



**Women in the Fire Service
National Executive Committee
held on 17 April 2024 via Teams**

Present:

Directors: Jules King, Chair, Caroline Anderson, Vice Chair

Executive Member:

Co-opted Member: Paula Lyons (Greater Manchester FRS), Nicky Thurston (Kent FRS)

Regional Reps: Amy Beams (Hampshire & Isle of Wight), Bex Sims (East Midlands), Catherine Paddon representing Daisy Byron (East), Amy Croxton-Evans (Wales)

Local Reps: Jan Morris (Shropshire) Jo Dawson (Nottinghamshire), Natalie Parkinson (Humberside & Yorkshire), Beth Barton (South Wales), Lisa Howsden (Cleveland), Karla Stevenson (Scotland), Georgina Connor (Jersey), Melanie O’Hara (NFCC), Jo Hardy (NFCC) part of meeting

WFS: Karen Smith, WFS Administration Manager

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Apologies: Kerry Cassidy, Alex Johnson, Dany Cotton, Sue Mallinson, Lianne Petts, Helen Chadwick, Hannah Patchett, Jo Henry, Jennifer Schamp, Anna Snelson, Karen Pointer, Vicky Wallens-Hancock, Lynsey McVay, Laura Mullins, Nicola Lown and Hannah Lodder. | |
| | Action: |
| Notes from the last meeting: | Agreed as a true record. |
| Matters arising: | |
| Alex Johnson agreed to write suppliers re correct fit for PPE kit – actioned | |
| Teams to be used for sharing documents – regional reps event JK tried to share information, can we use teams to share. Still a work in progress | |
| Policies - a number that are in need of a review, not opportunity to spend time before event. Will do an appropriate review and update after the event. WFS Governance needs to be tightened up. | |
| Dragaer have asked after the successful event in South Yorkshire, if one could be held in the South region. Alex would enquire if any services interested. | |
| | |
| Gifts and Hospitality: | None declared |
| Chairs Report: | |
| Since our last meeting in February we saw many events up and down the country celebrating International Women’s Day on the 8th March with this year’s theme being ‘inspire inclusion’. There were face to face events, virtual events and much celebration on social media and my thanks to all of those who were involved in these events. | |

| | | |
|---|---|--------|
| <p>Another event to celebrate was in Greater Manchester last week - with Sue Mallinson and Paula Lyons putting an incredible effort in to arranging a WFS event that saw 130 delegates enjoy a great range of workshops, supported really well by CFO Dave Russel and the senior leaders of the Service. The Antarctic Fire Angels attended to share their experience following their recent expedition to the South Pole, which was inspiring to all present.</p> <p>We are now less than 50 days away from our national training and development event at the Fire Service college and we will have a more detailed update later on in the agenda.</p> <p>Our 2024 awards saw 130 (check the exact number) nominations - at the last meeting it was the day before the closing date with 83 nominations received at that time - so there was a real surge of nominations coming in those last few hours. We will look forward to celebrating with the award winners at the event in June.</p> | | |
| | | Action |
| <p>Treasurers Report:</p> | <p>No financial statement available. JK informed the committee that WFS had engaged an independent Tax expert to review if we should be VAT registered. After a thorough review it was agreed this was not required as we are not for profit, all money goes back into the organisation and events.</p> | |
| | | |
| <p>Regional Reports:</p> | | |
| <p>Karla Stevenson Scottish Regional Rep</p> | <p>WFS full steam ahead in Scotland, two additional reps, plus 4 local reps. Service really embracing. Women's Health seat beside FBU, CFO etc. The first ever event planned for 28/29 September which is exciting. For IWD we had an all-female fire skills course for teenagers – all graduated with Employability certificate.</p> | |
| <p>Paula Lyons – Greater Manchester FRS</p> | <p>Request for any women wanting to trial menopause trousers to make contact, will feedback at next meeting</p> | |
| <p>Mel O'Hare – NFCC</p> | <p>Mini WFS weekend at Sheffield, 10 people attending with IC, Trauma Care and BA. Alex to speak.</p> | |
| <p>Amy Croxton-Evans – Wales Regional Rep</p> | <p>With the cultural reviews there seems to be lots of pressure but looking at this in a positive way. North – continue with walks – cuppa and a chat. Sometimes with guest speaker Coaching and mentoring for women – see it be it, through WFS</p> | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>All Wales event in South Wales FRS 18/19 Oct – region with maximum of 60 people.</p> <p>EDI event for network chairs in November – celebration of everything. Session to show what WFS is/or speaker – suggestions would be welcome. Could be a shared/lived experience</p> <p>Uniform trials continuing</p> <p>Guidance and support welcome</p> | |
| Nicky Thurston | <p>Male gender based role model charity – has contact details if ACE interested.</p> <p>Jan Morris- also has contact for Sal to help with EDI day.</p> | |
| Jo Dawson – Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service | <p>IWD – coffee and cake/less structured which went really well. Sharing ‘purple’ love</p> <p>Human Library online event – human books who went into breakout rooms</p> <p>Derbyshire and Leicestershire did events.</p> <p>Recruitment both green and grey book roles</p> <p>On call course 2 out of 10 women/whole time has concluded 4 out of 20 are women.</p> <p>32 (two women/1 man)</p> <p>Working in prevention for 6 months and then going onto firefighter.</p> <p>Uniform trial, no update</p> <p>Estates programmes to make facilities more inclusive. Ongoing estates – making it more inclusive. Different I/C tabard and avatar, choice of female station manager.</p> <p>ACFO input on importance of language – anything FS podcast wise more relevant to fire.</p> | |
| Bex Sims- East Midlands Regional Rep | <p>Lincolnshire update on behalf of Chantelle Bird</p> <p>Given women’s network a jumpstart.</p> <p>WhatsApp group for all female FF Rookies Red</p> <p>First women in Senior Leadership Team</p> | |
| | <p>Derbyshire</p> <p>IWD did an online campaign</p> <p>Recruiting whole-time open, run a women’s only although disappointed by numbers.</p> <p>Positive action/had lots of people attended the mixed group</p> | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>Held Women to Work online workshops 2 sessions.</p> <p>Gender network – medicals big discussion, on employees being asked to remove clothes. Assured this is standard. Changed information so people are made aware of this.</p> <p>Terminology – in discussion. Training for all leaders, cultural statement, how they can ‘nip in the bud’</p> | |
| Lisa Howsden - Cleveland | <p>Cleveland picked by Lancaster University to trial a menopause tool kit for 6 months, surveyed half way through, to be launched this week. Open to everyone eventually.</p> <p>Launch of health and wellbeing week – Emily Watkins coming into talk</p> <p>Fire Safety advisers all women</p> <p>TDE 2 delegates going, requests for workshops sent to co-ordinator but not forwarded to delegates, which caused a long delay. Could LH have a copy in future or delegates notified that co-ordinator has received these.</p> | |
| Catherine Paddon – East region | <p>Suffolk FRS about to launch new control room, changes number of women significantly</p> <p>Now have a Two-week culture induction before new employees begin their role -SWIFT – women’s network have opportunity to be involved.</p> <p>Trying to introduce from the beginning, networks, allies and what is on offer. Making people aware of what expectations and behaviours required and what is available.</p> <p>Also trialling menopause trousers (which seem to have more comfort/elastic waistband).</p> | |
| Natalie Parkinson – Humberside FRS | <p>Celebrated IWD and held a couple of workshops, ‘feel the fear’, ‘how to be an ally’ and ‘Leadership’</p> <p>Recruitment pass out, more women throughout the year and continue with Rookie Reds.</p> | |
| Amy Beams – Hampshire and Isle of Wight | <p>Hampshire IWFRS IWD collaboration with South Coast Region. Sara Cox, first woman Rugby Referee as speaker</p> <p>Internal wellbeing walk</p> | |

| | | |
|---|--|-----|
| | <p>Women's Health checks with Occupational Health which were very popular, needed to add 3 extra days and realise this is not done enough.</p> <p>Had external cultural review, discussions on diversity. Signed up to menopause scheme but not progress. More resources required and how to plan that, and fund.</p> | |
| Jo Hardy - NFCC | <p>Mark Hardingham term as NFCC Chair will reach a close soon so looking for new Chair. CFO for the last 2 years. Promote within your service. A woman Chair would be good.</p> | All |
| Firefighters Charity – Ellen Irving | <p>WFS welcomed Ellen Irving who joined the meeting to give details on a Women's focus week with the Firefighters Charity. Physiotherapist based at Jubilee House. Had a pilot Women's Focus week.</p> <p>It doesn't have to be only people who work direct in the Fire Service, as long as they have done 5 years, retired or a dependant. Still continuing with regular rehabilitation. Women's wellbeing week, broad target market roughly for around 40-60 age bracket to increase fitness level, mental resilience or general well-being</p> <p>Menopause, changes physically. Support and guidance on how they can help with transition This programme involves physiotherapists, Exercise therapists, health and wellbeing practitioners and psychologist, quite a broad range of professions</p> <p>Week running at Jubilee House, 30 June – 5 July, hoping to do another one towards the winter time. Room for 10 to attend, considering trying to increase to 12 women. Information can be found on firefightercharity.org.uk</p> <p>Other resources on the website that might be useful. Will also be holding a menopause week in Devon.</p> <p>JK thanked Ellen for providing all this information to WFS.</p> | |
| 7.1 Marketing and Communications update: | | |
| <p>KS updated the committee that Emma Smith had now left although supporting WFS working one day a week until a replacement was appointed. Hoping to have someone by the event.</p> | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Awards – Winners and runners up have all been notified by email letters and this includes letters to all their Chief Fire Officers. Nominees have also received letters informing them of their nomination. Full announcement will be made on social media on 1st May.</p> <p>A newsletter focusing on the Training and Development weekend will be available after the event.</p> | |
| | |
| <p>8.WFS Events Update</p> | |
| <p>Women’s Development Programme</p> | |
| <p>KS provided an update on the WDP with the last session of Programme 8 to be held tomorrow. There are 4 further programmes planned on the following dates:</p> <p>Programme 9 - October 16, 14 November and 10 December – 9.30-12.30 Programme 10 – February/March/April 2025 Programme 11 – May/June/July 2025 Programme 12 – September/October start After this there will be review of the programme and going out to tender.</p> | |
| | |
| <p>Training and Development Event – Caroline Anderson/Karen Smith</p> | |
| <p>Number of delegates to date: 209</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onsite: 168 • Offsite: 32 • Saturday only: 9 <p>Delegates will be attending from 52 Fire and Rescue Services WFS Team/Instructors – Total: 74 All accommodation is full at the FSC No extra beds available to make up more twin rooms. Possibly look at camping in the future.</p> <p>Event Sponsors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline Sponsors - Supply+ • Silver – Itrack PPE <p>Awards Sponsors</p> <p>Headline – MSA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Services Times • Draeger • Practice to Progress • IFE • Hainsworth Protection Fabrics (awaiting payment) • NFCC <p>PBI have made contact to sponsor one of the remaining awards below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional Allies • Digital Trailblazer • Fundraising Heroes | |
| <p>9. Any Other Business:</p> | |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| | |
| <p>Bex Sims – question for Lincolnshire re: whole time working patterns: whole time working patterns, having to stay on station when there are children involved. Any thoughts would be really helpful and how other services cope with this. This can be quite a barrier and needs to be addressed by services. Put question out on WhatsApp to see if others have thoughts</p> | All |
| <p>Derbyshire – networks being relaunch – in the process of relaunching the gender support network and considering changing name with relaunch to reflect being inclusive. What do other services call their network and reasons for existing. What is the national picture? Stay focus on women, should that be in the name? Any thoughts would be really helpful.</p> | All |
| <p>Jules King - AGM – working with KS, JK discussed trying to make the process a little lighter with the AGM and the election of the National Executive Committee. Move away from where we say currently ask committee members ‘do you want to continue in role on the National Executive Committee’. We will be inviting people to express their desire to continue on the committee, in what role and what they would like to focus on for the future of WFS.</p> <p>A couple of Directors will be stepping down at the AGM which will mean a few positions will be available. Anyone wishing to take on a Directors roll will need to have already being part of WFS as Executive/Co-opted or Regional Rep level. JK expressed how important it is to evolve.</p> <p>Alex Johnson will step down as Director, to allow an opportunity to bring someone new in.</p> | JK/KS |
| <p>Jan Morris - NFCCPPE JM – with impending departure, WFS will need someone to pick up the NFCC PPE, lead and deputy. Lead by people in Kent. Amy Beams, happy to get together a small group to collate information, use experience. Beth Barton also happy to help with contribution. Asked to present at the PPE conference on 13 May and Amy Beams happy to do this with support on WFS views. Support also offered from Caroline Anderson and Beth Barton.</p> | AB/CA/BB |
| <p>Amy Croxton-Evans – Policies and ranking Asked for information on any policies on appearance, hair/jewellery that can be shared. JM to share Shropshire FRS Also a review on rank markings, conflict operational/non-operational. Non-operational predominately woman. Don’t want to create a divide. Has there been any work on this that people are aware of?</p> | JM All |
| <p>Paula Lyons– regional events feedback. Paula and Sue Mallinson have organised a Team session for an hour to go through some of the process for organising an event.</p> | |
| <p>KS – Insurance KS informed the committee that WFS have met with Insurers to review what is covered on the annual insurance. This was at the request of the Insurance</p> | |

Company. It became evident WFS need to tighten up on activities running in regions and the responsibility, liability/risk that could be involved. The Training and Development Event was also not sufficiently covered for all the activities involved. The Insurance company made it very clear that any event held under the umbrella of 'WFS' needs to be covered under their own/or individual insurance. Separate insurance is now in place for the Training and Development Event. This needs to be made clear in all communications on events. Daisy Byron, has already provided communications for Mam Tor informing that they require their own individual insurance.

10. Date of next meeting: 25 September 2024

