

Please see the response on behalf of Women in the Fire Service.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the questions raised in your recent correspondence. Whilst we will not be able to comment on each area specifically, please see our response and are happy to discuss further if required.

WFS would not comment on a particular governance structure or constitutional arrangement that is in place and whether it is a barrier to culture change; however we have seen reports from across the fire sector where issues are within FRS's with a range of governance arrangements, is it less about the governance arrangements and more regarding the entire institution that is the barrier. It is important that any fire and rescue authority and Chief Fire Officer must want to lead reform and culture change and the Chief Fire Officer must be given the full support of resources and political leadership to achieve this, sufficient scrutiny should also form a part of these arrangements, accountability of progress is key to delivering change.

Inspection within England has highlighted the need for culture change and this is now a priority focus for fire and rescue services and the sector as a whole. WFS has seen an increase in the level of engagement with our training and development events locally and nationally. WFS are now a key stakeholder within the National Fire Chiefs Council being involved in national events and most recently the first menopause event hosted by the NFCC in September 2023. Whilst WFS have been questioning for decades the need for change and supporting women throughout this time, there is now a clear national and collective drive for culture change within the fire sector.

WFS continues to be an not for profit organisation that is here to enable and inspire confident and successful women. We also aim to build a more progressive Fire and Rescue Service and this certainly extends to supporting our amazing men to be the best allies they can be. Our reach is international and we would continue to welcome all our Welsh services to recognise WFS as a resource to support the improvement of equity and inclusion.

Kindest regards

Kathryn

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