

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Fire Fighters Charity (the Charity) supports serving and retired fire fighters in the UK, fire service support staff and their families and is the only organisation to provide such a full package of support tailored to the needs of fire fighters. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the Fire Fighters Charity's Impact Report 2012-13.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Charity provides a wide range of support including access to three rehabilitation and recuperation centres: Harcombe House in Devon; Jubilee House in the Lake District; and Marine Court in Littlehampton. These facilities offer various services such as physiotherapy and counselling to help individuals following injury, trauma and other problems in their lives.
- 2.2 The Charity also runs a helpline to provide information and advice on dealing with bereavement, mental health and benefit support for example. Home visits are also offered by specially trained volunteers when more in-depth help is needed.

3. SUMMARY OF IMPACT REPORT

- 3.1 A copy of the Impact Report is provided for Members at Appendix A. The report outlines how the Charity has performed over the past year and includes details of how it delivers services and the difference it makes to people's lives.
- 3.2 In 2012-13 the Charity supported four and a half thousand fire fighters, retired firefighters, support staff and their family members.
- 3.3 Access to its rehabilitation and recuperation centres, which the Charity has improved over the last two years, has helped nearly four thousand fire fighters alone and its outcome measures project has confirmed that the centres improve fire fighters health and wellbeing.
- 3.4 Key improvements in 2012-13 included a £2.4m refurbishment at Marine Court, a new physiological service offering specialist support to assist with mental health and reduced waiting times allowing more people to use their services by offering services 7 days a week.

3.5 The Charity also reported 500 home visits to help with more complex problems and an increase of over 1,500 calls to their helpline indicating that more people are becoming aware of support they offer.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 The Charity has ambitious plans for the future including improving their whole person approach, introducing a new system for managing requests for help and expanding their psychological support services.

4.2 It also intends to introduce a pilot project for supporting people within local communities and plans on making further efficiency savings whilst increasing beneficiaries. Page 13 of the Impact Report provides further information regarding future plans.

4.3 In addition, the Charity is currently developing services to ensure it meets the needs of everyone that is entitled to them. In doing this it has begun work to carry out a census on all fire and rescue services in the country to inform as many people as possible of the services on offer and how to access them.

5. RECOGNITION FOR SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS

5.1 The continued support of supporters and volunteers is vital to the Charity continuing its work.

5.2 In a recent letter to the Chief Fire Officer, the Chairman of the Charity specifically thanked the Authority for the on-going support provided which has directly helped thousands in the fire and rescue community.

6. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

6.1 All funding for the Charity is from donations and other fund raising activities. There is no cost to the Authority.

6.2 It costs over £8 million per year to keep the Charity running and with no Government funding they are completely reliant on the generosity and enthusiasm of their supporters. Further details of the Charity's financial position can be found at page 15.

6.3 In order to deliver their plans for the future the Charity needs to raise an additional £1m every year and are determined to achieve this with the help of supporters and volunteers.

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 On-going support for the work of the Charity demonstrates the Authority's commitment to the wellbeing of employees for example; there is a direct link with supporting individuals with disabilities in conjunction with the Authorities excellent occupational health facilities.

7.2 During the reporting year the Charity supported families with children with physical and mental disabilities and children with burns injuries. It is therefore not only concerned about supporting fire service employees and their families but its work also has a positive impact on the wider community.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of this report for information only;
- b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- The Firefighters Charity Impact Report 2012-13.
- www.firefightercharity.org.uk