



# Women in the Fire Service UK Annual Plan

## Foreword from Chair, Jules King

Welcome to our Annual Plan which sets out our priorities and direction of travel. In recent times we have used the word ‘unprecedented’ on many occasions and the Coronavirus pandemic created a greater task for us, our network, and in determining what support our members needed.

Despite recent challenges, I would like to highlight some of the good that has come out of the pandemic in the way that we operate. We have seen effective partnership working, a growing community of supporters and members, and a small army of volunteers who have been there to help us continue to flourish and grow.

Our community spirit offers much hope and opportunity for a brighter future and ties in with our values of working together, sharing strengths, and being future focussed.

We have some exciting projects ahead—getting started with a new membership management system; a new partnership for our Women’s Development Programme; and planning for the next training and development event at the Fire Service College.

Take a look through our Annual Plan. The work shows a commitment to making Women in the Fire Service UK a strong, well-connected, and more sustainable organisation.



Jules King, WFS Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jules King".

# Activities, objectives and goals 2021/22



## Summary

Women in the Fire Service UK is a non-profit volunteer-led organisation managed by our Directors, two full-time employees and a National Executive Committee (NEC). Our NEC is made up of our Directors, Regional Representatives, Executive Members, and Co-opted Members. Our Directors are formed of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Company Secretary, Patron, HR Consultant, Corporate Director and an International Director.

We are a registered company no. 06577352.

## Our vision

We envisage a society where women and girls are empowered to realise a career in the Fire and Rescue Service and to reach their full potential. We spread a message that a career in the Fire and Rescue Service is for everyone.

## Mission



***“Enabling and inspiring confident and successful women to build a more progressive Fire and Rescue Service.”***

## Change and adaptation in 2020

The pandemic impacted our organisation and volunteer network significantly in 2020 with furloughed employees, and volunteers stretched with their professional and personal responsibilities—because as ever—the Fire and Rescue Service was at the heart of serving communities. Our guiding principles for short, medium and long term recovery were the foundations for a rethink on our ways of working, sustainability and



longevity. The ideas and changes realized now offer much potential to strengthen our organisation for the longer term. Through this flexibility and reworking we can broaden our services in the coming financial year with a new found resilience.

## Main achievements in financial year April 2019-March 2020

- Undertook research into the running of a girl's camp, and wrote a funding proposal for future use.
- Set up an online webstore for our merchandise usually sold at our annual training and development event.
- Set up a free to members self-service jobs board on our website connecting our online audience with our Corporate Members.
- Gained recognition and financial support from forty Corporate Members.
- Launched a brand-new categorised awards scheme and online nomination process resulting in 54 nominations—an increase of 50 on the previous year.
- Delivered our Women's Development Programme to 42 delegates at West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Humberside Fire and Rescue Service.
- Researched, developed and planned our first online events—our pilot 'Choose to Challenge' webinars.
- Delivered our 19th National Training and Development Event, 21-23 June where we welcomed 248 delegates from 40 UK services and five international services.
- Visited Nepal with Devon and Somerset FRS USAR and Community Safety, as part of an ongoing humanitarian project to offer community support on burn injuries.
- Issued an environmental statement, addressing the need to recognise and review our carbon footprint in response to the climate crisis.



## Planned services for financial year 1st April '21-31st March '22

- Develop and build on our Women's Development Programme with our chosen partners to offer an impactful personal development support opportunity.
- Roll out a mentoring programme working with the National Fire Chiefs Council and Yorkshire and Humberside Fire Service teams.
- Participate in humanitarian projects to build on the knowledge and skills of individuals and organisations and to strengthen our international connections.
- Improve and build upon our current and future services and refine our member benefits through better understanding of our paid membership.
- Develop and plan for our 20th National Training and Development Event in June 2022 at the Fire Service College.
- Research and plan for merchandise in line with our brand strategy, procurement policy, and environmental statement.

- Continue our virtual events based on the needs of our Corporate Members and community. Seek opportunities to build partnerships and volunteer opportunities.
- Develop a support programme for our NEC and Local Reps to enable them to be comfortable and confident as WFS representatives.
- Establish arrangements for partnership working and communications with our Corporate Members in Scotland and Northern Ireland to achieve common goals.
- Attract and retain more members through digital transformation of our member joining process and payments via an online membership management system.



How we will improve communications and engagement

- Target communications to our paid members via a new membership database.
- Adopt and develop social media channels to reach new members and supporters and gain brand recognition.
- Continue to develop our e-newsletter to celebrate our members and supporters.
- Invest in the website to improve customer experience and online engagement.
- Research and plan for new merchandise in line with our new brand strategy.
- Promote and network at in-person/virtual events (those we host and/or attend).
- Work with our corporate members to help promote our services and activities.
- Pursue opportunities to promote WFS in local and national press/media.





## Financial planning and future projections

WFS continues to be funded from membership fees (corporate and individual) and from its events. During 2020 with the Covid-19 pandemic and cancellation of our annual training and development event, this potentially caused the Directors concern about short to medium term viability. However, with a generous donation from the National Fire Chiefs Council and the use of the government retention scheme (furlough) for our two permanent staff, WFS achieved financial viability. In February 2021, the virtual events were successfully launched and the Women's Development Programme (being launched in September 2021) will ensure that WFS maintains financial stability.

## Budget

The financial year-end, April 2021, recorded a healthy cash in bank (£7,445) position and savings account (£87,839). Our cash flow is improving as we engage external companies for bookings and introduce a more streamlined membership system. We have reviewed all our contracts and spending profile to ensure value for money for our members. As a non-profit organisation, going forward and building our services WFS anticipates that during 2021/22 and further, we will be able to confidently re-invest back into our members and women in the fire services.