Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service's Station Manager named Inspiring Leader

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Press release

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Liana Selecka-Jones, a Station Manager for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service has been named 'Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award' winner in the Women in the Fire Service Awards 2022.

Liana, who joined Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service in 2021, was nominated in the national awards for her remarkable contributions to the Fire Service.

The 'Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader' category recognises individuals who champion equality and diversity, who deliver real change, inspire the fire service community and bring out the best in the people they work with.

About Liana

Liana's team described her as passionate about improving and shaping the future of the sector and a fantastic role model. Liana was instrumental in establishing Cumbria's Women in the Fire Service (WFS) network, a positive action recruitment champions working group and in supporting many colleagues within the Service through their development pathway. As well as this, Liana has also set up a WFS network in her previous Service in Gloucestershire and has supported the WFS 'future firefighter' programme as a volunteer, leading the way for other women to join the industry.

Liana's team stated how she is dedicated to supporting others with their development and acts as a coach and mentor for several people.

The award submission detailed how Liana believed that everyone could fulfil their true potential, with the right support and encouragement in place. A commitment stemming from her own journey, when she came to live in the UK from Latvia and her local community supported her own career development.

John Beard, Chief Fire Officer at Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service said: "I am thrilled that Liana has been chosen as the winner of the Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award. This is a fantastic achievement and is a real testament to Liana and the work she is doing within Cumbria and for Women in the Fire Service nationally. She is a fantastic role model to all within the fire and rescue service community, as well as to those considering the fire service as a career."

Speaking on the notification of her award, Liana said: "I am honored to have been nominated for the Danny Cotton Inspirational Leader Award by my Service. I am so delighted and humbled to be the winner of this category and I truly believe that everyone who has been nominated would be a worthy winner.

"It was only four years ago when I attended my first national Women in the Fire Service training and development weekend as a newly-promoted Crew Manager. I only had one year of service under my belt, and I felt slightly out of place because of my inexperience. I listened to Danny Cotton's speech and that gave me the confidence and self-belief that I could be following in her footsteps one day. That is why this particular award means so much to me personally.

"I am very grateful for this recognition for a job that I love doing and I am so passionate about. It took me nearly 10 years to be successful in joining the Fire and Rescue Service. However, I never gave up on my ambition. Now as a manager, I try to remove barriers for those who are trying to join the sector and/or move up the ranks and try to create an environment where others can succeed through coaching and mentoring. Unfortunately, women and ethnic minorities are still very much underrepresented in our sector, and I try to use my own experiences of both failures and successes to support and inspire others.

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“I am very grateful to WFS for creating this opportunity to celebrate some of the fantastic work that we all do. I would not have been here if it wasn’t for the support of my amazing mentors Jo Singh (Gloucestershire FRS) and Janette Morris (Shropshire FRS) who have believed in me and have been there through all my ups and downs.”

In total, three members of staff from Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, including Station Manager Liana Selecka-Jones, were nominated for an award. The additional nominees were Angela Opie and Ellie Harrison.

About Women in the Fire Service

Women in the Fire Service UK is a not-for-profit organisation who work in partnership with its member services to advance equality in the sector.

WFS Chair, Jules King QFSM, said: "I am delighted to recognise Lianna for the impact her leadership has had on others. She leads by example—exuding passion, energy and enthusiasm. Her inclusive approach and optimism for other people’s advancement are commendable. Liana continues to embrace her development journey, empowering others along the way. Her engagement and involvement as a Local Rep for Women in the Fire Service has been most welcome, especially how she uses her own experiences to support and inspire the next generation."

Category sponsors of the Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award were Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS).

GMFRS Senior Women’s Success and Support Network sponsors Ben Levy, Area Manager, Director of Corporate Support, Andrea Heffernan and Head of Health and Safety, Natasha Brayne, said: “It is a privilege for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to support Women in the Fire Service and to proudly sponsor the Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award. Liana’s contribution to the future of the Fire and Rescue Service, and her passion and drive to build upon her own experiences to champion equality and diversity should inspire each and every one of us. We congratulate Liana and all the winners and nominees at this year's Women in the Fire Service Awards.”

Winners and runners-up receive prizes, as well as an invitation to attend a special award ceremony in June.

ENDS

Notes to the Editor

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There were a total of sixty nominations across five categories from twenty-five Fire Services.

- 8 nominations in the Young Persons Role Model Award
- 18 nominations in the Bright Light Award
- 9 nominations in the Firefighter Rising Star Award
- 17 nominations in the Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award
- 8 nominations in the Exceptional Allies Award

Award Sponsors:

1. Cold Cut Systems Ltd - Young Person Role Model Award
2. Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service - Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award
3. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service - Firefighter Rising Star Award
4. Serve and Protect Credit Union - Bright Light Award

5. Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service and the National Fire Chiefs Council End Point Assessment Partnership - Exceptional Allies Award

The Women in the Fire Service Awards opened to entries in November 2021 and closed on 15th March 2022. The Award Ceremony takes place at The Fire Service College on Friday 10th June 2022.

#WFSAwards22

Women in the Fire Service UK is a volunteer-led, not-for-profit organisation which exists to advance equality, addressing gender imbalance in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). Women are vastly underrepresented in firefighting. Government figures (2021) show just 7.5% of firefighters in England are women.

For more information on Women in the Fire Service visit: https://www.wfs.org.uk

For more information on Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service visit: https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/cumbriafire/

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