

News Release

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Firefighter Makes New Year's 2019 Honours list

A Leicestershire firefighter has been announced as making the New Year's 2019 Honours List.

The Honours List, which was officially announced at 22:30 last night (Friday 28 December), features Firefighter Andy Parkin.

Andy, who has been a firefighter for over 29 years, will receive a British Empire Medal (BEM) for his services to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Mental Health.

On hearing that he had made the Honours List, Andy said: "I am very proud to be awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours List for the work that I do inside our organisation, and externally.

"This award also reflects the support that I am given by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, to enable me to do what I do, and I'm always proud to represent our service at the many events that I attend around the country every year.

"I couldn't do what I do, without the support of my wonderful wife Kristina, who spends most of the Pride Season as a 'Pride widow' whilst I'm out and about."

Andy started off his career as a firefighter, joining Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service in 1989. He transferred to Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service in 2004, where he served as a firefighter at Shepshed Fire Station, until his retirement from the On-Call duty system in December 2016, after almost 28 years On-Call.

Andy currently works within the Appliance and Equipment Department, where his role involves the procurement and servicing of equipment, as well as numerous projects, including the replacement of breathing apparatus used by firefighters.

In addition to Andy's work, he is the lead for the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Network – ShOUT!, and is an advocate for raising awareness about mental health across the Service. Andy is also known for spreading cheer amongst colleagues by signing off each email with, 'keep smiling'.

Andy added: "It is no secret that I am a highly visible Equality Champion, a firm believer in Diversity and Inclusion, and an advocate of discussing and encouraging good mental health.

"I am a 'people' person, who believes that we should all look after each other, and that we all should respect differences, and other peoples' right to be who they are.

"I work with several community organisations, to raise awareness and educate people, and I try to improve life for people. Put simply, 'it's just what I do'.

"Keep smiling."

Andy was put forward for the award by Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, Andrew Brodie. He said: "Andy's care for people is exemplary, particularly for those who are struggling or perceived as 'different'. He gives his time, knowledge and expertise to support them and directly improves lives.

"Andy represents our Service incredibly, attending Pride events across the country, learning from and presenting at events. He is truly deserving of this award."

Andy will be presented with his BEM medal by the Lord-Lieutenant at a local ceremony and will also be invited to attend a Royal Garden Party in summer.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Interviews can be arranged through prior arrangement with Corporate Communications on the details below.

About the Service

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides emergency response, prevention and protection services from 20 stations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Its headquarters is based in Birstall, Leicester.

The Service's prevention, education, enforcement and inspection programmes have resulted in significant reductions in the number of incidents. In the last ten years, fire-related incidents have reduced by 43 percent.

During 2016/17, the Service attended 694 road traffic collisions, of which 148 were extrications from vehicles, in addition to 2,259 fires. 272 schools were visited as part of the Service's schools programme, delivering fire and road safety education to pupils. Staff organised or took part in 1,613 community safety events, promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, and 145 Virtual Fatal Four (VF4) events as part of the Service's young drivers' road safety project.

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