

The Firefighters Charity and its relevance to BMKFA

Report to Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 18 December 2013

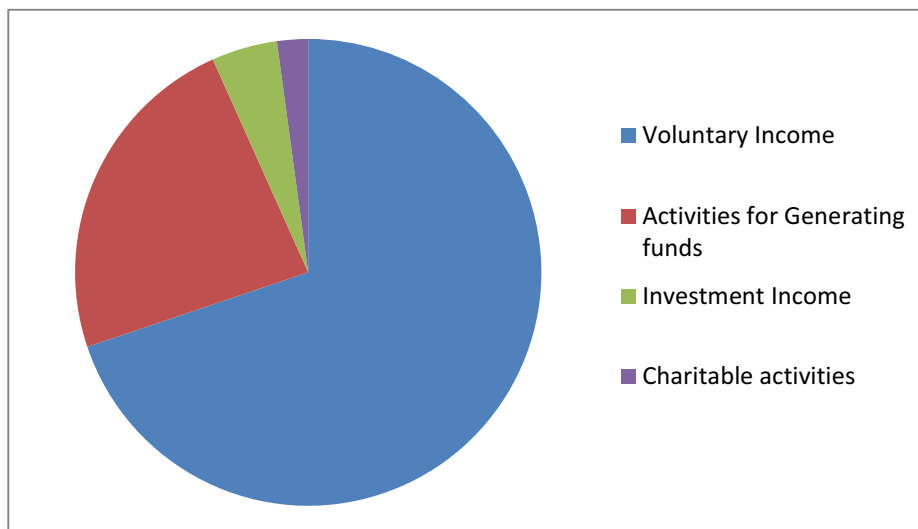
Background

The Firefighters Charity (FFC) potentially confers its benefits to all of the Fire Authority's staff and their immediate families. Whilst the acute need for its services is thankfully rare, the fact that they are readily available and simply accessed renders them as extremely valuable in rehabilitating injured staff and helping those with difficulties to find assistance. An information sheet is attached (Appendix 1).

Size of the charity and its funds

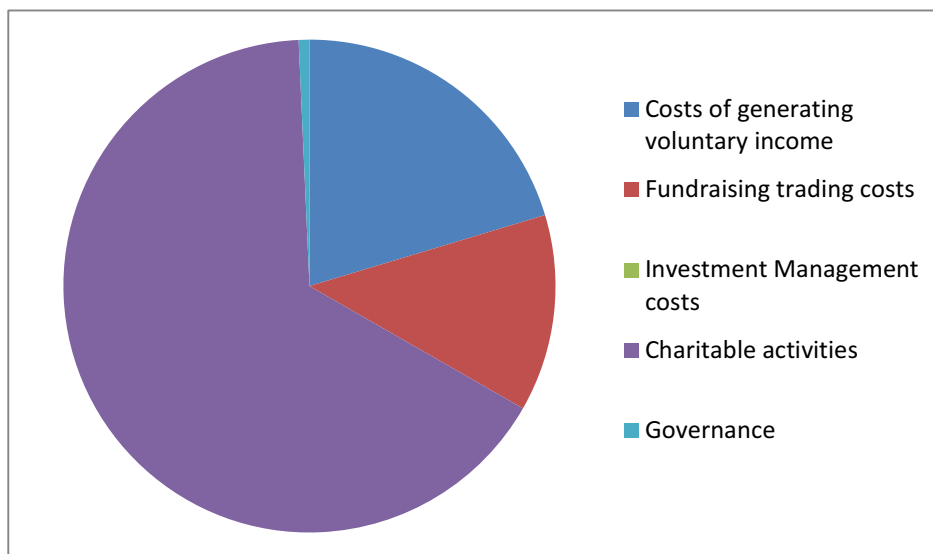
It currently costs £9 million a year to keep the charity running, it does not receive any government funding so is completely reliant upon the generosity and enthusiasm of its supporters.

In 2011/12 the FFC's income was £8,389,803. The pie chart below details the various income sources.



The Firefighters Charity and its relevance to BMKFA

In 2011/12 the FFC's expenditure was £8,067,468. The pie chart below details the expenditure.



Charitable expenditure is budgeted to increase by a further £1m over the coming years so that the FFC can increase the quality, quantity and availability of services to its beneficiaries.

Its Services and beneficiary base

The FFC is the UK's leading provider of services that enhance quality of life for the fire and rescue community, including serving and retired fire fighters, fire service personnel and their dependants.

There are three centres which are based in Devon, Cumbria and West Sussex. The centres offer a range of physiotherapy, nursing and psychological support programmes. They also offer one or two week breaks designed to help those who are recovering from injury, illness, stress or bereavement.

There is also a free confidential helpline to members of the fire and rescue service community where advisors are trained to provide impartial advice, guidance and support on a wide range of concerns.

A Child & Family Programme runs alongside these services and offers a week's activity break for families with one or more children with special care needs.

How many people benefit each year?

In 2011/12 the FFC supported 4,581 firefighters, retired firefighters, support staff and their families to get better after injury, illness and emotional turmoil.

The helpline has responded to 5,981 calls relating to a range of queries including work-related issues, relationships, bereavement, mental health concerns and addiction.

The Firefighters Charity and its relevance to BMKFA

As well as supporting Fire and Rescue Service staff in their times of need, one of the most important other roles played by the Charity is speeding up recuperation and thus allowing staff to return to full duties following injuries than might not have been the case solely by using NHS services.

How much is raised within BMKFA each year (include payroll giving)?

The funds raised for the charity in BMKFA for the years ending March 2012 and 2013 were £74,438 and £71,868 respectively. The charity helped 22 beneficiaries in this area in the year to March 2012 and 32 beneficiaries in the year ending March 2013.

These funds are directly donated from members of the service or raised through a variety of fund raising activities including social events, sporting activities and station open days.

How much benefit is derived by people in this Service's area?

Numbers for Bucks for 2012/13	
Helpline cases	1
Referred cases	5
Recuperation pack requests	17
Rehabilitation pack requests	9
Numbers for Bucks for 2011/12	
Helpline cases	0
Referred cases	6
Recuperation pack requests	11
Rehabilitation pack requests	5

The services detailed above are explained as follows:

- Helpline cases – dealt with directly by the helpline – not referred anywhere else.
- Referred cases – have come in from third parties with the knowledge of the beneficiary – e.g. a home visitor or social visitor referral for assistance – they may have ended up at a centre. Alternatively they may have been dealt with via beneficiary support co-ordinator activity.
- Packs requested – these are direct requests via the helpline for applications for either rehabilitation or recuperation. They are completed by the requesting beneficiary and then processed via the centres. The majority of cases are new cases, however some are from individuals requesting a second attendance.

The volunteering undertaken by Service staff and their friends and families does much to enhance the Authority's image within our communities and the effects on morale should not be overlooked. Our crews have proved enthusiastic and competitive when seeking ideas for

The Firefighters Charity and its relevance to BMKFA

fund raising and they utilise activities such as car washes and open days to raise funds as well as to spread the Authority's safety message.

This Service has been recognised nationally as one of the best at supporting the Charity's interests and in recent years, both Broughton and Bletchley have made it to the shortlist of the final 4 stations in successive national "Station of the year" contests. Many of our staff also donate to the charity directly from their pay in the form of "Payroll giving" or by direct donation from their current accounts.

The achievements of the staff of this Service are even more remarkable when it is noted that the Firefighters Charity is not the only charity supported by our crews and staff. They also raise monies for many national and local charities and for the Red Cross and Help for Heroes to name two prolific examples.