Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service Group Manager Named Inspiring Leader

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Press release

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Stefan Douglas, a Group Manager for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has been named Runner-up of the ‘Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award’ in the Women in the Fire Service Awards 2022.

Stefan, who joined Northamptonshire Fire Service in 2019 in the Operational Assurance Team, was nominated in the national awards for remarkable contributions to the Fire Service.

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

About Stefan

Stefan is the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead for the Service. The nomination described Stefan as an incredible leader, paving the way to building and developing a diverse workforce. It said he was always there at the forefront of recruitment campaigns, positive action days and recently helped support a women only Aspiring Leader’s day. The nomination detailed how Stefan led by example, calling out discrimination and bullying, and giving support and strength to those who experienced discrimination.

Stefan’s nominators stated how he worked tirelessly, creating contacts throughout Northants’ diverse community, supporting minority groups, and nurturing those relationships day in and day out. They said he was passionate about neurodiversity, educating the service to understand more about its neurodivergent workforce and how they could all support one another.

The award submission explained how Stefan saw great value in the vast array of positive attributes individual differences can bring to the service.

Darren Dovey, Chief Fire Officer at Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service said: “I am extremely pleased to hear that Stefan has been named as runner up in the Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award. It is testament to his passion and dedication in leading our EDI strategy across the Service. Stefan has been instrumental in our journey of cultural change, inspiring inclusivity, valuing diversity, and ensuring we are a fair and equal place to work. I would also like to congratulate everyone who was nominated in these awards. They recognise exemplary individuals who are committed to making a difference to communities and colleagues everyday.”

Speaking on the notification of his award, Stefan said: “I have worked with Women in the Fire Service for 20 years and I actively support their mission to promote equality of opportunity for women in Service. It’s humbling to be nominated for this award and I am very grateful to my nominator and the panel for considering me.”

In total, four members of staff from Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, including Group Commander Stefan Douglas, were nominated for an award. Crew Manager, Lauren Fitzgerald and Training Instructor, Rebecca Meachin were nominated for a Firefighter Rising Star Award. And Station Commander, Ashley Tugby was nominated for a Bright Light Award.

Ashley was described as an outstanding ally. He has not only championed and mentored women, but worked tirelessly on positive action campaigns, even helping produce some films for national campaigns encouraging women to apply for on-call firefighter positions. An active member of the Women in the Fire Service Facebook page and the National Fire Chief’s Council’s Workplace Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group, Ashley goes out of his way to help and encourage people.

Lauren was described as setting consistently high standards for her and her Watch and is an amazing role model for current and future firefighters. She leads the Service’s Women's Network with passion and

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empathy and has created a group that is both supportive and an effective agent of change.

Rebecca was described as someone who sets the highest standards and a great role model for women in the service and those thinking of joining. Active in the Service's Women's Network and leadership development programme, she has also been integral in recruitment campaigns. Rebecca is a keen athlete and uses her profile in competitions to promote the role of women in the fire service.

About Women in the Fire Service

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

WFS Chair, Jules King QFSM, said: "Stefan's dedication and commitment to champion and foster equality and diversity, to collaborate, and to support and inspire colleagues and communities shone through from the entries. So huge congratulations to Stef, a truly Inspiring Leader."

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

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

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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 Person 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.

Hashtag: #WFSAwards22

About Women in the Fire Service UK

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 about Women in the Fire Service, visit: https://www.wfs.org.uk

For more information about Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, visit: https://www.northantsfire.gov.uk/

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