

**Women in the Fire Service**  
**National Executive Committee**  
**7 March 2023 via Zoom**

**Present:**

**Directors:**

Jules King, Chair, Caroline Anderson, Vice Chair, Nicola Lown, Regional Support and International, Miriam Heppell, Secretary

**Executive Member:** Sara Hall, Divine Zake

**Regional Reps:** Bex Sims (East Midlands), Daisy Byron (East), Hannah Lodder (Wales), Jo Henry (North East), Serena Benassi, London

**Local Reps:** Emily May Williams (North Yorkshire), Georgina Connor (States of Jersey), Jan Morris (Shropshire FRS) Jo Dawson (Nottinghamshire FRS), Liana Selecka-Jones (Cumbria FRS), Natalie Parkinson (Humberside & Yorkshire) Paula Lyons (Greater Manchester FRS), Peggy Male (West Midlands FS)

**WFS:**

Karen Smith, WFS Administration Manager

Kerry Cassidy, WFS Administration Assistant

<b>1. Apologies:</b> Amy Beams, Caz Whiteman, Elizabeth Curtis, Louise Brown, Lynsey McVay, Nicky Thurston, Sara Slater, Sue Mallinson, Vicky Wallens-Hancock, Jenny Nangle,	Action for:
<b>2. Notes from last meeting:</b>	Agreed as a true record.
<b>3. Matters arising:</b>	None
<b>4. Gifts and Hospitality:</b>	None were declared
<b>5. Chairs Report:</b>	<p>Welcome to Kerry, new member of the team supporting Karen in the office and comes with a wealth of experience. Bookings opened for the Training and Development Event on 28<sup>th</sup> February and to date there are 92 confirmed bookings, with purchase orders to cover another 62 delegates so not much room left. Great people have been booking onto the event early compared to past experience. The only concern is that we don't have enough capacity for all but there is always next year.</p> <p>Today is International Women's Day, tomorrow a number of people are involved in events, with others for the rest of the week. The theme this year is 'Embrace Equity'. Opportunity to celebrate women's achievements and raise issues around discrimination.</p> <p>At the last meeting offered an update on the recently published Cultural Review and since then there has been a lot of press coverage and fair to say the Fire and Rescue Services are in the spotlight. Directors have recently updated the statement given on behalf of WFS which allows reps to steer towards and Karen, Kerry or Nat in terms of comments, Directors can consider a response. Gone for a less is more approach.</p> <p>Statement:</p> <p>'WFS UK is a not for profit company with a purpose of supporting and developing members of the UK Fire &amp; Rescue Service.</p> <p>We are not a political body and have jurisdiction or authoritative powers over individual Services therefore we cannot comment on any individual cases as these should follow due process.</p>

	<p>We strongly condemn any unacceptable behaviour with the Fire and Rescue Service and encourage anyone who has experienced this to report it to their individual services (and if appropriate also the Police) for it to be investigated properly. We will continue to support our colleagues in any way that we can during these challenging times.'</p> <p>Linked to that we have written a letter to the Home Office and NFCC asking for their continued support with pushing the culture review forward. Once this is finalised will ask KS to share with NEC.</p> <p>Also a NFCC Culture Conference on 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> March and WFS invited as key stakeholders. JK and Alex Johnson to attend.</p> <p>Caz Whiteman also in South Yorkshire today doing some video promotion for that Cultural Event.</p> <p><b>Awards:</b> Nominations closed with an amazing 68 nominations received. Most we have ever had. Decision made on winners and runners up who will be notified and invited to attend the Awards ceremony at the TDE in June.</p>	
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#### **6. Treasurers Report:**

Presented by Jules King	For this current year, WFS is still in a healthy position. Some outstanding invoices relating to sponsorship intake, Women's Development Programme and Corporate Membership, mainly to do with a timing issue. Money in the Bank, just over £5,000 and £95,000 in the Bank Reserves. This seems a fair amount of money but if WFS were no longer receiving Corporate Membership it would not take long for this to disappear. Current amount outstanding is £23,612.00, one of which is outstanding from previous financial year of £529.00 which might have to be written off.	Action SS
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#### **Regional Reports:**

##### **Derbyshire FRS – Bex Sims**

	On top of Training and Development Event this year and already have 10 delegates booked, mix of ops and non ops plus a couple of men. Currently have 5 booked onto the next Women's Development Programme, with 5 on the next two programmes and a waiting list for next years.	
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##### **Greater Manchester FRS - Paula Lyons**

	Still managing to send some delegates on the Women's Development Programme. For the TDE, 6 people including PL and SM attending and hoping for 4 more from Executive Board. Main project at present is setting up some coaching and mentoring for career progression for women FF wanting to go for Crew Manager. This was set up to start in February but have had issues with positive discrimination being raised and other conflicts with existing courses. One session a month, links in with Police. Hope this has been resolved and looking to move forward on this starting later this month or in April. Regarding IWD, GMFRS have produced a video. Lots going on in GMFRS with CFO's email/linked to news and now on National news which the service are working through.	
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##### **Shropshire FRS – Jan Morris**

Jan Morris	Event tomorrow in Shropshire for IWD two speakers, Becci Bryant and Mayor of Shrewsbury. Regionally have attended a bulb planting event with West Mercia Police and HW FRS for IWD 2023. Also Regionally some issues regarding fitness test for women of a certain age. Need some work with regards to appropriateness of the VO2 Max. Think there is some work on a National level (i)	
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	<p>JM also involved with work by NFCC PP and Work Wear Group, organised a workshop with WFS on future firefighting PPE good range of attendees' attendance and received good feedback. Also been asked to write an article for Emergency Services Times on PPE, work wear and impact on Menopause (about 1,000 words).</p> <p>Building a relationship with Women in Fire Engineering and a lady called Andrea White (a fire engineer) trying to bring together people from a FRS background and those in Fire Engineering. Support and awareness of what each other do. Low representation of women in fire engineering and fire risk assessment. AW contacted Jan to see if there might be an opportunity to arrange an awareness day understanding pumping appliances, water supplies and issues for FF. Looking for women instructors, JM said this is difficult as instructors scattered around the country but would raise at NEC and ask how we could help to facilitate. (ii)</p> <p>Anyone interested in being a mentor for Bristol City Council Stepping Up programme? If interested I can pass on your details to the organiser for more information. I will send to Karen to send out to membership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) JK: in regards to Fitness test has not sighted on this but feel an opportunity. Recall on Fire Fit journey about 10 years ago, worked really hard for place on the Board but never invited, however hard pushed for a place. Significant issues around the Fitness testing. WFS needs to be part of this for future testing. Need to have voice heard. If JM has contact to pass on for WFS.</li> <li>(ii) Query, physical event. AW will organise but needs someone to deliver the training. Help to supply potential venue and instructor.</li> </ul>	JM
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#### Hereford and Worcester - Sara Hall

	<p>Confirmation of 2 delegates for the TDE. Missed the boat last year so a little disappointed only funding for 2. SH attending as team member. Update on Future Firefighters, delivered first session in January with Michelle Hicks on 'Introduction to the Fire Service' not looking to repeat the content on the podcast. Different format to be delivered, one every two months for 1 hr 20 minutes on a Wednesday evening. Going forward looking at providing many different sessions, not just for those not in the service but looking at also supporting those already in the fire service. Next session on 15 March on 'Interviews and Applications'. Hoping for a variety of people to be involved in all sessions to bring in that diversity. Session 3 will be around fitness in May. Looking for facilitators, able to do a couple of practice sessions and then the 1 hr 30 minutes' session.</p> <p>40 people attend the first session and the lesson learnt was that those attending and they want to ask the questions. JK thanked SH for all the hard work put into the WFS Futures.</p>	
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#### Nottinghamshire – Jo Dawson

	<p>From a Service point of view, some of you may have seen that NFRS became part of the consent coalition and safer streets campaign, joining with other partner agencies to stand against violence against women and girls. We have some wrapping on appliances, certain appliances are driving red routes and crews have had enhanced safeguarding training. This links in nicely with a sub group that has formed within our Women's Network who are raising awareness about Domestic Abuse and as a network we have seen more people attend meetings and gradually others are taking on some organising roles, possibly linked to me being able to delegate more.</p>	
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	<p>We've finished whole time recruitment and I think we have 4 or 5 females on the next course of 12, all of which I get to talk to about WFS and networks. On call recruitment is ongoing and creating some interest with females, more than before I believe. We are still doing our clothing review and I was delighted that the pre market trial of clothes is being carried out by mainly female colleagues. For IWD, we also have a video and an internal coaching event was held yesterday with Women to Work which was really positive. We are also doing some external events within the community to raise awareness about roles within NFRS and the fact they can be done by women. We've booked 5 places on WFS TDE weekend and have a couple of instructors going for the first time.</p> <p>Finally, our Women's Network and our other staff networks are beginning to get more interest and members which has enabled me to delegate more to others. A positive of the LFB report and others is that I (we) are getting more airtime with senior leaders, wanting to understand our views and thoughts on the reports. The open seat, mainly for network leads, at the SLT has also become a reality and I believe a real positive practical step forward.</p>	
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#### **TWFRS and NE region - Jo Henry**

	<p><u>TWFRS</u></p> <p>Women's Development Programme - Promoting the women's development programme, some of our employees have attend the on line events and have given positive feedback on the training, we have had an average of 2 people on each session</p> <p>Development Weekend - 9 people interested in the event and have support from ELT to send all of those interested.</p> <p>International Women's Day -TWFRS are running a workshop tomorrow for international women's day coffee, cake and a chat. Celebrate women's achievements. Raise awareness about discrimination. Take action to drive gender parity. IWD belongs to everyone, everywhere.</p> <p>We have asked the attendees to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What female inspires you and why?</li> <li>What does International Women's Day mean to you?</li> <li>What are your Health, well-being or Self-care tips for others?</li> </ul> <p>Snowdon Walk - Some of our employees from TWFRS and CFB are doing the Snowdon walk, CFB are doing the walk as a sponsorship for Firefighter Charity. They have been doing practice walks each weekend and promoting this on Facebook, Lisa, Helen and Alex have raised £175 so far.</p>	
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#### **Lancashire – presented on behalf of Jenny Nangle**

	<p>12 staff booked onto the WFS event – plus 1 group manager who has been super supportive since he took on my line manager role</p> <p>We have an IWD event tomorrow at our training centre – based around recruitment, sharing info on family friendly shifts, apprenticeships, fitness, other roles in the service, maternity/paternity policies. We have a few speakers from different departments and staff experiences. We finish with some demos on RTC, Fire Behaviour and extinguishers. People will also get the chance to have a go at the fitness test – the areas we find females generally need a little more support with. Event is sold out!</p>	
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	<p>We also have a video coming out tomorrow to celebrate IWD. A lady who worked in control 50 years ago kindly agreed to an interview/informal chat – so watch our Facebook page for that.</p>	
<b>Humberside FRS - Natalie Parkinson</b>	<p><b>Supporting Women in Career development.</b></p> <p><b>Workshop 1 -How to support women's development at HFRS.</b></p> <p>A workshop to enable male and female allies and line managers to share skills and approaches to actively develop and progress women across our service (operational, green book and control) and openly challenge barriers to change.</p> <p><b>My Career - where am I and where do I want to be</b></p> <p>Jenny and Emma from Women to Work host this workshop for women to reflect and consider your career progression options and pathways. During this 1-hour workshop you'll have the opportunity to chat with other women, as well as work through an individual exercise, as you explore your thinking around what job satisfaction, career success and happiness means to you, and you'll consider options, pathways and next steps to achieve your chosen career path.</p> <p><b>WORKSHOP 2 Action planning for women's progression at HFRS</b></p> <p>Taking ideas and discussion from the first workshops participants will develop HFRS's action plan for women's progression and retention, as part of our public sector duties. Come and play a lead role in this strategic priority area for HFRS.</p> <p><b>WORKSHOP 2: My Next Role – being prepared and demonstrating what I bring</b></p> <p>Join Jenny and Emma from Women to Work in this workshop for women to explore your thinking around your next role. During this 1-hour workshop you'll have the opportunity to chat with other women, as well as work through an individual exercise, as you consider how to best prepare and manage the process of applying for posts within fire and rescue and you'll identify the key characteristics that are needed for your next role and your own individual strengths and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Humberside continues to support Women through a Voices for Women forum. We have more Rookies engaging with Humberside to become future Firefighters. We will be bringing more Rookies to the T&amp;D Weekend in total– 12 Delegates.</p>	
<b>Mid &amp; Wales FRS and Wales RR - Hannah Lodder</b>	<p>18 places for the TDE, may be consequences of culture review in their service. Organised a Spring Board for developing women with 22 on the course. Deputy Chief of Police and a woman Welsh Rugby player, someone who worked for the Welsh Government. Big issue with Welsh Rugby Union and all the FRS. First IWD event with 50 people attending with in house speakers as well as an external speaker from WIN – who is the women's voice in Welsh Government. Interested in what JM was talking about with Menopause as no support in their service. First IWD event. Issues with Fire kit. Also interested in the Fire Engineers project. HL announced she would be standing down as Wales RR to get more people at the forefront and fresh eyes.</p> <p>JK reminded HL of the impact she has made, how much change and influence she has had in Wales. Well done for all you've done.</p>	
<b>Bedfordshire FRS and East Region - Daisy Byron</b>	<p>10 from Beds plus DB, 10 from Cambridgeshire and should get delegates from all other services in the East Region. Not long until the Snowdon walk, 56 days until they go. Nothing for IWD this year but will be on it for 2024. Next event in Bedfordshire is 25 September 2024, hosting and funding</p>	

	Training and workshop day, taking over Kempston and Dunstable training centres. Workshops looking at 'Working at height', 'RTC', 'Hot house', 'Be a control operator', 'FI Dogs, USAR, Fire Safety. Keep at East Region for now, if places not taken up will offer nationally. Alison Kibblewhite, ACFO and Head of HR is behind event.	
<b>Cumbria - Liana Selecka-Jones</b>		
	Busy time in the service and looking to hold an event possibly in May. Still waiting to confirm venue. It will be a small North West regional event with a few workshops. Will follow along the lines of Jenny Nangle's event. Since reviews nationally, Cumbria has had meet up with Chief Fire Officer which was most positive, honest and powerful conversation looking at situation in the service. LSJ has been involved with Practice 2 Progress initiative. Also coaching at assessment level. On a personal note Liana has secured a role, Group Manager in Prevention at Great Manchester FRS but will remain in the North East Region.	
<b>London – Serena Benassi</b>		
	New reps in LFB having regular meetings. LFB had the Cultural Review which was really difficult and challenging and put a lot of pressure on all the equalities groups. SB spent a lot of time supporting colleagues. Organised a number of meetings including one with LFB Commissioner and Director ally Fiona Dolman who has been really supportive so very positive on the help she will give. LFB organised own meeting with women which has resulted in Management deciding to meet in person with a promise on making change. Equality Support policy reviewed so it is more supportive of reps. Expectation is that reps should do everything in their own time and it does look like this will be reviewed. Better outcome for volunteer reps. Campaigning to create a more workable finance system for Equality Support groups and collectively started to work together to try to effect change. SB felt this was valid for improving things for women the women's action committee which is the Women's section of the FBU in London have done an excellent campaign and gained traction on improving their maternity policy so hopeful for a much better policy. Menopause action group have done a lot of work to get the menopause policy implemented but has had lots of hurdles to jump. Changed how LFB do the Training and Development process. Nicola Lown has done some fantastic work on the training side and SB on the canvassing side. Nicola, Divine and Serena had done their first sift through applications to attend (90 expressions of interest). Should be much earlier sorting out delegates. IWD, in person event all day but will also have the ability for people to log in to the event. Keynote speaker – Gina Martin, responsible for changing the law on 'up skirting' interesting presentation. SB to step down so will see some changes. JK spoke of the length of time SB has been involved with WFS and all she has achieved especially with the Training and Development Event. WFS know more recently how difficult it has been to keep in touch.	
<b>7.1 Marketing and Communications update:</b>		
<b>Newsletter:</b>	We had the best open rate ever (people reading our newsletter) of a WFS newsletter. We had some great contributions from Gail and Beth at West Midlands FRS and Airport FF Vicky at Falkland Island Government. If you would like to feature in a future newsletter (individual member spotlight or local/regional rep spotlight) and have a story to tell that you think would inspire others, please contact natalie@wfs.org.uk	All
<b>WFS Climb Snowdon</b>	Will be writing a news article for the website - I'll be looking to get quotes and a mix of images from those attending. If you'd like to contribute,	

	please send any images or quotes to nathalie@wfs.org.uk as soon as possible after the event. I'll be in touch with Daisy for some post event comments!	
<b>WFS Awards 2023:</b>	We had 68 nominations across 31 organisations. Thank you to everyone who nominated someone. I'll be working with FRS on joint press releases and WFS will make public announcements in April (date TBC).	
<b>WFS Futures</b>	Free online positive action careers event Please share this event with anyone you know who might be interested in a career with the FRS, don't forget it is also open to serving FRS staff. Sara Hall will be providing an overview of the event at the NEC meeting.	All
<b>Future Firefighter Podcast</b>	We've had nearly 6k downloads of our podcast series and people are finding WFS via podcast platforms. We'll be doing more podcasts based on new content from WFS Futures. Watch this space :-) <a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/applications-and-interviews-positive-action-tickets-552549168437">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/applications-and-interviews-positive-action-tickets-552549168437</a>	
<b>IWD</b>	If you would like any last minute support sharing any IWD events that are happening in your service, please contact nathalie@wfs.org.uk with details and I'll share on social media. Website and social media We've had nearly 14,000 website views this year performing well and 2.6k views in the last 7 days driven by the newsletter and national event ticket release. LinkedIn is now our fastest growing social media platform. If you're on LinkedIn, please follow WFS and share our posts. <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/womeninthefireserviceuk/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/womeninthefireserviceuk/</a>	

#### **8.WFS Events Update**

##### **Women's Development Programme**

	Programme 5 started on 8 February with 25 delegates Programme 6 is now open for bookings, 3 delegates to date and will start on 17 May. Programme 7 scheduled for 17 October 2023 Programme 8 scheduled for 8 February 2024. Online working well, much better than face to face. All information available on the website.	
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##### **Training and Development Event – Caroline Anderson/Karen Smith**

	Fast booking up for the event which will result in some disappointed FRS. The TDE is so big now we may have to rely on more Regional Events. QR code to be set up for those attending with all the information required so we can go paper free. Good communication with the FSC All instructors and facilitators sent QR to complete for all requirements. Merchandise, different company which will enable us to have an online shop. We will take a certain amount for purchasing. KS update: 92 places already booked, also have purchase orders for another 62 delegates just waiting for details for those delegates. Still receiving emails asking for places of up to 8-10 at a time. Likely to be full at the end of the week. Lack of accommodation at the FSC unfortunately will mean we will not be able to accept all requests for places. Bridges has been decommissioned so no overflow on rooms. Top	
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	limit of 200 for delegates. Also have to accommodate WFS, facilitators and Trainers.	
	Natalie Parkinson - Query re: credit card payment and purchase order. Eventbrite will only accept payment as bookings are made. Purchase order means this all has to be done manually by the WFS Office including adding on all the details for each individual delegate.	
	DSFRS have an event for IWD with some amazing speakers being Miriam Heppell, Kathryn Billing, AJ Whittaker from FF Charity and Laura Gibb.	
<b>9. Any Other Business:</b>		
	JK - really proud to be part of WFS, feel so much energy every time there is a meeting. Virtual meetings work well as allows more people to attend. Energy and all the different initiatives everyone is engaged in is so heartening for such a small organisation. Challenge for Directors - if there is more you feel you need or want from the Directors in terms of a bit more of a steer, please do get in touch and ask. If anyone wants to get involved more, ask to sit in on a Directors meeting (held every other month), WFS needs all of your energy and experience.	All
<b>10. Dates of next meetings:</b>		
	Friday, 28 April 2023 - 10.00-13.00 Tuesday, 19 September 2023 - to be held at the Emergency Services Show - Tuesday, 5 December 2023 - 10.00-13.00	