



CHANGING LIVES IN LOCKDOWN

IMPACT REPORT 2020/21

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER



CHIEF EXECUTIVE DR JILL TOLFREY LOOKS BACK ON 2020/21

2020/21 will live long in all our memories as the year in which our world changed. On a personal level, coronavirus impacted every one of us, transforming the way we lived and the way we worked, limiting our movements and restricting our freedoms. For The Fire Fighters Charity, meanwhile, it had far reaching consequences for those we support, those who work for us and those who work so hard to fundraise for us.

As I look back on the year, however, I do so not with sadness at opportunities lost, but with a sense of accomplishment and a renewed respect for our beneficiaries, supporters and employees. Covid-19 forced us to fundamentally change the way we operated as a business, presenting us with a set of challenges that we had not anticipated or planned for. But far from shutting up shop and battening down the hatches, you will see over the coming pages how we effectively and speedily adapted and innovated in order to continue to support those in need, and to mitigate the impact on fundraising as much as we could.

Just as we saw the fire and rescue services adapting and supporting their emergency service and NHS colleagues, the Charity's teams supported each other throughout the year, coming up with new ideas and exploring new ways to reach people and provide help to those in need across the fire services community.

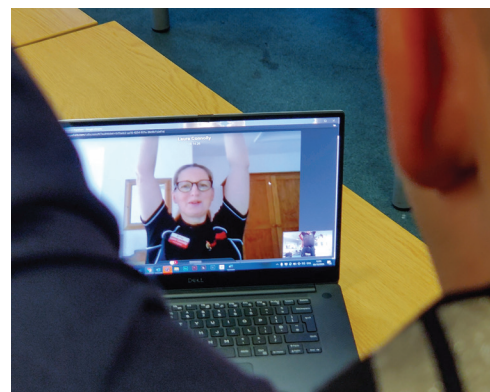
The pandemic fast-tracked our plans to introduce more digital support pathways across our community, allowing us to support more people and provide more proactive, preventative advice and information to a mass audience of eligible beneficiaries. With practitioners offering video-based consultations and working with our Marketing and Engagement Team to create a wealth of supportive multimedia information and advice, we were able to do some great work throughout the year that made a real difference to people facing difficult times. Our popular face-to-face Living Well Groups, meanwhile, moved online with great success and will continue in this format after we also return to in-person meetings.

We have long known that digital support solutions is where the future of our Charity lies, helping every member of our diverse community to live well, empowering them to make positive lifestyle choices to affect long term health benefits and preventing the need for intensive support in later years.

Our new Strategic Plan for 2020-25 explores this innovative digital approach much further, but work began on this plan long before the pandemic struck. So, while coronavirus made life difficult for us in many ways, it has inadvertently given us a head start on some of the ambitions we have for the coming few years.

Central to the Plan is our ambition to reach and support many more people than we currently do. We know that our potential beneficiary base could be as large as half a million people across the UK, but that we only currently engage with, and support, a small percentage of this number. This simply isn't good enough. By 2025, we want everyone across the fire services community – whatever their role and however they are eligible – to know who we are, how we can help them and to be using our services to support their long-term health and wellbeing.

Of course, to achieve this our fundraising income needs to keep pace with our evolving services, a challenge made all the more difficult by the pandemic. Today, we are still over £1m adrift of



and committed our teams are to welcoming and helping beneficiaries – was incredibly hard for all involved. The energy and enthusiasm to which those same teams returned to work this year, however, has once again confirmed for me, our senior leadership team and Trustees how lucky we are to have such a skilled and dedicated workforce.

So, the detail in this year's Impact Report, may look markedly different to years gone by, but it is no less significant. We were significantly impacted by Covid-19, but we were still able to impact the lives of many thousands, helping them through the pandemic, while also learning a huge amount about how we can continue to evolve our new



our pre-pandemic annual event fundraising totals, as the proliferation of events we enjoyed prior to the pandemic have been understandably slow to return to fire stations and community venues across the UK. Throughout 2020/21, however, our fundraising teams did all they could to offset this inescapable downturn, once again using their ingenuity to come up with creative ways for our supporters to fundraise for us – much of which you will read about on the coming pages.

Despite all this great work, Covid meant that we were also faced with some tough decisions in 2020/21, not least having to place on furlough leave many of our employees. The temporary closure of our three centres meant that there was no work for many of those whose roles were based there, which – considering how passionate

technologies and innovations to achieve long term goals for the Charity.

Having been around for almost 80 years, we have proven ourselves to be a resilient organisation and I am optimistic that we will use the lessons of 2020/21 to propel ourselves towards a bright, enduring and sustainable future.

Dr Jill Tolfrey
Chief Executive

REACHING HIGH

AN OVERVIEW OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-25

Our five-year strategic plan was launched a few months before the UK was locked down as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Setting out the Charity's plans and ambitions for the coming years, the Plan has innovation at its heart. Together with a desire to complement our existing services with new, digital solutions it also strives to dramatically increase our reach, taking us from the position of a charity that supports a few thousand people a year to one that impacts the lives of hundreds of thousands. Available to download in full from our website, here are the highlights of our Strategic Plan 2020-25.

Our Vision for 2025

We will be known as the UK fire service community's go to provider of mental, physical and social health support.

Recognised for our caring, professional and proactive approaches, we will deliver proven interventions through innovative means.

Blending face-to-face expertise with digital services, we will help the entire community to live healthier, deliver personalised support to thousands and reach every corner of the UK.

How we will get there

At the heart of this plan is a desire to expand the reach of the Charity and to show our beneficiaries that the support we offer goes beyond our three centres and into local communities and homes. We believe The Fire Fighters Charity should be a charity

for every member of the fire services community, regardless of where you live or the circumstances in which you find yourself.

The support we offer should be accessible to everyone, so this plan sets out how we will remove barriers that may previously have held people back from reaching out to us for support, in order to provide services that every member of our community can easily access.

Through investment in innovative new digital technologies; the development of community-based initiatives; the dissemination of health and wellbeing content and resources; close partnership working with fire and rescue services and organisations which complement our work; and major campaigns to raise awareness of who we are, what we do and how we can help, we are confident that we can transform our Charity into the nationwide provider of health and wellbeing support to the fire services community.

In other words, by 2025, we will be the first organisation that every member of the fire service community will think of and turn to when they need health and wellbeing support.

Four core areas

To achieve these ambitions, we will divide the challenging work ahead of us into four areas:

Inform and Prevent:

Learning for wellbeing

Through the Inform and Prevent portfolio we will inform our beneficiaries of relevant health matters, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to maintain and improve their mental, physical and social health and wellbeing. By providing them with timely and relevant information we will help prevent common health risks and conditions from impacting our beneficiaries' lives.



2020/21 progress and successes

- Coronavirus Support Hub created and launched on website, providing library of multimedia information to support the fire services community through the pandemic.
- Library of digital health and wellbeing content established.
- Series of webinars broadcast to support issues such as alcohol awareness.
- First Health Awareness Programme launched, focused on healthy lifestyles.
- Research programmes commissioned e.g. ...exploring social transitions into retirement.
- Wellness and Behaviour Change Coach team established.



Respond and Recover:*Right support, right results*

Through the Respond and Recover portfolio and its associated projects we will utilise a blend of digital, community and residential services to more effectively respond to those individuals who reach out to us for support. Earlier and easier access to expert help will provide beneficiaries with faster outcomes as they recover and continued support will encourage sustained health and wellbeing.

2020/21 progress and successes

- Virtual support offered for vulnerable clients.
- Regular phone contact made with nursing clients and vulnerable beneficiaries.
- Online and digital counselling provided, as well as online physiotherapy and exercise therapy support for those with musculoskeletal injuries or other physical needs.
- Online Living Well Groups launched.

Engage and Grow:*Building support through engagement*

Through the Engage and Grow portfolio and its associated projects we will engage and build stronger bonds with a growing number of beneficiaries and supporters, increase awareness amongst the fire services community and invest in lifelong associations. We will also diversify and grow our income to provide the additional funds necessary to achieve our plan.

2020/21 progress and successes

- *Shout! Podcast* launched – Seasons 1 and 2 broadcast
- Work begins on *My Fire Fighters Charity* – a new social media and wellbeing app for the whole of the UK's fire services community
- Library of multimedia and written content created to support Service delivery and promoted to multiple audiences
- Charity's first virtual *Spirit of Fire Awards* ceremony was broadcast, with a message from HRH Duke of Cambridge and guest presenters including Michael Sheen, Dame Julie Roberts, Dame Katherine Grainger, Brian May, Jason Watkins, Susannah Reid, Les Ferdinand, Adam Hills, Clare Balding and Rev. Kate Botley
- Fundraising campaigns including Brew With A Crew and Fire Family Challenge launched

Enhance, Enable and Empower:*United and powered by our people*

Through the Enhance, Enable and Empower portfolio and its associated projects we will develop our culture, enhance our processes, technology and facilities and further enable and empower our people to drive us forward.

2020/21 progress and successes

- Process improvement work undertaken across priority business areas
- IT developments implemented
- Pro bono Salesforce support established for development of MyFFC



RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

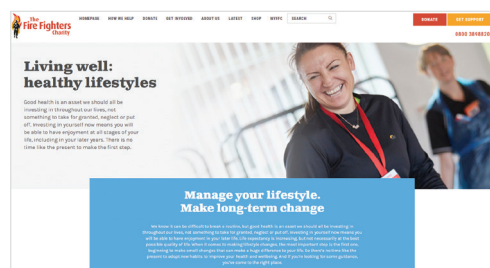
2020/21 AT A GLANCE: HIGHLIGHTS FROM A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION AND GROWTH

2020/21 began with the Charity's centres forced to temporarily close due to pandemic restrictions, before ending with a huge expansion of our digital services, a host of specific resources created to support beneficiaries and, subsequently, even more people helped by our expert teams.

Here are some of the highlights from the last year:

Coronavirus closes our centres

On 17 March 2020, the decision was taken to temporarily close Harcombe House, Jubilee House and Marine Court following the introduction of Government restrictions and social distancing amid the coronavirus pandemic. They remained closed for the following months, before briefly opening as lockdown restrictions eased later that year. They then remained closed through the end of 2020 and into the start of 2021, before opening with Covid measures in place.



While the centres' doors were closed, we increased our efforts to support beneficiaries remotely via new digital technologies and the availability of relevant advice and information online. This proved a huge success, with the Charity delivering over 3,000 1:1 digital consultations throughout the year.

Coronavirus Support Hub grows

We began the year with the development of an online Coronavirus Support Hub, housing all the latest Government advice alongside a wealth of information specific to the fire services community. In the months that followed, we developed this with fresh and relevant content including health and wellbeing tips and advice during lockdowns, digital resources such as exercises to do from home, activities to try and Tai Chi/relaxation videos to help combat stress and isolation.

Health and Wellbeing library expanded

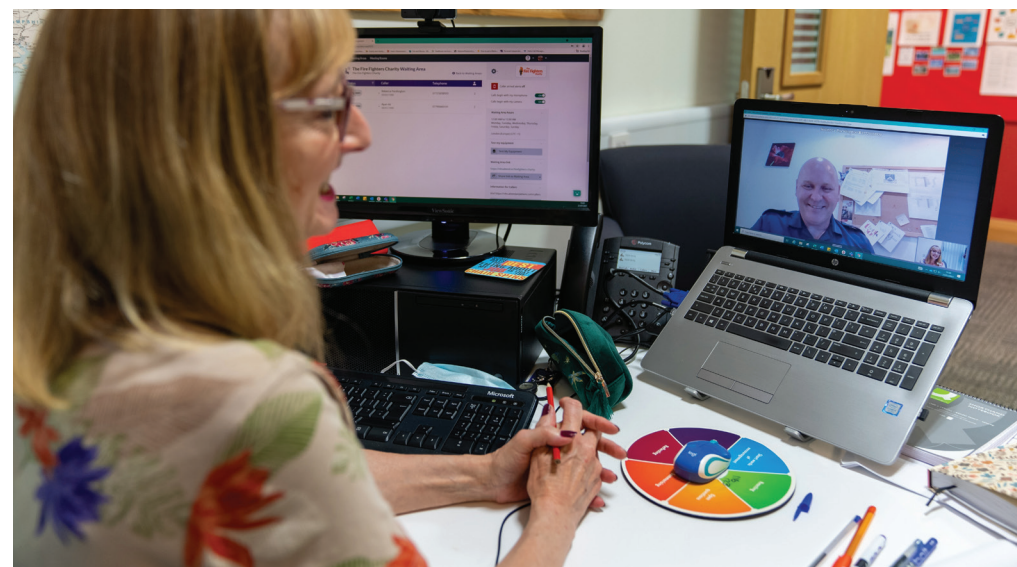
We continued to expand our online health and wellbeing library of content with in-depth advice to support beneficiaries' physical health, mental health and social wellbeing. This also included themed days and weeks to support different sectors of our beneficiary base, for example, carers.

We also launched a new series of our *Shout! Podcast*, with shorter, 20-minute episodes packed full of expert advice, chats with beneficiaries and exercises to try from home.

Online and digital counselling introduced

Our practitioner led assessment service, introduced in 2019, continued to flourish with our health and social care practitioners responding to the needs of our beneficiaries and helping them navigate their way around the challenges brought about by the pandemic. Our practitioners worked in partnership with our beneficiaries to understand their individual needs and goals, identifying the help and support required to meet those needs and improve their overall health and wellbeing.

In 2020, we introduced our telephone and online counselling service, complementing our increasingly successful digital rehabilitation services. For those beneficiaries who would normally have accessed our nursing services at Jubilee House, we kept in contact, carrying out telephone and video calls and also sending the occasional card. This contact was welcomed by this group of beneficiaries, many of whom were isolating due to poor health. Regular calls to beneficiaries were also carried out.



Health Awareness Programme launched

At the start of 2021 we launched the first in a new series of awareness programmes, designed to help all our beneficiaries across the fire services community to live well. The first focussed on making healthier lifestyle choices, including a wealth of digital resources on everything from self-care to nutrition, the benefits of exercise for both physical and mental health and the dangers of alcohol and smoking.

These were delivered across a range of resources including videos, written content, podcast episodes and webinars, ensuring we reached as much of our audience as possible.

Digital groups grow

As our online service delivery grew, we introduced digital Living Well Groups when the face-to-face meetings were forced to stop due to lockdown restrictions. These offered an opportunity for more people to come together, no matter their geographical location, to chat to like-minded others in the retired community and combat isolation.

During the pandemic, we looked for new and innovative ways to reach and support our beneficiaries. Lisa Gregory, the partner of an on-call firefighter, benefited from one such initiative. Lisa, who lives with a rare autoimmune disease that impacts movement in her hands, joined our Art Therapy group, which involved digital sessions exploring the therapeutic benefits of art and offering

an opportunity for social connection. Lisa found these sessions were not only beneficial for her hand mobility, but also her mental health as she was self-isolating. She says: "Losing mobility in my hands and still managing to create – discovering this new thing for me – it was quite profound, amazing."

New centre-based programmes

Whilst Harcombe House was closed for much of the year, we used this opportunity to develop our psychological wellbeing programme. With 1:1 support offered through our telephone and online counselling service, we developed a group-based approach at our residential centre in Devon, combining psycho-educational sessions, mindfulness-based interventions and a range of physical and psychological group-based activities, designed to support beneficiaries to move forward with their own recovery.

As we entered 2021, we were starting to see an increase in the number of beneficiaries needing support to recover from Covid-19 and once again we responded. With our practitioner teams supporting the needs of these beneficiaries during lockdown, we provided 1:1 telephone and digital support and opportunities for peer support. Our practitioners started work on developing a bespoke Covid Recovery Programme which was successfully implemented once restrictions had eased and we were once again able to open the doors of our residential centres.

The year in numbers:

**HIGHLIGHTS
FROM A
SUCCESSFUL
YEAR OF
FUNDRAISING**

It was a difficult start to the financial year, as it came at the start of the pandemic. It brought with it a lot of uncertainty around our fundraising activities for the rest of the year, however, the Charity was resilient and adapted to this change, creating a new campaign called The Fire Family Challenge. We also saw continued and hugely valued support from corporate partners and trusts across the UK. Here are a few of the many highlights.

£321,000 **£445,225**

Total amount raised through 331 Fire Family Challenges across the year

Amount raised in our annual Recycling Campaign

£170,833 **£163,524**

Annual value of the 1,354 new regular donors recruited

Donated by generous individuals through our website

£137,851 **£65,000**

Amount raised through merchandising

Amount raised during our Christmas 2020 fundraising campaign

£55,548 **£56,000**

Value of donations from donors who Made the Switch from Payroll to Direct Debit National Car Wash year total

£49,967

Amount raised through Facebook Fundraisers

£31,037

Total from on-going corporate partnerships

3,525

New players recruited to The Fire Fighters Lottery

275

Number of regular donors who agreed to uplift their donations

Fire Family Challenge

Through our online Fire Family Challenge we raised a staggering £321,000 in 2020/21, with individual supporters and their families devising innovative ways to raise money, while often confined to their homes and gardens.

Whether climbing stairs, running laps around their patios, crocheting rainbows, flipping tyres or opting for an extreme haircut...our fundraisers did us proud during such tough times.

London Marathon goes virtual

We celebrated the inspirational people who took part in a very different Virgin Money London Marathon on 4 October 2020. The virtual event saw people run in local parks and along routes where they lived, due to social distancing restrictions, while still managing to support us from afar.



National Car Wash takes a hit

We saw the huge impact of the pandemic on our National Car Wash campaign. Fire stations across the UK were unable to host activities on station for most of the year, so we introduced the 999 Virtual Car Wash.

The idea was to wash your own car in 9 mins, donate £9 and nominate 9 other people to join in, all while recognising that it was in place of attending a local fire station car wash event. However, as lockdown restrictions started to ease, we eventually saw some stations across the country able to take part by running drive-through, Covid-safe car washes. We had 89 take place overall, raising over £56,000. However, with a normal year having on average 500 car washes

across the country raising £250,000, we still saw a real impact.

Festive Christmas gets a new look

Our Christmas activities were inevitably very different this past year due to lockdown restrictions. However, the fundraising team introduced a series of new and creative ideas for people to support us safely.

The Santa Dash offered people the chance to give a one-off donation to take part and dash their own distance from wherever they were based. More than 160 Father Christmases took to the pavements as part of this solo alternative. With no requirement to get sponsorship and just an entry price to pay to take part, our dashing Santas raised £3,500 of income, which was generously added to by the event's sponsors, Aspray Ltd, who contributed £3,500 to our total.



In total, Christmas raised over £65,000 which, compared to the previous year's amount of over £184,000, showed that we continued to feel the impact of the pandemic.

Year-round recycling success

Overall, our Clothes Recycling scheme adapted very well with all of the additional pressures that Covid presented. Our recycling partners continued to operate a collection service amidst their own challenges with staffing, sickness and lockdown issues.

With export markets closing, we had to take measures to protect our recycling scheme for the long term, so we made the decision to reduce the price from £220/tonne to £120/tonne during the early stages of the pandemic. This allowed us to adapt to the new pressures and towards the end of the financial year, negotiations had started to increase the price back towards normal levels.

Clothes recycling generated £445,225 in total over the year, from over 920 fire stations and over 130 community sites which were supporting our scheme with a clothing bank. We now have a very strong consortium of eight companies that give us a solid base to work from moving forwards, and we have proven this over the last 12 months.



Firm foundation for merchandising

Web shop sales have been very positive and again, adapted very well to the Covid situation. Our web shop was closed for Q1 (April-June) and re-opened in July, at the start of Q2. Gift sales remained our main focus for development alongside our other range of clothing, toys and branded items. The Christmas period saw sales pick up between October and December and then, maintaining a healthy income for the final Q4.

Income for 2021 totalled £137,851 over nine months. Once again, our Retail Merchandiser has developed a strong range of items, particularly in the gift range to meet the needs of our shop customers for special occasions and retirements. This has set a firm foundation for our merchandising for the forthcoming year.

New regular donors recruited despite pandemic

We continued to recruit new regular donors and, over the course of 2020/21, we were delighted to welcome 1,354 people to the Charity - each of whom committed to donating to us on a monthly basis. In total, their donations - with Gift Aid - are worth £171K a year. New donors from the fire service community accounted for around three quarters of this figure.

We asked our existing donors if they could help us by increasing their donations and 219 of our existing fire service community and 56 of our existing public regular donors kindly agreed.

We also launched our *Make the Switch* campaign, asking our Payroll donors to switch and donate via Direct Debit. 612 people agreed to Make the Switch, meaning their donations - worth over £55K per year - will continue when they leave or retire.

Lottery bags more players

The Fire Fighters Lottery continues to grow and we welcomed 3,525 new players in 2020/21. Of those, 83% were members of the general public. During 2020/21, 375 people won prize money totalling over £322,000. Meanwhile, 351 of our existing fire services community and 209 of our existing public Lottery Players agreed to increase the number of chances in the draw during the year.

Since its launch in 2002, The Fire Fighters Lottery has raised a massive £18,527,814 for the Charity and our 7,477 winners have together won £5,187,276.95.

Facebook Fundraising continues to flourish

As the world went online, we saw more people opting to run Facebook Fundraisers on our behalf instead of asking for birthday presents or gifts for other occasions. This simple social media-driven fundraising tool helped our generous Facebook followers to raise nearly £50,000 for us.

Cashless donation options continue to be popular

Cashless payments have become more prominent everywhere so we're investing in cost-effective ways to make it easier for people to make cashless donations at our fundraising events using their phones.

- QR codes with Google Pay and Apple Pay were widely used across the Charity
- Text Giving made a comeback with our text FIRE and CAKE donation campaigns
- Online giving continued to grow in popularity, with less cash donations

SIDE BY SIDE

Standing together with our corporate supporters
Include all copy from the 'Corporate support' part of this spread to the end of the page



Corporate support:

We have once again been overwhelmed by the generosity of our corporate supporters who have not only helped generate vital income for the Charity throughout the course of 2020/21, but also raised awareness of our work and how we've adapted our services to meet beneficiaries' needs in communities across the UK. Here are just some of the highlights from the year:

Elvis and Kresse once again donated 50% of the profits from its Fire Hose Collection to the Charity. It's just the latest incredible donation from the luxury accessory manufacturer.

Ocado made a one-off donation of £30,084 to support our services.

Other corporate partners, companies and organisations who kindly supported us in 2020/21 included:

Autoglym

William Wood Watches

Aspray

Frontline Coffee

Fire Risk Assessments

Emergency One

Utilita

Typhoo

Oddballs

Multibrands

D. Robinson & Co Ltd

ASTCO (Alford Storage & Textile Company)

Beaumonts Recycling

Clyde Recycling Ltd

Elm Tree Textiles

LMB (Lawrence M Barry & Co)

Roberts Recycling Ltd

VPR Clothing Ltd

Grants from Trusts and Foundations:

We were privileged to have been supported throughout 2020/21 with some fantastic grants from trusts and foundations. Their continued support has enabled us to invest in the development of our facilities and programmes. Here are a few highlights from the year:

- The Wimbledon Foundation is the charity of The All England Lawn Tennis Club and The Championships. Trustees of the foundation

have kindly agreed to support us over three years with £110,000 towards the ongoing development of our Living Well Groups and the direct delivery of wellness and behaviour change coaching into fire and rescue services. The work on these programmes is well underway and we are very grateful for the support received from the Wimbledon Foundation.

- The Kirkby Foundation donated £25,000 towards the cost of replacing the serving and dining room furniture at our Jubilee House centre. In these current, challenging times we are very grateful for their ongoing support.
- The Gamesys Foundation, The Charles Wolfson Charitable Trust and The Westfield Health Charitable Trust generously donated £5,000, £2,000 and £1,000 respectively to help fund digital sessions for our beneficiaries.

Other trusts who kindly donated to us in 2020/21 included:

Birthday House Trust

Donald Forrester Trust

Gowling WLG (UK) Charitable Trust

James Wood Bequest Fund

John James Bristol Foundation

Maud Elkington Charitable Trust

Sylvia Aitken Charitable Trust

The Burghley Family Trust

The Carr-Gregory Trust

The Christopher Laing Foundation

The Hull and East Riding Charitable Trust

The lone Vassiliou Charitable Trust

The Isabel Blackman Foundation

The J Reginald Corah Foundation Fund

The James Wise Charitable Trust

The Jeannine Vassiliou Charitable Trust

The Lawson Trust

The Lord Belstead Charitable Trust

The Lord Faringdon Charitable Trust

The Nicka Vassiliou Charitable Trust

The P F Charitable Trust

The Saddlers' Company Charitable Fund

The Zochonis Charitable Trust

LIFE CHANGING

HERE, A FEW OF THE BENEFICIARIES WE HELPED IN 2020/21 SHARE THEIR STORIES...



Jon Helm, Crew Manager with Cumbria FRS

When Cumbria firefighter Jon Helm caught Covid-19 last year, he assumed it would clear up in a matter of weeks. But what started out as a short illness, turned into an ongoing battle with major physical and mental health issues that would leave him out of work for nearly 12 months.

He'd had previous experience with the Charity, having visited Harcombe House several times with his eldest son, but when it came to his own health battle, it was his colleague who finally called our Support Line. Jon was put in touch with a member of our physio team, who arranged a video consultation.

"I can't stress what a difference speaking to the Charity made to my life," says Jon. "I was given some breathing exercises, which the physio would take me through over a video call, but really it's more about having someone there that understands and wants to help."

Jon later visited Jubilee House for face-to-face support, before sadly catching Covid-19 for a second time earlier this year. He has since been supported by the Charity throughout to deal with his ongoing symptoms.



Anthony Naylor, firefighter with Cheshire FRS

Firefighter Anthony Naylor and his family were supported by the Charity in accessing an assistance dog for his son, Theo, who has autism. While they'd looked into getting one previously, they'd struggled to afford the course they needed to enrol on – but were eventually supported by our Welfare Team.

"We could fundraise and contribute ourselves, I could work extra shifts, but we just didn't have the funding to just commit to it then and there," says Anthony. "I explained our situation to [the Charity] and asked if there was anything you could do. After an initial assessment they said yes, we can cover the deposit. Just like that! It was unbelievable."

Theo was eventually matched with two-year-old Malone and Anthony says he has transformed their lives. "I've always been heavily involved with the Charity, but I had no idea to what extent you could help families. Seeing the difference a dog can make to a family, it's just amazing. He has saved my son. I'm so grateful to the Charity for helping us get to this point."

Nina Hudson, wife to a retired Nottinghamshire firefighter

Nina Hudson and her former firefighter husband Peter were enjoying an active retirement together in 2018 when they were involved in a horrific motorbike accident during a ride out in Spain. Nina was left with a series of serious fractures and damage to her knee, leaving her unable to walk for months on end.

It had a major impact on both of them, with Nina's mental health taking a huge knock as she came to terms with a completely different future. However, she says since contacting the Charity shortly after, they've both been supported ever since – and now finally feel excited about what's to come.

"I visited Jubilee House and they were so helpful, says Nina. "They worked out a programme for me while I was there, including hydrotherapy and an Alter-G machine... I was finally able to walk with that – it was the best piece of equipment you can imagine.

Nina has since been focusing on her recovery at home, with virtual support from the Charity and the constant support of Peter by her side.



Owen Spiers, retired firefighter with Northern Ireland FRS

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 Multiple Sclerosis, it led to another addiction – this time to over-the-counter medication – and it sparked years of mental health issues.

Luckily, following his long career with Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue, Owen, knew of the support the Charity could offer beneficiaries. 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.

"The online sessions 100% helped me. It's about turning negative thoughts to positives," says Owen. "Then the Living Well Groups are very much an opportunity to connect with other fire service retirees. It's a community.

"[The Charity] is like having a safety net underneath you. If you feel like you're going to step off the tight rope, knowing the support is there if you need it is a reassurance."



LOOKING AHEAD

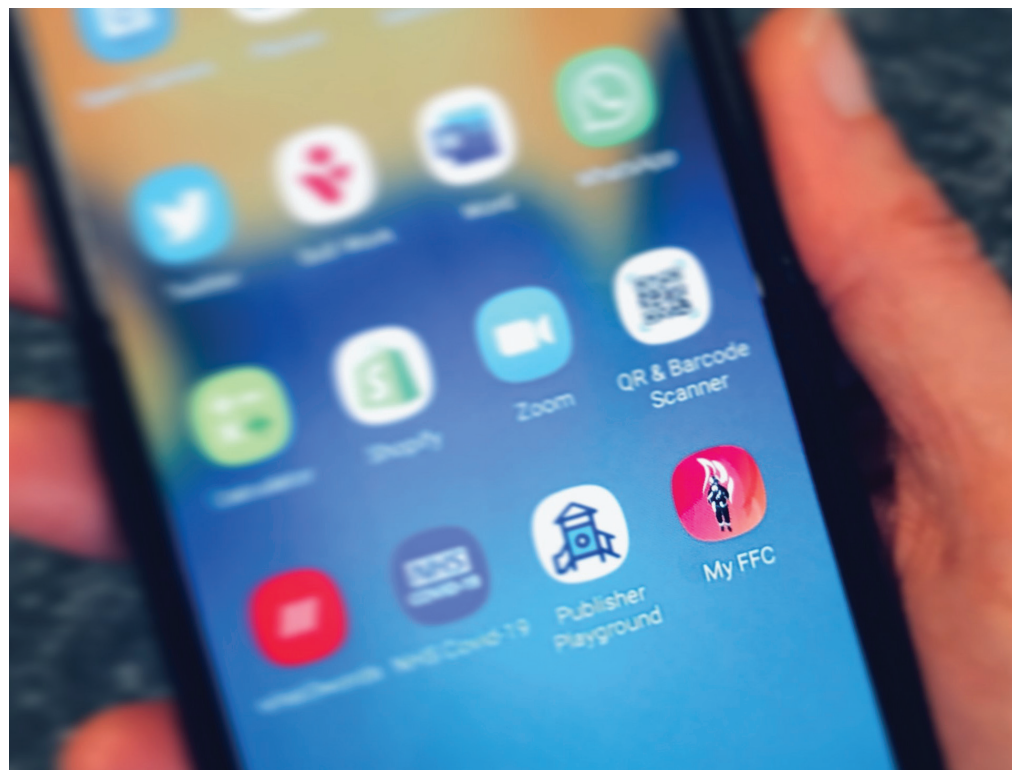


CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PETER DAVIES, LOOKS AHEAD TO THE COMING YEAR.

As I reflect on all that the Charity achieved and endured during a turbulent 2020/21, I am reminded, of course, of the stalwart leadership and contribution that long standing Trustee and former Chair of the Board of Trustees, Paul Fuller, made to The Fire Fighters Charity.

Paul's untimely death in June 2021, means that it is I writing these notes today, rather than him. However, although Paul's tenure as Chair was short – he was appointed to the position in November 2020 – his sterling support undoubtedly helped to steer the Charity through the second half of a turbulent year. So, while I would dearly wish that he was penning these words in my place, I feel that I must take this opportunity to recognise Paul's tireless work for the Charity over his five-year involvement with the Trustee Board.

Our future and the work we must recognise over the coming few years is built on the foundations left by Paul and the countless others who have worked, over eight decades, to create The Fire Fighters Charity we know today. So, as I look ahead to the coming year, I do so with optimism that we will overcome this short-term adversity, as we have in the past, and evolve to meet the needs of those for whom we exist to support.



On this last point, our Strategic Plan for 2020-25 is already bearing fruit as we have seen great progress with all four core portfolios of work. I am therefore confident that this will continue over coming months as we move forward with the plan and its many associated projects.

One such project is the launch and introduction of *My Fire Fighters Charity*, our new social media and wellbeing app for the fire services community. This vital project links much of the work associated with the Plan, enabling us to reach new members of our community, allowing us to share health and wellbeing content with them and delivering a vehicle through which our beneficiaries, supporters, donors and fundraisers can come together. It will itself evolve and grow over the years to come and I encourage you all to register and involve yourself in this exciting new platform.

Under our inform and prevent portfolio, I am also confident that the coming year will see a further proliferation of the exceptional proactive health



and wellbeing advice and information that our practitioner teams are creating in collaboration with our Marketing team. This will be delivered in a multitude of different ways, including through the delivery of new in-person wellbeing workshops with fire and rescue services, through MyFFC, via multimedia, podcasts and via specific health awareness programmes.

In a similar vein, we will continue to see the increased use of digital technology to reach our beneficiaries, building on the successes seen during 2020/21 with projects including our online

Living Well Groups, digital rehabilitation and psychological support.

Elsewhere, we have plenty of work still to do to overcome the fundraising downturn that resulted from the coronavirus pandemic. However, while I am full of admiration for all the incredible fundraising that has taken place this year, I feel we should be under no illusions that the fundraising world will return to its former, mass-participation state any time soon. It is clear that fire and rescue services and society as a whole remains rightly cautious as to the future of events and traditional forms of large scale fundraising.

So, I fully anticipate that our exceptional fundraising and income generation teams will continue to innovate and come up with new and engaging ways for our supporters to fundraise, whether through holding a Brew With A Crew, reinstating car washes, taking on a Fire Family Challenge, recycling or participating in wholly new fundraising enterprises.

Excitingly, we are also seeing an increase in interest from corporate supporters, as our teams have reached out to third party organisations that have a close affinity to the fire services community. This could represent a significant new source of income for us over the year ahead as these organisations choose to fundraise on our behalf and align their brands with ours. It will therefore be interesting to see how this will be reflected in next year's Impact Report.

Of course, the lifeblood of our Charity remains the generous donations that come from our regular donors and, although we recognise that for many the year ahead will see a tightening of purse strings in the wake of rising household bills, I hope that continuing to contribute towards your charity remains a priority. We simply cannot do what we do without the security of regular income, so I urge all our incredible donors to continue to support us over the course of the coming year.

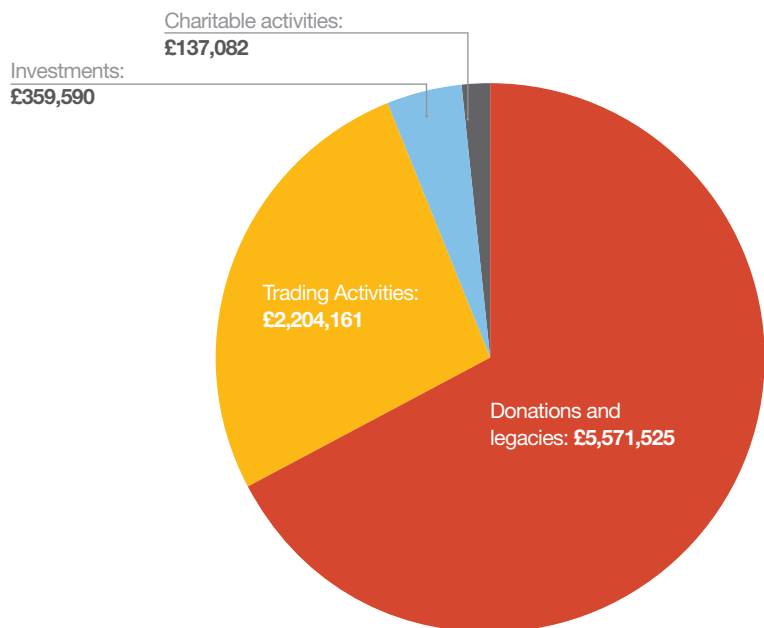
And finally, we also cannot do what we do without our incredible volunteers and employees. So, on behalf of the whole organisation, I'd like to thank them, for their commitment this year and, in advance, for the year ahead.

As ever, thank you for all that you do in support of The Fire Fighters Charity.

Peter Davies
Chair, Board of Trustees

OUR FINANCES

INCOME



2020/21 was a difficult year for income, a total of £8,272,358 was achieved, a decrease of £1,697,978 on the £9,970,336 raised in 2019/20.

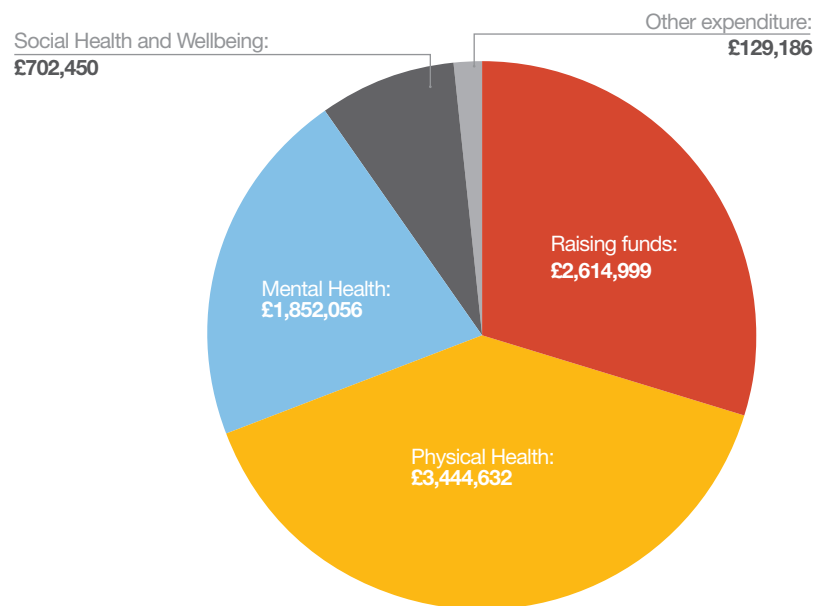
Government restrictions limited community fundraising during Covid-19 and despite an increase in one-off gifts through new digital campaigns and online technology, overall income from corporate and other donations fell by £1.1m.

Committed giving grew this year, mainly due to the recruitment of new regular donors and lottery players in the prior year, the retention of these and existing donors increased overall income from Regular Giving and Lottery to £4m from £3.8m in 2019/20.

The impact of coronavirus-related restrictions on our service delivery resulted in a significant number of employees being placed on furlough leave. This scheme provided much needed income of £1.1m during 2020/21; this grant income is included within donations and legacies.

The recycling industry was also negatively impacted by the pandemic, both in the UK and overseas, as a result income from recycling, which is included within other trading activities, fell by £199k to £445k. We worked closely with our partners to ensure all banks continued to be emptied as normal, under the circumstances this was a very positive outcome.

EXPENDITURE



Total expenditure for the year was £8,743,323 compared with £9,953,459 for last year, a 12% or £1.2m decrease.

The Covid-19 related restrictions on face-to-face activity led to the cancellation of fundraising events and the halting of committed giving sign-up activity. While this resulted in a significant reduction in income, some of this was offset by a reduction in the overall cost of raising funds, with £2.6m being spent in 2020/21, a reduction of £574k.

With the centres being closed for almost the whole year, their associated running costs were reduced,

so in total charitable expenditure fell by £0.7m to £6.1m. On a more positive note, this spend includes new funding for improving our capability to support our beneficiaries, as demonstrated in other sections of this report.


Keep in touch


Join MyFFC: www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/myffc

Support Line: 0800 3898820

Customer Care: 01256 366566

Email: customercare@firefighterscharity.org.uk

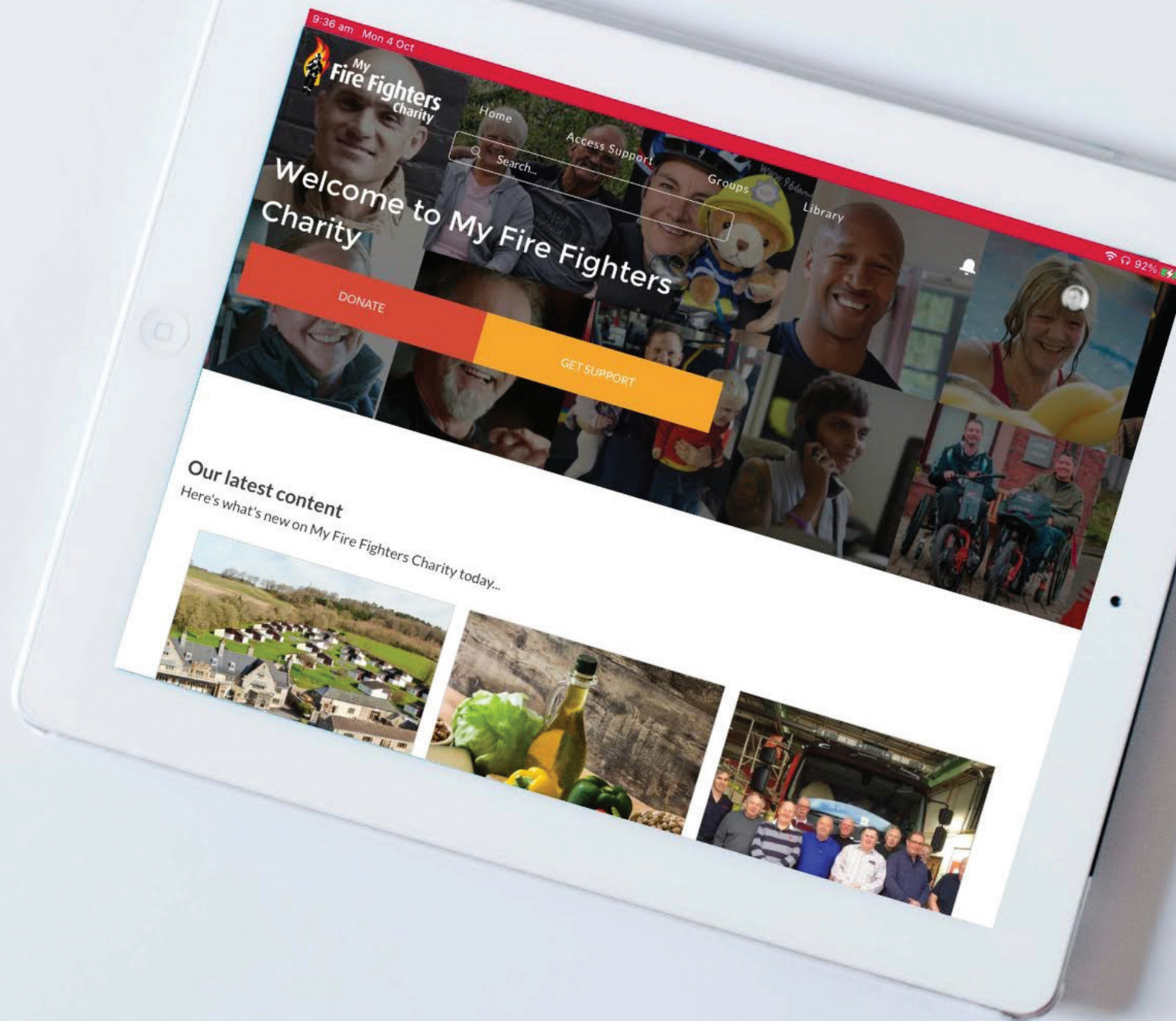
 The Fire Fighters Charity

 @firefighters999

 thefirefighterscharity

Address: The Fire Fighters Charity, Level 6 Belvedere House, Basing View, Basingstoke, RG21 4HG

Join MyFFC



Registered office: The Fire Fighters Charity, Level 6, Belvedere, Basing View, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4HG
Charity registered in England and Wales (1093387) and Scotland (SC040096)

Royal Patron: Her Majesty The Queen