

SUBJECT: THE FIREFIGHTERS CHARITY

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report is to update the Authority about the support and facilities available through the Firefighters Charity.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Firefighters Charity exists to help members of the fire service community in times of need. Many assume that the services are only available to firefighters themselves, when in fact the Charity facilities and service are available to the wider fire community and specifically:

- Serving and retired firefighters, including retained, airport, MOD and works firefighters;
- Corporate staff working in fire and rescue services;
- Dependants of the above including spouses, children and anyone who is wholly or partially supported by the beneficiary.

- 2.2 Over the years the Charity has been challenged to keep pace with the changes within the fire and rescue service, and the demands of its members. It has responded by dramatically improving and increasing the numbers of people it cares for and the grants and facilities it can offer. The Charity is now the UK's leading provider of services that enhance the quality of life for serving and retired firefighters, fire personnel and their families. They are passionate about their work and the services they provide.

- 2.3 The Charity has purchased properties and land and invested in paid staff to support the large army of volunteers needed to meet these new demands. They now offer specialist convalescent care, rehabilitation and therapy for injured firefighters and their dependants, as well as sheltered housing and hardship grants.

3 THE FACILITIES AVAILABLE

- 3.1 The Firefighters Charity has three rehabilitation centres based in Devon, Cumbria and West Sussex to help injured fire personnel (and dependants) to actively recover in times of need and help better prepare them for a return to everyday life. The Charity offers bespoke programmes in:

- Physiotherapy;
- Exercise;
- Mental and emotional wellbeing support;
- Nursing and personal care.

3.2 To aid recuperation they offer one or two week breaks which are designed to help those who have suffered injury, illness, stress or bereavement. They also have a beneficiary support service that can come to the individual and provide direct support to ensure that fire personnel get the help they need in difficult times. In addition there is also the child and family programme for families with a child or children with special care needs, giving them respite and quality time with each other.

3.3 The three centres are as follows:

- **Rehabilitation Centre – Jubilee House, Penrith, Cumbria**

Jubilee House is a purpose-built Therapy Centre developed exclusively for the benefit of fire and rescue service personnel, both past and present. On admission, everyone receives a full assessment of their needs carried out by qualified staff. An individually tailored programme is then prescribed in a caring and therapeutic environment. The aim is to help individuals achieve their maximum potential and to improve their quality of life.

The Therapy Wing consists of a treatment area, gymnasium and hydrotherapy pool. Outdoor activities include a trim trail, cycling and hill walking. This combination of facilities allows the Centre to treat both specific injuries and also to help individuals with their all-round fitness.

Injuries do not have to be sustained on duty, and all available National Health Service Treatment must be completed prior to admission.

- **Convalescent Centres**

Marine Court, Littlehampton, West Sussex – is located on the sheltered south coast and boasts a mild climate, ideal for the less mobile. Situated in the town centre, it is 500 metres from the pedestrian shopping area and just a short walk from the pleasant beach. The town has a library, sports centre, heated indoor swimming pool – with facilities for the disabled – and a children’s pool.

Harcombe House, Chudleigh, Devon – nestles in the tranquil south Devon countryside with an estate that extends to over 300 acres of farm and woodland. Built in 1912 for the Wills tobacco family, the estate is about two miles from the ancient wool town of Chudleigh, which has a variety of small amenities. Harcombe has a bar, games room, indoor heated swimming pool, exercise room, hard tennis court, three fishing lakes and a play area for young children. There are also woodland walks on the estate.

4 Financial Support

- 4.1 The Charity aims to provide financial assistance to past and present fire and rescue service personnel and their dependants when they suffer misfortune, illness or hardship. Support is provided in the form of grants and awards, with the aim of maintaining the quality of life, and every application is given careful and equal consideration.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It costs about £9 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.
- 5.2 The Chief Fire Officer is please to advise the Authority that he has received the annual 'Certificate of Appreciation' from the Chairty in recognition of the dedication and effort that members of this Service have shown towards the Charity. New for this year is a more inclusive figure which is designed to thank each Service for the achievements reached in all areas of fundraising. In addition to the usual income streams such as the National Car Wash, the fundraising total now includes public Regular Giving, Lottery, In Memoriam and one-off donations.
- 5.3 The Charity would now like to thank all members of this Authority for the continued support and to congratulate those active members. The following is a breakdown of statistics and information specific to The and Wear Fire and Rescue Service:
- Total beneficiaries who received services from the Charity 75
 - Total income achieved by this Service £139,142.34
 - Income raised per head £115.27
 - Number of lottery winners from this Service 15
- 5.4 It is stressed that all funding for this Charity is from donations and other fund raising activities. There is no cost to the Authority.

6 FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- 6.1 In July 2011 the Board of Trustees approved significant new proposals to enhance and reframe the beneficiary services through a series of exciting projects and a new model of re-ablement.
- 6.2 The Charity intends to provide even higher quality services to more people than ever before and to provide a greater spread of services including psychological support. Members may wish to consider visiting the nearest Centre to get a better appreciation of what the Charity currently has on offer.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report;
- b) Consider a visit to Jubilee House, Cumbria;
- c) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- The Firefighters Charity literature