

News Release

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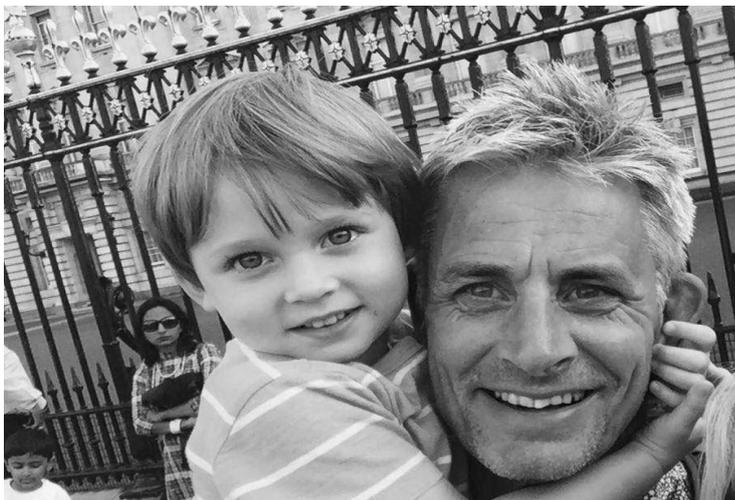
Firefighters take on 'Chase the Sun' challenge

A team of cyclists from Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service will be taking part in an annual cycling challenge on June 18, to honour a former firefighter who tragically passed away whilst on duty.

The team of eight firefighters will join hundreds of other cyclists in a coast to coast cycle challenge called 'Chase the Sun', which sees riders set off at sunrise and arrive at their destination by sunset.

Taking part in the 'Chase the Sun' challenge was originally suggested by Paul 'TL' Wilkens, a crew manager at Castle Donington Station. Paul was a keen cyclist and part of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Cycling Club.

Unfortunately, Paul never got to take part in 'Chase the Sun', as he sadly passed away whilst on duty in August 2016. In memory of Paul, his colleagues – including his brother Simon - friends and cycling team mates successfully took part in their first 'Chase the Sun' challenge the year after Paul passed away – something they have done ever since.



The ride will start at sunrise at the historic Titanic docks of Belfast, up the dramatic coastal road and the Antrim Glens, heading inland to traverse forests, mountains, and loughs. The route crosses the border of Northern and Republic of Ireland, and finishes at sunset along the wild Atlantic way beaches at Enniscrone.



Simon Wilkens, crew manager at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, said: "As this was something Paul and I had planned to do together, it always becomes an emotional journey before the cycling challenges start.

"We hope that in doing this event the whole of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service will all remember Paul by doing and supporting something he thoroughly enjoyed."

They will be doing this ride not only in memory of Paul, but to also raise funds for The [Fire Fighters Charity](#) who provide physical, mental health and social wellbeing support to past and present members of the fire service community.

If you would like to support the team and The Fire Fighters Charity, you can do so by visiting <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lfrs-cc-leicestershire-fire-service-cycle-club> All donations are welcomed.

This year, we have made it different. We want to give something back for your generous support. We have been able to secure donations to run a prize draw – so not only are you supporting us, but you have the chance to win a prize. Thanks to Hunt Wheels who have generously donated a prize – a voucher for a set of wheels up to the value of £500! (www.huntbikewheels.com). There will also be the chance to win an Oculus Quest 2 Headset (www.oculus.com/quest-2)

For each multiple of £5 which is donated, you will be entered into a prize draw to win an Oculus Quest 2 headset (e.g £5 is one entry, £20 is four entries). When entering, please select that you are happy for JustGiving to share your contact details with the organiser. Your details will be safely

stored and will only be accessed to notify you if you are a winner. The winner will be contacted once the page is closed after the event.

You can keep up-to-date with the teams' progress via our social media channels, Facebook ([/LeicsFireRescue](#)), ([@lfrscc](#)) and Twitter ([@LeicsFireRescue](#)), using the hashtag #ChaseTheSun.

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.

During 2019/20, we attended a total of 8,541 emergency incidents, including 2,079 fires and 748 road traffic collisions. A total of 7,274 Home Safety Checks were completed and we fitted 4,720 smoke alarms. 305 schools were visited as part of the Service's schools programme, delivering fire and road safety education to 26,218 pupils. Staff organised or took part in 1,218 community safety activities, totalling over 11,000 hours of time engaging with members of the public.

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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