss recommended she get in touch with us, and she initially attended our online Hope Programme.

"The Programme really kept me going," said Jaspreet. And having found it beneficial, she was later offered a space on our Reset Programme at Harcombe House.

"Overall it was an amazing experience and for me it was perfect timing. It just got me back on track to align myself," Jaspreet reflected.



Russell:
"I'd be in a much worse place if I hadn't asked for help."

Retired LFB firefighter Russell Webb, 55, has been supported by us for several years, initially after an accident at work, but later when his wife, Sharon, was diagnosed with breast cancer.

They were initially offered a rehabilitation stay at Marine Court together, before they and their children were invited to Harcombe House for some time away to rest and recharge.

"This was the last time that we were all together as a family," says Russell. "Harcombe House will now always be incredibly special to me, I'll hold it close to my heart, always. There's a lot of very happy memories there."

Sharon sadly passed away in 2018, at the age of 50, and Russell remained in touch with us – later receiving digital counselling sessions.

"If it wasn't for the Charity, I'd be in a much worse place now," says Russell. "My main message now is: it's okay not to be okay. There is help out there, I've seen and experienced it. There's the old stigma of 'man up' and everything, but there's so many men struggling with mental health issues and they need to know there's help around. Reach out, talk to people, it's so, so helpful to talk."

If you're struggling with your health and wellbeing, call our Support Line on 0800 389 8820 or register for MyFFC at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc and visit the 'Access Support' tab. You can also join our 'Share Your Story' Group in MyFFC, by clicking on the 'Groups' tab.





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Milestone moments

After a challenging few years in the wake of Covid-19, Chief Executive, Dr Jill Tolfrey, reflects on the positive progress we've made and some of the challenges that still lie ahead.

While recent years have presented a huge challenge for us all, I am delighted to say that there has been much to celebrate and be thankful for. By the time you read these words it's likely, for instance, that we will have passed a significant milestone, delivering 10,000 digital consultations since April 2020.

A shining example of our long-standing commitment to using digital technology to reach more people, this also illustrates how our innovative approach to supporting you through the pandemic helped us to accelerate the speed at which we could bring such great new services to you, your colleagues and families.

This landmark, together with the introduction of other digital services such as MyFFC, online Living Well Groups and an evolving library of great multimedia content, has meant that we are now able to meet with you and provide you with the information you need, whenever is convenient to you and in whatever format works best for you.

In turn, this has also allowed us to focus our centre-based activities on delivering support to those with a specific need, such as with our new Covid Recovery Programme. While, elsewhere, it has been fantastic to work with fire and rescue services directly with the delivery of wellbeing programmes and to expand our

community-based activities, such as our successful Living Well Groups and new Telephone Befriending Service.

Over our almost 80-year history, we have always adapted and changed what we do to meet the needs of our community at the time. Just this year alone, we have seen the impact that Covid-19 continues to have and in more recent months have witnessed the pressures faced by Services across the UK with the summer's unprecedented wildfires. For individuals, meanwhile, the cost of living crisis is adding a considerable burden to our daily lives.

As your Charity, our role through all these circumstances is to ensure that we can help you in any way we can. Our teams are therefore working in an agile way, always adapting what we do to ensure that we can help you through these challenging times. So, if you are finding things hard at the moment, please do call us.

Here for you and your family, for life, we are working hard to make sure your children get the support they need, while also looking at how we can positively support your transition into retirement, what needs to be in place to support people through their careers and what you actually need from us. We are also looking at how we evaluate our services – do they do what we think they do? What's their impact? Are they the right thing?

We want to reach more of you, to provide more support that is truly shaped around you, support that changes as your needs change and is there when you need it. We want a lifetime of connection with you, and for you to see us as that third space – home – work – Charity – there when you need us to help you find what you need when you need it.

We exist to support the health and wellbeing needs of you all, as part of an amazing community, and we will always seek to do our best for you.



With you all the way

We're always working to actively support and empower our fire family to live healthier and happier - and this is an overview of the ways we're here for you...

Covid Recovery Programme

Our Covid Recovery Programme is dedicated to anyone living with ongoing and long-term symptoms of Covid-19.

Available at all three of our centres, the programme combines online sessions with a five-day residential stay, which is tailored to your individual needs.

It includes a range of educational and activity-based sessions including, but not limited to: breathing techniques, fatigue management, coping strategies and exercise-based sessions.

Find out more:

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/covid-support



Living Well Groups and Befriending

Our volunteer-led Living Well Groups offer our retired community the opportunity to meet with like-minded others, either virtually or face-to-face, to socialise and share common interests.

The groups meet regularly and guest speakers are often invited, sharing a wealth of information from health and wellbeing advice to special interest groups.

Find out more at

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/lwlg



We also offer a telephone befriending service to our older community providing social support and connection for our retired beneficiaries through a regular telephone call from a friendly volunteer.

Find out more at

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/befriender



Welfare support and financial support

From helping during times of financial hardship, to support with home adaptations to help you to live independently in your own home, our Welfare Services team is here to support you during difficult times.

Our team can offer advice, information, and support on a wide range of issues including:

- Financial hardship
- Social care support
- Independent living
- Ill health or bereavement

Find out more at

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/social-wellbeing



Digital physiotherapy

Our Physiotherapists and Exercise Therapists provide 1:1 digital support for individuals who may need help following an injury or illness.

Using our video consultation platform, we will work with you to understand your needs and how we can support you. We will then develop a personalised rehabilitation programme, which can also be accessed via an app.

Find out more at

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/digital-physio



Family support

We offer a number of support pathways for the whole family...

Our Child and Family Weeks offer families with children with additional needs, young carers or those living with difficult health conditions the opportunity to spend time together in a supportive environment and meet other families in similar situations.

And we are also now offering a free children's book to fire families, *The Wolf Was Not Sleeping*, which is designed to help you share the pride you feel in your job and to help you talk about it with the young people in your life.

Find out more at

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/family-hub



Take the time out you need

We offer breaks to rest and recharge at all three of our centres.

Perhaps you're a firefighter or a member of support staff dealing with difficult shouts? Or a family member of someone working in the service and you can see the impact it's having on your loved one? Or maybe you're facing a difficult time in your life due to unforeseen circumstances and feel in need of a break, whether working or retired? A stay at one of our three centres could prove incredibly beneficial to you and those close to you. Giving you the time and space to unwind, relax and reflect on your wellbeing and yourself.

For further information email

recuperation@firefighterscharity.org.uk



My Fire Fighters Charity (MyFFC) and our Wellbeing Hub

Have you joined our health, wellbeing, and social space for the UK's fire services community yet?

My Fire Fighters Charity (MyFFC) is an online space for you to come together and engage with others in our fire family. It offers you a wealth of exclusive health and wellbeing content, dedicated groups for you to join and chat to like-minded others, and the opportunity to access support.

It also now has a fantastic new library of interactive health and wellbeing courses, resources and tools in a dedicated Wellbeing Hub. With three levels of information and support, including self-directed courses, our Hub covers topics on everything from alcohol and anxiety to menopause and debt.

Register now at

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc.

You can access the Wellbeing Hub by clicking on the Access Support or Library tabs.



Digital counselling and Hope Programme

Our psychological therapists provide short-term 1:1 counselling support via telephone and video.

We aim to help you with a wide range of issues, including stress, anxiety, depression and stabilisation of trauma symptoms.

Find out more at

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/how-we-can-help/mental-health



We also offer regular Hope Programmes, which are six-week online self-management courses run in partnership with Hope for the Community.

These cover topics like managing stress, setting goals and boundaries, gratitude, personal strengths, eating well and improving sleep. The programmes can be taken at entirely your own pace.

Find out more at

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/hope



Residential rehabilitation and nursing support

Our five-day physical rehabilitation programme is designed to meet the needs of those with a range of injuries or illnesses.

Our team of physiotherapists, exercise therapists and psychological therapists deliver everything from gym and pool sessions to outdoor activities and educational workshops, all tailored to individual need.

We also have a team of registered nurses who can provide 24-hour support at Jubilee House for those who may have a long-term or degenerative condition, or who may have suffered a traumatic injury or stroke. Carers can also attend.

Find out more at

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/physical-health



A SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

Throughout October we will be focusing on women's health, with the aim of offering support to female fire and rescue service personnel, as well as family members in our fire service community.

While women in the UK on average live longer than men – research has shown that they spend a significantly greater time in ill health and disability. Therefore, being able to make healthier choices - and being better informed - could greatly help women to live healthier, longer lives, personally and professionally across the fire service.

With that in mind, we have focused this October's Women's Health Awareness Programme on four key areas:

Week 1: Menopause
Week 2: Female cancers
Week 3: Ageing healthily
Week 4: Osteoporosis

We'll be sharing exclusive articles, videos and more in MyFFC throughout October. Here's what you can expect:

MENOPAUSE

Approximately 13 million women in the UK are either peri-menopausal or menopausal, with one in four experiencing severe debilitating symptoms. In fact, a third of



women suffer with anxiety - yet around two thirds say there is a general lack of support and understanding.

It isn't just women who are affected either; partners, friends and colleagues of menopausal women often struggle to understand what is happening to them too.

Many women also have issues with sleep, night sweats and insomnia and we'll be focusing on all of these symptoms, sharing advice on coping with them and posting tips on how to support a loved one, family member, friend or colleague on MyFFC.

AGEING HEALTHILY

As we age it's not uncommon for many of us to develop long-term conditions which need to be managed through drugs or specialist treatments. However, maintaining good health, being physically active, eating healthier and raising awareness of risk factors for long-term conditions can all help us to avoid or manage these conditions and to live healthier.

In October we'll therefore take a closer look on MyFFC at what lifestyle changes we can all make in order to avoid or manage longer term conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, and cardiovascular disease.

We'll also look at the transition into retirement and, subsequently, ageing – and ways of helping us to stay healthy throughout.

OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis is a health condition which weakens bones, making them more fragile and more likely to break. It affects over three million people in the UK, but women are more at risk as they lose bone mass rapidly in the first few years after the menopause.

If you are at risk of developing osteoporosis, taking steps to help keep your bones healthier is key. This includes regular exercise, eating healthier, taking a daily supplement of Vitamin D (with medical advice) and making lifestyle changes such as giving up smoking and reducing your alcohol intake.

We'll tell you much more and share some top tips on MyFFC later in October to get you started.

FEMALE CANCERS

Over the course of a dedicated week in October, we'll take a closer look at cancers that commonly affect women, including ovarian cancer and uterine cancer. We'll also discuss the psychological impact of cancer and offer advice on how to cope with the fear associated with the disease.

On the following page, in line with our focussed week, we take a look at ovarian and uterine cancer.

FEMALE CANCERS: RISK FACTORS AND SYMPTOMS



OVARIAN CANCER

Around 7,500 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer in the UK each year, making it the sixth most common cancer in women.

Risk factors:

There are some factors that can increase your chance of developing ovarian cancer. However, having one or more of these doesn't necessarily mean you will develop it:

- **Age:** the risk of getting ovarian cancer rises from around 45 years - with more than half of cases in the UK in those aged 65 and over.
- **Family history:** if you are worried about a family member having had it, speak with your GP.
- **Previous cancer:** you may have an increased risk if you've had breast cancer before.
- **HRT:** using HRT after the menopause can increase your risk. However, this risk is small and for many, HRT is helpful to manage menopausal symptoms.
- **Smoking:** the longer you have smoked, the greater the risk.
- **Some medical conditions:** women with endometriosis or diabetes may have an increased risk.
- **Being overweight or obese:** excess body fat is also dangerous when it comes to cancer risk.

Symptoms:

If you have any of the following symptoms 12 or more times a month, it is recommended you should speak to your GP who should, in turn, arrange tests – especially if you are over 50:

- Swollen tummy or bloating
- Feeling full quickly or loss of appetite
- Pain in your tummy
- Needing to pee more often or urgently.

These symptoms are all common and can be signs of much less serious conditions – so having them doesn't mean you have cancer - but it's always best to speak to your GP to be sure.

UTERINE CANCER

Also referred to as womb cancer, uterine cancer affects around 9,700 women in the UK each year.

Risk factors:

The cause of womb cancer is not clear, but there are some factors that can increase your risk of developing it:

- **Age:** almost three quarters of cases in women are in those aged 40-74.
- **Being overweight:** around a third of womb cancers are linked to being overweight – yet this is also the most preventable factor.
- **Increased oestrogen levels:** oestrogen causes the cells in the womb to grow and

divide – and cancer often develops where there's a mistake with this process. By having more cells, you're increasing that risk of mistakes.

- **Thickened womb lining (or Endometrial Hyperplasia):** this is a non-cancerous condition where the lining of the womb becomes thicker. You're at higher risk of developing womb cancer if you have this thickening, especially if the extra lining cells are abnormal.
- **Family history:** research suggests that daughters of women with womb cancer have double the risk of developing it.

Symptoms:

Around nine out of 10 womb cancers are picked up because of post-menopausal or irregular vaginal bleeding. These symptoms are worth looking out for:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding (especially post-menopausal)
- Change to vaginal discharge
- Bleeding between periods
- Pain during sex
- Blood in urine

These symptoms can be caused by many different conditions. Having them does not necessarily mean you have womb cancer, but you should get checked out by your GP all the same.

If you haven't already, register for MyFFC now to keep up with all our Women's Health updates throughout October. Join the community now at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc.



ARE YOU FEELING THE PINCH?

With price hikes on everything from bills to fuel and food, our Welfare Services Lead, Carrie Pearce, has shared a few ideas to help ease the financial burden, as well as details of how we might be able to support you.



The cost of living crisis has been headline news for months now, with energy and food costs seemingly rising on a weekly basis. Managing family budgets and lifestyles to offset these increasing costs has forced many to make difficult choices, while the prospect of further price increases in the future is understandably causing heightened anxiety.

For those living on benefits and low incomes, these tough times could also have a significant impact on their overall quality of life. However, there are steps that you can take to access financial support and minimise the impact of the cost of living crisis on your quality of life.

BENEFITS & GRANTS HELP:

- Check if your child is eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium. If you're on a means-tested benefit (like Universal Credit) and have a low income, it's worth checking: www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals

- Attendance Allowance and Personal Independence Payments are non-means tested and help with extra costs for those with disabilities severe enough to require assistance in being cared for: www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance and www.gov.uk/pip
- Over 800,000 people are eligible for a top-up of their state pension. Pension credit is a tax-free, means-tested benefit aimed at retired people on low incomes. Plus, it's a gateway benefit that gives eligibility for council tax discounts, free TV licences for over-75s and more: www.gov.uk/pension-credit
- Choosing between heating and eating? Speak to your local authority about claiming some help from the Household Support Fund. The Fund aims to prioritise money to meet essential costs - you needn't be on benefits: www.gov.uk/find-local-council
- Try your local foodbank. Foodbanks give out free

parcels that should provide at least three days' worth of in-date, non-perishable food. www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank

DID YOU KNOW?

- 16 million people are out of contract on broadband and mobile bills - and could potentially halve their bills. Check out broadband comparison and cheap SIM comparison sites.
- If you have more or the same number of bedrooms as there are people in your household, you might be better off with a water meter. The Consumer Council for Water has a free online calculator that will tell you if you can save water with a meter: www.ccwater.org.uk/watermetercalculator/
- Do you have magazine subscriptions, gym

memberships, Pay-TV or anything else you're not really using? Take a closer look and cancel any unwanted direct debits.

- Be energy savvy! Get into the habit of unplugging or switching off your electronics when they are not in use.

HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

If you are struggling to make ends meet or find yourself in a situation of financial hardship, our Welfare team is here to help. The team can help with benefits advice, debt management, financial hardship and can help you to access the support available in your local community.

Call our Support Line on **0800 389 8820** or register for MyFFC at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc and visit the 'Access Support' tab.



Try our online courses

Visit our new Wellbeing Hub in MyFFC to access a range of bitesize and longer courses focusing on everything from healthy eating and stress to debt management.

Simply click on the 'Access Support' tab to find our Wellbeing Hub.



WHY REACHING OUT FOR HELP IS A STRENGTH

It can seem like the most daunting thing in the world, but asking for help when you need it really is a strength. Here our Psychological Services Lead, Jane Rosso, explains why...

WHAT IS STRENGTH?

Is it carrying on regardless of how you're feeling, or is it reaching out for help when you're beginning to feel out of sorts?

The answer is not always simple.

How we feel about reaching out for help with our mental health is influenced by many factors. These can include, but are certainly not limited to:

- our culture
- our attitudes and beliefs towards mental health
- identification with gender stereotypes
- our parental/care givers' influences
- concerns about being judged
- a belief that others have more pressing needs.

Any one of these factors can trigger difficult feelings, such as fear and shame, so it can take a lot of strength to reach out and ask for help when you need it - particularly when it comes to your mental health.

But why does it take more strength for us to ask for help with our mental health, than with our physical health?

We can often see a physical injury and we experience

physical pain, which in turn drives us to seek help from medical professionals. Emotional pain can be more complex, but just because we cannot see it, it doesn't mean we aren't injured or that it should be endured.

To cope with emotional pain we can sometimes isolate ourselves, as we may feel unable to ask for help, worry that others may not understand or may not wish to burden our loved ones with our difficult thoughts and feelings.



"Reach out early for help. Things can get in the way, but it's important to take that time."

Ali Moore, 29, on-call firefighter, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

This lack of personal connection can weaken our resolve and our ability to re-connect and ask for support. Just as you build muscle strength to recover from an injury, you can build your emotional strength by talking to and connecting with others. This may be a friend, a trusted colleague, a family member or one of our team here at The Fire Fighters Charity.

As with all recovery, healing takes time and you may experience setbacks along the way. But, remember, we're here beside you.

HOW WE CAN HELP

We understand the challenges in taking that first step, but you can reach out to us and find support with your mental health in various ways.

If talking is too difficult initially, you may choose to make a web enquiry. Visit our 'Access Support' tab in MyFFC, join one of our Hope Programmes or take any of the free online courses available through our Wellbeing Hub.

If you would prefer to speak to someone, please call our Support Line on **0800 3898820** and we can discuss how we may be able to support you.



"If you need help, to ask for it is not a sign of weakness - it's actually a sign of great strength."

Jeff Cross, 43, Watch Manager, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service



"You might think you don't deserve the help - but I'd encourage anyone to make that call. You do deserve it."

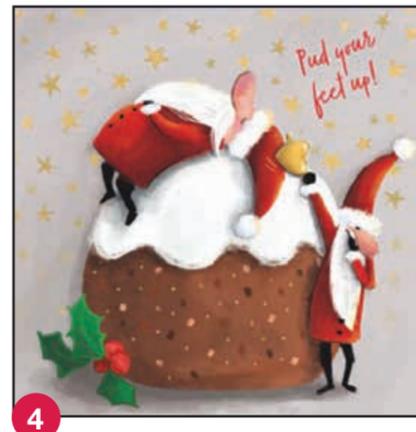
Amy Martin, 36, firefighter, London Fire Brigade

Pick a card

You can support us this festive season with our wonderful selection of Christmas cards.

New for 2022

1. Christmas convoy - designed exclusively for us by Paige Anderson
 2. Firefighters Christmas Greetings
 3. Wishes from Me & Him
 4. Pud Your Feet up
- 10 cards per pack £5.00 incl. P&P



Festive Favourites

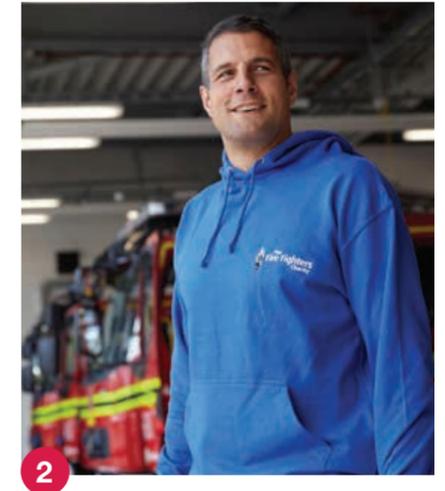
5. Fire Fighters with Tree - 10 cards per pack £5.00 incl. P&P
6. You Know Christmas is Coming When...Pt1 or Pt 2 - Now only £3.00



Winter Warmers

Looking for a new fleece or hoodie to keep you cosy this winter? We have a great range of products to get you through the cold snap, and a Blaze Bear to cuddle too!

1. Navy Fleece Hat £8.00
2. FFC Hoodies – Red, Blue + Plum £24.00
3. FFC Navy Fleece £33.50
4. Travel Mug – Black £6.95
5. Travel Mug – Silver £5.95
6. FFC Mug – Red or Black £5.00
7. Acrylic NeeNaw Mug – Blue or Red £4.00
8. Blaze Bear - Blue or Gold - £9.50



Visit our new and improved online shop to purchase all these products, and much more!
www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/shop

Follow us on the 'Merchandise Offers and Updates' group on MyFFC for the latest news and product releases. 100% of profits from the shop goes to our Charity, helping to fund vital health and wellbeing services for the UK fire services community.

Funder Woman

Nikki Haxton-Jones has raised more than £7,500 for us over the last five years, after dedicating her time to honouring her late husband, Danny, who passed away suddenly while at work.

Think of a fundraising challenge – whether it's running, abseiling, bucket collections or a glamorous ball – and the chances are Nikki Haxton-Jones has organised it.

The mum-of-two, 41, has dedicated the last five years to organising events for us in memory of her husband, Danny, who passed away suddenly while at work in 2017, at the age of 37.

Danny was a firefighter with London Fire Brigade and had taken part in fundraisers throughout his career. Now Nikki, who has since begun working in Control for Kent Fire and Rescue Service herself, says she wants to continue that legacy.

"Danny passed away in July 2017," she explains. "He was on station and collapsed suddenly. It actually turned out that he had pneumonia in both of his lungs. They think it triggered an arrhythmia."

Nikki was suddenly faced not only with a future without her husband, but also the challenge of caring for her two children, Olivia, now 15, and Harry, 12, while they struggled to come to terms with their loss.

She has since made it her mission to show her children how to be positive and still achieve things in the face of difficult times.

This determination gave her the idea of planning some fundraising challenges and events in Danny's memory, to not only continue the fundraising work he had done on station, but also to provide a positive distraction for her and her kids, allowing them to have fun together and to spend quality time remembering him with his colleagues.

"Danny was a positive person so we really didn't want it to be all negative at the time," says Nikki.



"The lads on station did a ladder climb, then we did the Vitality 10K, a charity cricket match, the Great North Run – it went on from there."

In fact, Nikki has been so successful with her fundraising that she was nominated for one of our Spirit Of Fire Awards in 2020.

She has been in touch with us throughout and while she hasn't accessed our support yet, she's discussed with us the possibility of visiting one of our residential centres for a break with her children.

"It's a huge reassurance knowing we can reach out in the future, myself and the kids, particularly as a lot of bereavement charities are inundated at the moment," says Nikki.



This year alone, Nikki has helped organise a nationwide Control dress-down day event, a ball and raffle and a bucket collection at a Wrexham vs Altrincham football match – where they raised an amazing £836 in a matter of hours.

"We've done loads of little things in Kent too, a Brew With A Crew, a non-uniform day, a cake sale, things like that. It brings people together and helps the Charity out too," says Nikki.

"I know the difference our fundraising will make, it means my kids and I can turn to you for support in the future."



If you're struggling with your health and wellbeing, we may be able to help you. Call our Support Line on 0800 389 8820, make an enquiry online or visit the 'Access Support' tab in MyFFC. Register now at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc.

You can also join our 'Share Your Story' Group in MyFFC to share your own story.



Russell's greatest gift

Retired on-call firefighter Russell Davies has been supported by us with his physical and mental health – and that's all thanks to donations from our kind-hearted supporters. Now he's chosen to give back in a very generous way.

We are here for all of you in our fire services community, throughout your lives, whether you're still working or you've retired. For Russell Davies, 79, that support came years after he left his role as an on-call firefighter with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

He's since received support at our centres, as well as telephone counselling following the death of his long-term partner, Jean and, having seen just how far kind-hearted donations from you go, he's now generously chosen to leave a gift to us in his will.

"I'd been out of the service for a good few years when I first reached out for support from you," reflects Russell. "I'd had some stents put in and one of my colleagues said, 'surely the fire service will have something they can offer to help you'. That was 2008.

"You offered me a stay at Harcombe House, with my partner, in one of the bungalows for some rest and a break. It really was great."

Russell later had some physiotherapy at Jubilee House in 2011, following a knee replacement, as he was dealing with pain from sciatica at the time.

"I was in tremendous pain and they gave me a thorough going over. A few months

later I went back and they got me to such a good point that the pain had more or less gone. It was tremendous," says Russell.

While he had largely been supported with his physical health until then, he discovered how we could help him with his mental wellbeing when his partner, Jean, passed away two and a half years ago.

"I was really down at the time and I reached out to you," he explains. "I started getting a call every week from the psychological services team. It was just a chance to talk through everything and it really helped."

Russell was also offered a stay at Harcombe House, on our Reset Programme, which he thoroughly enjoyed.

"It did me so much good – it really was tremendous," he says. "It's now really helping me knowing you're there if I need you again in the future."

Having experienced our support and knowing it's all down to donations from our supporters, Russell decided he wanted to give back by leaving us a gift in his will.

"The first thing I did was state I wanted to leave a section to The Fire Fighters Charity," says Russell. "It's my way of giving back for all the support I've received over the years... I just need to win the Lottery now!"

"I've had so much support, particularly the emotional side, and you even put me in touch with an external grief counsellor. I was getting incredibly lonely at home and I've continued with them ever since.

"I just want people to know how great this Charity is – it has helped me tremendously. Believe you me. I would recommend anyone reach out, don't put it off."



Remembering us in your will leaves a lasting legacy and ensures we can be there for our fire family for future generations. Find out more at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/will.



Living Highlights

Here's the latest news for our retired fire services community.

Digital helping hand

Do you find it difficult to navigate today's increasingly digital world? Whether it's online banking, booking appointments, running a price comparison or managing your email, some of us struggle to see the wood for the trees when it comes to the internet.

So, to help out we're running some online Living Well Group sessions to help you become more skilled with navigating the digital world.

We have increasingly found that access to essential services such as banking, booking appointments and getting car or home insurance has moved online; especially as many restaurants, cinemas and entertainment venues have switched to online bookings since Covid-19.

If you're IT savvy then living a digital life can be a breeze, but we know that many of you can feel frustrated and left behind as signatures and handshakes are replaced by facial recognition and chatbots.

Technology has increased at an incredible rate in recent years, so if you're retired, we're running a number of Living Well Group sessions with volunteer and digital expert Ian Potter, who will be helping those on the calls to navigate online systems and services.



Ian will be able to guide you through some of the more challenging aspects of the online world, such as buying and selling online and potential security risks, to more everyday activities including how to use messaging services and share photos with your family and friends.

If you would like to know more about these special upcoming Living Well Group sessions, give Clare Hannaford a call on **01626 855274**, email **CHannaford@firefighterscharity.org.uk** or, if you're feeling brave enough, direct message her on MyFFC **@ClareHannaford**

You've got a friend

We offer a telephone befriending service to our older community, providing social support and connection for our retired beneficiaries through a regular telephone call from a friendly volunteer.

With our befriending service, we aim to reach more of our retired beneficiaries who might be feeling lonely, isolated or would just like to chat. If you think that you could spare 45 minutes a week to volunteer and chat to an older person, we would like to hear from you. We are looking for people who are good at listening, able to initiate topics of conversation and enjoy chatting on the telephone; we will match you with someone with similar interests. You will need to have a smartphone or tablet with internet access to log in and make the call.

If you would appreciate a call or would like to volunteer, you can message Clare Hannaford directly on MyFFC (**@ClareHannaford**), send an email to **channaford@firefighterscharity.org.uk** or call **07970 107933**.



Reaching new heights

Ongoing support from our corporate partners goes such a long way in helping us to support the UK's fire family and the last few months have seen even more acts of kindness and generosity – including a fantastic event in London's BT Tower.

Ensuring that our potential new corporate supporters can see first-hand the difference they could make to the lives of fire service personnel and their families. This is vitally important to us. A recent charity fundraising event, hosted by BT at the top of London's BT Tower, provided just such an opportunity.

We were delighted to welcome a number of corporate supporters, as well as fire service personnel, to a special Charity dinner on 28 July. While enjoying views of central London, our guests heard moving stories from two of our beneficiaries, recalling how they've been helped by us – all thanks to generous donations from our supporters.

The event raised £16,000 on the night and we were incredibly grateful to be introduced to six potential new corporate partners, all of whom expressed an interest in supporting us going forwards.

During the evening, retired LFB firefighter Russell Webb shared his story of how he was supported by us – and his moving words received a standing ovation from the guests.

Elsewhere at the event, we heard from Miriam Heppell, LFB's Assistant Director of Learning and Professional Development, who recently received physiotherapy support at Jubilee House.

Miriam has a genetic condition called Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS) which effects the collagen in her body and can lead to major issues with her joints. In the last three to four years, it has seriously impacted her mobility.

Miriam added: "Penrith [our centre in Cumbria] was very helpful – the clinical staff had gone away and researched the condition, and they tailored a programme just for me."



Britannia Fire's £10K donation

Britannia Fire generously donated £10,000 to us in August as a thank you to the whole fire services community, for the risks they take every day keeping their communities safe.

Roger Carr, Managing Director of the British manufacturer – which invented the world-leading P50 fire extinguisher – presented the cheque to us on 16 August.

"Every day, firefighters put their lives at risk to save others," says Roger, "we wanted to salute their heroics and - due to the success of Britannia Fire and the P50 - we're able to do that with a sizeable donation."

Thank you to everyone at Britannia Fire for this fantastic donation – one of many corporate supporters who have donated to us this year.



FIND OUT MORE

None of the support we were able to offer Russell and Miriam would be possible without regular donations from our corporate partners and wider supporters. You can find out more about partnering with us at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/corporate.



Twenty million thanks

Our Lottery has raised £20million over the last 20 years and, as we mark its milestone anniversary, what better way is there to reflect on its success than by celebrating the difference it has made to people's lives?

The Fire Fighters Lottery has raised over £20 million since its launch in 2002, given out over £5million in prize money and allowed thousands of members of the UK's fire service to live healthier and happier lives - just like Sonia Cox, Sarah King and Robert Cowie, whose stories you can read below.

We are now celebrating our anniversary by adding 20 extra £100 cash prizes to the November 2022 Draw – and you can get your tickets today to be in with a chance of winning.

Enter and be part of our celebration by scanning the QR code or visiting www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/20Anniversary for



a chance at joining the 6,541 winners who have won prizes totalling £5,187,276 over the past two decades! The closing date for online entries is 28 November.

As well as our extra prizes, you could also scoop the Jackpot of £25,000; a £1,000* second prize and 30 additional cash prizes of £50.

Don't forget, as well as being in with a chance of winning yourself some cash, every time you enter our Lottery, you're helping us to continue offering support to thousands of individuals in our fire family every year.

Reflecting on the success of the Fire Fighters Lottery over the last 20 years, our

Individual Giving Officer, Katy Parsons, said: "Seeing the difference our Lottery has made to people's lives has been amazing. Every time you enter, you're helping ensure we can be there for our fire family for years to come."

Have you won our Lottery in the past? We'd love to hear from you and find out what you did with your winnings if so. Join our health, wellbeing and social space, MyFFC, now at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc and let us know in one of our Groups, or email lottery@firefighterscharity.org.uk.

**The £1,000 is our roll over prize, which means it rolls over each month if not won by anyone. Once it's rolled over a total of nine times, it then becomes a guaranteed prize.*



Lottery life changers: Meet Sonia

Sonia Cox, 55, a Group Manager with West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service, says she spent years never showing possible signs of weakness at work.

However, attending our Reset Programme following an injury allowed her to focus not only on her physical recovery, but also her mental wellbeing.

Our Reset Programme – funded by our Lottery players and regular donors – offers beneficiaries the opportunity to develop and improve their resilience and overall mental fitness, with a programme of workshops and activities tailored to individual need.

"It gave me the chance to reset and do some work around my mental health and stress," says Sonia. "I've never wanted to be seen as weak or emotional. But actually, we're all recognising that it's okay not to be okay, it's okay to talk and there's fantastic support out there."

"I'd really encourage people to come and talk early on, before you get to the point you think you're really struggling and may need time off work or therapy, or be in a situation where you're feeling quite hopeless or in despair."



The Fire Fighters Charity is licensed and regulated in Great Britain by the Gambling Commission under account number 5035. Responsible person Mrs K H Griffiths, The Fire Fighters Charity, Level 6, Belvedere, Basing View, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4HG. Please gamble responsibly: www.begambleaware.org

Lottery life changers: Meet Robert

Scottish firefighter Robert Cowie received digital and face-to-face support from us following a Crohn's disease diagnosis. Thanks to your lottery tickets and donations, he's now been able to return to work.

The father-of-one, 36, had to take months off work as he spent long stints in hospital from 2019 following his sudden diagnosis. However, having heard about the support we offer, he got in touch.

He began a series of remote video calls with one of our physiotherapists and later visited Jubilee House.

"I suddenly had all these professional Physiotherapists and Exercise Therapists around me, plus all the other workshops and sessions I could get involved in," says Robert.

"The group I had was amazing too, which really helped. I had also struggled a lot with my mental health before, but I was able to access some sessions with a psychologist through the fire service luckily. It all works as part of a package then, with the support I had through the Charity."



"This Charity's Lottery is something so easy you can do that does so much to help others."

Emily Smith, 32, from Hertfordshire

Lottery life changers: Meet Sarah

LFB firefighter Sarah King recently returned to work more than a year after getting Covid-19. Thanks to your donations and support, we were able to help her on her road to recovery.

"With the Long Covid symptoms, there were changes to my emotional cycle – just so many symptoms," says Sarah. "It was real hell. I went from being really active to being bedbound for months and months."

Sarah reached out to us for support when the symptoms continued, and was offered a place on our Covid Recovery Programme – also funded by our Lottery players and regular donors – which we now run at all three of our residential centres.

"The Fire Fighters Charity primarily taught me to pace myself," says Sarah. "It really helped me build my confidence. I wouldn't have been able to go back to work if I didn't reach out to the Charity."



"I fell off the chair when you told me I'd won! I was absolutely made up. You're there looking after firefighters like my son, Andrew, when they need it, which is a great cause as far as I'm concerned."

Alan Clarke, 70, from Liverpool

Enter now by scanning the QR code or visiting www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/20Anniversary



"I've been entering the Lottery for roughly 10 years. When you told me I'd won I had to get you to repeat it! I've got a daughter and a granddaughter who live in New Zealand and we're now going to bring them back over here for a holiday next year to meet their half brothers and sisters."

Norman Clinnick, 73, from Southampton

Winter Diary Dates

Whether you're taking on an epic challenge, hosting a fundraiser, or attending an event for us, there's bound to be an activity for you to get involved in.



Fire Family Christmas

Our Charity elves are already getting into the festive spirit with the launch of our 2022 Fire Family Christmas. Bring the Christmas cheer and give back to your fire services community by taking part in a fundraising event this December. Whether you go carolling with your family or friends, invite your community to a Christmas grotto, organise a Santa float event, wear your favourite reindeer onesie in exchange for a donation, or get creative with a bauble decorating competition or Christmas bake-off, there's lots of activities you can do to raise money for us this festive season.

We have plenty of hints and tips to help you to make your event a success. Find inspiration at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/festive-fundraising



Drive Through Santa

Bring some Christmas joy and excitement to the little ones this festive season by hosting a Drive Through Santa event. Invite families to your station, decorate the appliance bay, get the Christmas music on and have the Crew dress up as elves, reindeers and, of course, Santa.

Get started by registering your Christmas event on our website at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/christmas



Sahara trek

We have an unmissable opportunity to join our team on an incredible 100km trek across the Sahara Desert, Morocco.

This challenge takes place from Sunday 26 November to Saturday 2 December 2023. You will trek over 5 days, over varying desert terrain, experiencing dramatic changes in temperature, as well as desert camping. A true adventure!

Don't miss the deadline of Friday 3 March 2023 to register your place.

Find out more by going to www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/sahara-trek



Share your fundraising tips and experiences with members of your fire family on MyFFC



Fire Family Fundraiser

Ready for your next challenge? Winter may be just around the corner, but that never stops our determined fundraisers from taking on epic challenges and events to raise money for us.

There's no need to push yourself physically if that's not your cup of tea, you can do any number of things to raise money for us.

Whether you brave the great outdoors with a physical challenge, set up a livestream, bake or get crafty, the sky's the limit!

We have a fundraising toolkit with posters, fundraising tips and other resources to help you make your event a great success.

Join our Fire Family Fundraiser community by planning your next challenge today. Get started at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/firefamilyfundraiser



Brew With A Crew

Our fire family loves a good brew. Tea is an integral part of life for stations, control rooms and headquarters across the country. And now that the temperature is dropping, it's the perfect time to get together on station, or invite your family and friends over for a cosy brew to celebrate our amazing fire services community. Raise a cup in appreciation with a slice of cake or a cheeky biscuit and donate to us so we can be there for our fire family when they need us.

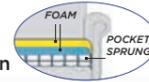
Get involved at www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/brew



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