Women in the Fire Service

National Executive Committee

02 October 2025 via Teams

Attending:

Directors: Jules King, Amy Beams

Executive: Jenny Nangle, Karen Pointer

Co-opted: Beth Barton, Ceri Sumner, Jan Morris, Nicky Thurston

Regional Reps: Hannah Sherwood (representing Daisy Byron East), Ellie Hayes (South East), Sam O'Brien,), Emma Edwards (Joint Wales), Lisa Howsden (North East), Caz Whiteman (Yorkshire & Humberside), Kate Garrigan (East Midlands), Sam O'Brien (West Midlands), Olivia Crook (South West), Anna Snelson (London), Hannah Lodder (Joint Wales)

WFS: Karen Smith, WFS Services Manager and Ellie Mason, Marketing & Communications Officer

1.Apologies were received from:		
Daisy Byron, Dany Cotton, Jo Henry, Kathryn Billing, Paula Lyons, Vicky Wallens-Hancock, Karla Stevenson, Paige Williams, Sara Slater		
Jules King welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular new members who were elected at the AGM in June, including: o Ceri Summer – new co-opted member o Emma Edwards (North Wales) – taken over from Amy Croxton-Evans as Joint Wales Representative o Kate Garrigan – New East Midlands Regional Representative o Lisa Howsden – New North East Regional Representative o Olivia Crook – New South West Regional Representative		
2.Notes from the last meeting:	**Received as a true record**	
3.Matters arising:		
Maternity Policy – looking for Model policies to reflect the FRS with a number to be updated. JK in discussion with NFCC to look at broader family friendly policies, and has raised getting a small group together to move forward. NFCC open to this suggestion. Update to be provided when available.		Action JK
PPE – No survey was provided following the PPE session at the Training and Development Event. However, PCIAW will be sharing an update on the results		Action closed

from the PPE measuring exercise. One key finding was that 20% of the women measured were smaller than the smallest size of PPE currently available.	
Policies – EDI policy. Thanks to Ellie Hayes for forwarding the EDI policies to Dal Rai. This should be available soon to present to the NEC for agreement.	
Business Plan – still on going	Action: JK
4.Gifts and Hospitality: None declared	
5.Chairs Report: Presented by Jules King	
I hope you have all had a good summer and have managed to enjoy a break away from work. Since we last met, we held our 23rd Training and Development event at the Fire Service College in June, which I think is fair to say as another great success with some amazing feedback from attendees. We also held our annual awards at the event, which was hosted by George and Bex - the Antarctic Fore Angels which gave it a really special feel, along with all the efforts from the WFS team to make the room look beautiful. I think the most memorable moment for me was the final award when the winner of the youth inspiration award came to collect her award and spoke to beautifully, full of maturity for such a young woman and ended with a standing ovation, which was a great way to conclude the awards. I know not everyone will have had the opportunity to attend the event, but hopefully you will have all seen the newsletter that followed soon after which was a celebration of the whole event. As ever, we are always looking forward and so dates for your diaries for 2026 5-7 June - which will be our 24th event. Two weeks ago we had a stand at the Emergency Services show, held at the NEC in Birmingham, we had great support from the WFS team, and also Sam O'Brien and Lisa Howsden. We had the opportunity to contribute to speaking on a number of topics and Amy Beams and Ellie Mason did a great job for WFS. I also wanted to take the time to celebrate a number of recent and upcoming events; Scotland recently held a regional event for the second successive year and earlier this week it was good to see Yorkshire run an event. I will be heading to Wales on the 17th October for their second successive relational WFS event, closely followed by a South East event hosted by Surrey FRS in November. Finally I wanted to thank you to you all for all that you do to keep WFS going and celebrating all things that we stand for, I recognise this is above your day	

jobs and sometimes volunteering takes up precious time - it is appreciated so very much.	
6. Treasurer's Report:	
The WFS Treasurer, Sara Slater sent apologies. JK presented the Financial Summary, full report Appendix 1	
7. Health & Safety	
No health and safety concerns were identified	
8. Marketing and Communications update: Ellie Mason	Action:
Emergency Services Show. Both Amy and I spoke at the community hub stage to do some myth busting about women in operational fire service roles. Amy also spoke twice on the Thursday in panel talks on the protecting our protectors stage about 'Inclusivity and the importance of sizing for everybody' and 'how to get what you want - the role of specifications'. I also spoke on the firefighters podcast regarding all things WFS, this came out yesterday and will feature on our socials today if anyone wants to have a listen. **Website rebuild:** We are have a website rebuild, and have just started working on this with our website builder, hopefully this will be complete in the New Year. **Regional Event Packs:** We are working on regional event packs containing things like a roller banners, a table cloth, leaflets, pens, bookmarks etc so that WFS promotional materials can stay in the region and shipped around between local services as we have limited numbers in the WFS office but lots of regional events started to take place and we only see this increasing. I will be leaving WFS as the Marketing and Communications officer on the 13th October this means there is unlikely to be a autumn newsletter but please do still email the marketing@wfs.org.uk email address with any updates and news from your service so it can get picked up by the WFS team for the next newsletter or socials. Chair, Jules King thanked Ellie for all her hard work, and wished her well in her whole-time Firefighter role in Norfolk FRS.	
9.WFS Events Update	
9.1 Women's Development Programme – Karen Smith	
Two Women's Development Programmes are scheduled for this month: WDP 12 commences on Wednesday, 8th October with 29 places booked WDP 13 commences on Thursday, 9th October with 18 places booked to date, and still open for bookings. WFS continue discussions with Women to Work on our collaboration for a further two years, as the current contract expires at the end of 2025. The proposed agreement would see the delivery of three programmes per year, with built-in flexibility to ensure each programme achieves sufficient sign-up.	

Feedback from previous participants has been very positive, and further programmes to begin in January 2026. This collaboration offers a more flexible working relationship. WFS and Women to Work will continue to have regular meetings.	
9.2 Training and Development Event – Karen Smith	Action:
Plans are progressing for the 2026 Training and Development Event. The call out for 'expression of interest' for workshops has been posted on social media, and on the website. The Fire Service College have offered the same number of rooms as 2025. Rooms will be divided between corporate members, Instructors and the WFS Team. Fees for the event will be announced shortly. WFS will write to all Corporate Members in October promoting the event and offering places which will be dependent on their Corporate Membership type (number of employees). Each service will be offered single and twin rooms. We welcome any suggestions for workshops, or Keynote Speakers please email events@wfs.org.uk Discussion ongoing regarding the Awards, and if this should be a standalone event possibly in November 2026	
10.Policies: For approval	Action:
There were no policies requiring approval at this meeting.	
11. Any Other Business:	
Corporate Membership: KS updated the NEC that the Isles of Scilly have requested to join as Corporate Members. All CM renewal invoices will be raised and send out during October/November.	Karen Smith
Black Members Conference: Nicky Thurston – attended the Black Members Conference and wondered fi there is an opportunity to collaborate or work with? They are looking at working with Women in the Shade, an organisation focuses on talent development of black women. Is this an opportunity for WFS to link across. NT offered to circulate information.	Nicky Thurston
International Opportunity: Nicky Thurston reported on an opportunity to do some work around reduction and improvement sexual harassment of women in Nepal, linking through Fire Aid. JK suggested getting together with NT to discuss further.	Nicky Thurston/Jules King
Attendance at events: Emma Edwards had a query regarding attendance at Training and Development events, specifically whether participants should take annual leave or be detached from duty. Practices vary across services. In some organisations, attendance is treated as duty time because the activity constitutes professional training. However, this approach depends on the support of senior leaders, as releasing staff can become difficult when demand	Emma Edwards

is high or when operational requirements limit capacity. JK recommended bringing this up at the next Regional/Local Rep forum where more reps would be able to advise what happens within their service. Anna Snelson – LFB/Babcock did a promotional video about all the different workshops and all the development opportunities, which gave a great insight to what actually happens at an event. WFS have a YouTube video of the Training and Development event which might be helpful, available on the website here Caz Whitemen – suggested using internal women staff networks for support, if your service has one. Also getting feedback after events and feeding this back into the service. WFS send out letters to Chief Fire Officers with feedback. Hannah Sherwood – AFSA have a document which they share giving a general outline and the benefits in attending events. HS to ask AFSA National Chair if this could be shared with WFS.	HS
Thank you to Ellie Mason	
JK in concluding the meeting wanted to offer a personal and heartfelt thanks to Ellie. Ellie has elevated what WFS do incredibly through all social media platforms. The best part of this is that Ellie, who had stepped away from being a Firefighter, came into WFS and after working with us, was inspired to go back as a Whole-time Firefighter. Ellie has made an incredible difference and will be missed.	
10. Dates of next meeting:	
National Executive Committee (NEC) - governance meetings for voting members, including Directors, Executive Members, Co-opted Members, and Regional Representatives. • **Thursday, 27 November (10.00-12.00)** **Regional/Local Representatives Forum** - for all Regional and Local Representatives, providing dedicated time for information sharing and collaboration. Everyone is welcome to attend. • **Thursday, 11 December (10.00-12.00)**	