

Women in the Fire Service
National Executive Committee
17 September 2021 at 10.00 am via Zoom

Attending: Jules King (Chair), Caroline Anderson (Vice Chair), Sara Slater (Treasurer), Miriam Heppell (Company Secretary), Jenny Nangle (RR North West), Bex Sims (RR East Midlands), Elizabeth Curtis (RR South East), Amy Beams (RR South East), Hannah Lodder (RR Wales), Karla Stevenson (Co-opted/Scottish RR), Sara Hall (Executive), Jo Henry (RR North East), Lisa Howsden (LR Cleveland), Liana Selecka-Jones (LR Cumbria), Nicole Smy (LR Essex County), Jo Dawson (LR Nottinghamshire), Peggy Male (LR West Midlands), Kiera (LFB), Karen Smith (WFS Administration Manager) and Nathalie Holden (WFS Marketing and Communications Officer)

1. **Apologies** were received from: Alex Johnson, Nicola Lown, Lynsey McVay, Divine Zake, Georgina Connor, Helen Chadwick, Emily Hodson, Nicky Thurston, Serena Benassi

The meeting started with a presentation by Hibou Drusden, Organisational Development Manager from Humberside FRS updating on the Pilot Mentoring Programme. This programme started as a regional programme in Yorkshire and Humberside in November 2020 and due to end in November 2021. This originated from the 2017 Women's Development Programme delivered by Women to Work. The PowerPoint gave the committee an insight as to how the programme has developed through the past year, the benefits to women and the huge amount of work involved.

JK thanked Hibou for all the hard work gone into the programme, being persistent and keeping up the momentum. HD invited WFS to attend the Mentor CPD event and a Close event for the final evaluation. Dates to be confirmed. To continue with this valuable programme, it would need input from various avenues. JK suggested a small task group of volunteers should be set up to drive this forward, carry on the momentum and consider the next steps. This needs to link with the NFCC, Becci Bryant and Ian Stone. Consistency with governance was required and a tender process. HB left the meeting.

JK welcomed all new members to the NEC meeting.

2. **Notes of the last meeting** held on 29 April 2021 were agreed as a true record.

3. **No matters arising**

4. **WFS Gifts and Hospitality** – None declared

5. **WFS Chairs Report**

Reflecting back to our meeting in April I commented on the positivity that was generally felt in relation to the pandemic, and here we are 6 months later and there remains much uncertainty. That said we remain focussed on a return to our training and development event for 2022 and work is underway under Caroline's leadership through the event management team with a productive meeting held just this week. Last weekend saw the 20th anniversary of 9/11 where nearly 3,000 people lost their lives including 343 New York Firefighters and I am sure you all found your own way to remember all those people. I was certainly moved by some of the documentaries and stories from families who lost loved ones and from the survivors. As you will know we have run a number of virtual events over the last year including the choose to challenge sessions, working with our colleagues in Lebanon and some great support for the future firefighters programme. There are many of you on the call today who have helped bring these event to life and my sincere thanks to you all for your support. If you are interested to know more about any of these please do get in touch with Karen and Nat. At a recent debrief I was reminded of all the work WFS are involved in such as the woman's development programme, progressing our awards and the great work going on throughout the UK FRS by all. A number of volunteers supported this year's Emergency Services Show with our partners from FIREAID with presentations made to other organisations and some

good contacts made with organisations. It was really good to be able to physically attend an event and to promote the work that WFS does.

6. Treasurers report

Financial Year Ending 30 April 2021

The draft Accounts have been received from Nick Westbury & Co Ltd and will be reviewed in advance of the next NEC meeting by the Directors.

Financial Year Ending 30 April 2022

The position of income and expenditure at the end of August 2021 is:

Income to date	16,965
Expenditure to date	-19,478
Surplus/(Deficit)	-2,513

The main income to date is transfers from reserves (£8,870), Training and Development events (£5,210) and memberships (Corporate £1,750 and Individual £842). Individual membership did increase this year and payment should be via Member Mojo, unfortunately, a number of members haven't cancelled standing orders and the old membership fee paid. Karen Smith is working hard on rectifying this issue but members should be reminded of the new fee and process. KS to send information on how to join MemberMojo to NEC/LR **Action Point: KS**

There is one corporate membership outstanding from 20/21 (Bedfordshire). Expenditure to date is mainly salary costs. Both members of staff are back working full-time after a period of furlough.

The bank and reserves position at the end of August 2021 is:

Bank Balance	4,932
Reserves Balance	78,971
Total	83,903

Forecasts for the remaining year are ongoing and are not finalised at this time.

7. Regional reports

Jenny Nangle –North West Regional Rep

- The Lancashire WFS group meet on a regular basis
- A Brochure was produced for this year's International Women's Day which is also been used as a recruitment tool, this highlights women in the Service, what their role is and some background on each individual
- A presentation is given on all recruit courses by a WFS local rep to new entrants on Recruit Courses at STC and those on a retained course (only 2 weeks) individuals are spoken to on the passing out parade to ensure they are aware of the group. The latest course saw 4 females, 3 of these wish to join our group.
- Support was being requested from the families of women employed in the Fire Service to provide a video/dialogue for International Women's Day 2022. This has been agreed and we will start to make progress on this.
- IWD will also be marked by a walk organised by the WFS group in Lancs with the hope to open this out to the region.
- Discussions over providing hygiene packs for females is ongoing in the service but we hope to bring this online soon

- Women to work sessions have been sent through to our head of training who will look into this – previous discussions had not been followed through due to covid so hopeful we can begin to make progress with this and possibly link to our talent management programme.

Sara Hall – Executive/Positive Action

For the first time since I have been a member of WFS we have an active local rep in each service; Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, West Midlands and Hereford and Worcester. We are arranging a local event meeting before Christmas.

Jo Henry – North East Regional Rep

TWFRS Update - Menopause Procedure launch. Due to launch the procedure, with launch event including videos, personal experiences and awareness sessions.

Endometriosis - We are looking to raise awareness of endometriosis and become an endometriosis friendly employers. By signing up to be an *Endometriosis Friendly Employer Scheme*, an organisation is demonstrating its commitment to support employees with endometriosis – 1 in 10 women. It is a demonstrable way of showing your commitment to your employee's wellbeing. Currently no Fire and rescue services signed up to the scheme, other emergency services. Like to encourage you to review the scheme in your service.

[Endometriosis Friendly Employer Scheme | Endometriosis UK \(endometriosis-uk.org\)](#)

Sanitary products - We have been working with our estates team to ensure that sanitary products are in all toilets in all locations.

It was highlighted the WM office on stations didn't have any sanitary bins, all offices have been supplied with the bins.

NWG's - We currently have 4 Network Groups covering LGBT+, Gender, Disability and BAME. We are introducing a new NWG, Diversity of Thought. This is looking to enhance neurodiversity and raise awareness. It's in its early stages, just been approved at our Equality Committee.

Being led by Crew Manager Kate Fullen, we are interested to know if any other Services have a group that supports this area. If anyone would like to be involved or has an existing group, can you please contact kate.fullen@twfire.gov.uk

UKRO -This weekend the UKRO event is in Newcastle. 60 teams from across the UK are taking part today and tomorrow. We are going to the event to promote recruitment. Currently open to register an interest that we can then use for positive action for this round of recruitment.

Cleveland FRS – Lisa Howsden Local Rep

We have the next meeting arranged and have someone coming in to give us a talk about menopause. Discussions have taken place about giving awareness sessions to dept. and station due to some female staff having negative experiences.

Bex Sims – East Midlands Regional Rep

6/12 females on wholetime trainee course, 2/12 females on on-call trainee course, 2 women applied for WM process (me included!), 1 woman applied for CM process, 1 female appointed to SM!

Elizabeth Curtis- South East Regional Rep (jointly with Amy Beams)

Amy and I have been working on a series of events for Menopause Awareness Month with a number of other services. ESFRS supported IWD with videos, publicity and internal Choose to Challenge events - and we've been running positive action events for wholetime recruitment people on board. As part of the Fire PRO network (comms professionals in FRS) we are also hopping someone from WFS could come to talk to us as part of a panel session so we can get more comms people on board.

Jo Dawson -Nottinghamshire FRS Local Rep

Continuing with talks to all trainees about WFS. We have two FFs booked on the WFS Women's Development Programme and encouraged contacts to book on Future Firefighter sessions. Carrying out a trouser sizing exercise to create a size conversion chart for duty rig trouser wearers. First meeting of NFRS women's network, very positive with 20 attendees, 'This is me' and 'Barrier Busting' will be standing items on the agenda. Launch event planned as a webinar with Shaunagh Brown, FF at Kent FRS and England Rugby Union player will be keynote speaker – 8th October 2021.

Liana Selecka-Jones – Cumbria Local Rep

Cumbria held first development day. Kasey Grainger a great support with group, now stepped back.

Nathalie Holden – Marketing and Communications Officer

There are still places left on Women's Development Programme. WFS and Women to Work to host an online Q&A on 23 September 2021. Anyone can book on and find out more. Shop flash 50% off sale finishes tonight. Future Firefighter Positive Action – audio recordings finished to be sent out to those unable to attend. The 6-week recordings will be released on the WFS website, one per month.

8. WFS Policies

8.1 Awards

The Awards policy specifies at the September NEC for a decision to decide on the launch, time parameters for the process and which categories to feature. NH and KS presented the proposed timeline for approval. This included a nominations open date for 1 November 2021 and a closing date of 1 March 2022.

Timeline AGREED

Categories to include Exceptional Allies, Bright Light, Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader, Firefighter Rising Star and Young Person Role Model.

Categories AGREED

9. WFS 2021/2022 Events update

9.1 Women's Development Programme

To date 17 bookings for the first programme starting on 7 October, maximum number of places 30.

9.2 Training & Development event

CA reported the Events Management Team met on 15 October and planning is ahead of schedule. The Fire Service College joined the meeting and indicated the college would be working towards 200+ numbers and expected to be working back to normal in the New Year. The accommodation block Bridges 2 (primarily used for WFS Team and Facilitators) will be out of action for this event which will have an impact on numbers.

As it is impossible to know what the situation with Covid will be for next year it was suggested the EMT should explore a plan B, ie virtual. Add to next EMT agenda

Action Point EMT

A 'Save the date' flyer to be produced next month. Delegate fee still to be decided after discussion with the Directors at their October meeting.

9.3 Future Firefighter Positive Action

SH reported 100 places were booked onto the 6-week programme which started on 11 September although only 23 attended. This prompted the cancellation of the next programme scheduled for

27th October to allow time to assess why so few attended. The next programme is scheduled for January 2022. Anyone interested in supporting the programme to contact SH or KS.

10. WFS Annual Business Plan 2021-2022

This document provides a flavour of what WFS is doing and can be used to show to anyone who enquires on what WFS do. This can be found on the website under 'Governance'.

11. HeForShe

Miriam Heppell presented the paper on HeForShe with four proposed commitments for WFS to adopt. It is further proposed that WFS seek to promote the HeForShe Movement on its website through Social Media and at all available opportunities, including encouraging Fire and Rescue Services, other organisations and individuals to make their own commitments.

After discussions on the correct language to use which highlighted the complexity of the proposal, JK asked KS to forward the four commitments to the committee for comments with a short deadline to reply.

Action Point: KS/all

12. Any Other Business

CA – attended the Emergency Services Show and met with Rosenbaur and the Airport Fire Officers Association both considering sponsorship. IFE asked WFS to provide a wish list for women, any suggestions to be sent to Caroline.

Bristol Airport have recently joined as corporate members and the Airport Fire Officers Association joined in August.

Date of next meeting – 2nd December 2021 at 10.00 am via Zoom