

News Release

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Cycling Firefighters Raise Thousands for Charity

A team of firefighters who cycled 200 miles for charity in June, have raised over £3,600.

Twelve firefighters who form part of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Cycling Club, took part in the 'Chase the Sun' cycling challenge on 22 June. The coast to coast cycle challenge saw riders set off at sunrise in Tynemouth in Tyne and Wear, and arriving at their destination of Prestwick in Scotland by sunset.

After successfully completing the 'Chase the Sun' challenge, another charity event to raise further funds was put on in the form of a charity golf day on 24 June, at Lingdale Golf Club.

The team, who were raising money for two charities, [The Fire Fighters Charity](#) and [The Laura Centre](#), were also taking part in the events in memory of former Leicestershire firefighter Paul 'TL' Wilkens, who tragically passed away whilst on duty in August 2016.

Simon Wilkens, firefighter at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service and brother of Paul, said: "The cycle challenge was something Paul and I had planned to do together, but never got the chance to. For the last few years we have taken part in the challenge and each one is an emotional journey for me.

"By taking part and supporting something Paul thoroughly enjoyed, it allows Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service to remember him, and gives us a chance to raise money for two very important charities."

The Fire Fighters Charity provides physical, mental health and social wellbeing support to past and present members of the fire service community. The Laura Centre, who supported Simon and his family through the difficult period after their tragic loss, provides bereavement support to

anyone who has lost a child or for children and young people who have lost a parent, carer or significant adult in their lives.

A total of £3,604.79 was raised from the two events, and has been split between the two charities.

Earlier this week, Simon Wilkens presented a cheque for £1,802.39 to each of the charities at an informal presentation afternoon at Birstall Fire and Rescue Station.

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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.

During 2018/19, the Service attended 762 road traffic collisions, of which 125 were extrications from vehicles, in addition to 2,569 fires. We carried out 6,746 home safety checks and fitted 4,790 smoke alarms. 279 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 1,068 community safety events, promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, and 134 Virtual Fatal Four (VF4) events as part of the Service's young drivers' road safety project.

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 over 30 percent.

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