Women in the Fire Service Awards 2022 Winners Announced

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News release

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Winners and runners-up in the Women in the Fire Service Awards 2022 have been announced today. The awards celebrate remarkable individuals who've shown exceptional commitment to their services, teams, and the communities they serve.

Sixty nominations from twenty-five UK Fire and Rescue Services were submitted this year for consideration in five categories: The Bright Light Award, Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award, Exceptional Allies Award, Firefighter Rising Star Award, and Young Person Role Model Award.

Jules King, WFS Chair said: "We hope this awards scheme has gone some way toward fulfilling a desire to celebrate each other, say thank you and put a smile on a colleague's face. We all know the pressure on the sector's professionals has been heightened during the pandemic, so a much-needed morale boost like this is so important."

Bright Light Award sponsored by Serve and Protect Credit Union

Joint Winner: **Jenny Nangle** (Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service)

Jane Williams, Jenny's colleague and nominator described her as passionate about Women in the Fire Service UK (WFS), supporting women in the fire service, and working hard to promote training and activities to develop women further and encourage them for promotion and other opportunities. Jenny represents Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service on the WFS National Committee and is also the WFS North West Regional Rep. She also supports the planning of the annual WFS national event and helps facilitate workshops. Jane stated how Jenny was always there to offer support, guidance or just a listening ear to any issues or frustrations and how she drives for better conditions and working practices on behalf of all women.

Justin Johnston, Chief Fire Officer at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service said: "Jenny is truly deserving of this fantastic award, and I think it is very appropriate that she be awarded in this way. Her work in fire safety helps to make Lancashire a safer place for us all. I'm extremely proud to have learned that several Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service colleagues were nominated for awards, and I'm very pleased that Jenny has won. Jenny makes a very worthy candidate, and I think all the nominations are a great testament to the wonderful women we are lucky to have working in our organisation. Well done, Jenny!"

Speaking on the notification of her award, Jenny said: "Thank you so much for this award! I am really happy that my colleagues nominated me, and to be named the winner feels incredible. I've worked at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service since 2003. In that time, I've had the pleasure of working with many brilliant teammates. Although we don't do this job for the awards, it really does feel great to have been recognised in this way."

Serve + Protect, sponsors of the Bright Light Award category said: "It gives us great pleasure to sponsor the Bright Light Award, for someone who lights the way for many others within her industry. Jenny's hard work and determination to support her colleagues with the promotion of training and development, and her evident passion for progression clearly demonstrates how worthy she is of this award."

Joint Winner: **Sue Mallinson** (Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service)

Sue Mallinson was described as regularly going above and beyond in all that she did. Sue started the Service's Women's Success and Support staff network for women and allies in the workplace. The network has been well attended and was launched by Dany Cotton. Sue was described as "tenacious", being very much about looking after everyone else and making sure they had support no matter who they were. Sue continuously strives to make a positive impact and goes out of her way to assist colleagues who need support. She runs the network in her own time and is an ambassador and equalities champion for GMFRS.

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Jules King, WFS Chair and award panel judge said: "Sue is so deserving of this award. Undoubtedly a hugely positive force and a fantastic ambassador for GMFRS. We all need a bright light in the workplace, someone who not only champions women's successes but who finds positive solutions through collaboration and supporting others."

Speaking on the notification of her award, Sue said: "I am blown away to be a winner and I am testament to having empowered women to support me to achieve my absolute best."

Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award sponsored by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Winner: **Liana Selecka-Jones** (Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service)

Liana's team said she 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. Liana 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 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.

Speaking on the notification of the award, Station Manager, Liana said: "It was only four years ago when I attended my first national Women in the Fire Service training and development event 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 Dany 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 trying to join the sector 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."

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

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."

Runner-up: **Stefan Douglas** (Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service)

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. 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 every day."

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."

Exceptional Allies Award sponsored by Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service and the NFCC End Point Assessment Partnership

Winner: **Hannah Caulfield** (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service)

Hannah's colleague and nominator described her as being a huge help to her since starting at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service three years ago. She stated how hard Hannah worked to make new staff feel supported and to put processes in place to improve the job for female firefighters. Maternity, menopause and welfare facilities were just a few of the things Hannah had made huge changes to for staff. Hannah set up WhatsApp groups to provide support for staff on maternity leave and arranged regular meetups. Hannah is passionate about gender equality and has made many positive changes in the Service.

Alex Waller, Deputy Chief Fire Officer at Cheshire Fire & Rescue said: "Hannah demonstrates exceptional qualities in her ability to recognise and support our staff networks. The commitment she has shown, and continues to show, in support of gender equality and women's issues is inspirational and she is a true role model within the Service for both women and men. We are extremely proud that Hannah has been named the WFS Exceptional Ally, it is very well deserved."

Speaking on the notification of the award, Station Manager, Hannah said: "I was very surprised to hear I had won this award but am incredibly humbled that I was nominated for two categories. It is a great honour to have been recognised by WFS; there is fantastic support for all staff within Cheshire, with the core belief being that people can completely be themselves at work, enabling us all to reach our full potential."

Runner-up: **Amy Croxton-Evans** (North Wales Fire and Rescue Service)

Station Manager Amy was described as "an ultimate role model" and "leader" who steps forward and challenges bias face on, without fear and with integrity. Through projects, initiatives, public speaking, television and education Amy has spent the last 10 years dedicating herself to being that leader. This includes helping create education packages for schools; empowerment days for teenage girls; a safe space group for Service members; coaching and mentoring; a mental health and well-being fund to support all service members; podcasts to inspire future firefighters; and tv appearances inspiring children with the message 'you can be whatever you want to be, don't be your own barrier'.

Dawn Docx , Chief Fire Officer at North Wales Fire and Rescue Service said: "We are incredibly proud that Amy's commitment to inspiring and empowering others has been recognised in this way.

"Amy is passionate about promoting gender equality and works tirelessly to create and lead on projects and initiatives which resonate with both our staff and members of our communities. Her vision and encouragement have supported and inspired numerous colleagues within our fire family and helped empower countless future firefighters. Well done and congratulations Amy!"

Speaking on the notification of her award, Amy said: "I'm honoured to have been recognised for the ongoing work and effort that I do for Women in the Fire Service, however, I hope that I can be the inspiration and pillar of strength to other women, like the amazing women before me."

Firefighter Rising Star Award sponsored by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

Winner: **Rebecca Rowe** (London Fire Brigade)

Nikki Upton, Rebecca's colleague and 'Rising Star' nominator, described her as having demonstrated huge determination throughout her life and the path that led her to be a firefighter. She said Bex had been a visible role model for women as a professional athlete but had also demonstrated a huge level of resilience when faced with career-ending injuries. When Bex no longer played professional sport she turned her attention to how best she could represent women and became a firefighter at the age of 37. Nikki described her colleague's passion and drive to see other women succeed as 'infectious', saying her love of the job was so clear to see that Bex's fiancé Kirsty also applied to be a firefighter. Rebecca is one of an all-female team of five training to ski coast-to-coast across Antarctica in November 2023.

London Fire Commissioner Andy Roe said: "This is a huge achievement and everyone at London Fire Brigade is extremely proud of Firefighter Rowe for winning this much deserved award. She is an excellent role model for all our staff and we hope that her story will encourage people from all

backgrounds and particularly women to consider a fire service career."

Speaking on the notification of the award, Firefighter, Rebecca said: "I'm very shocked and honoured to win the award as there are so many other amazing firefighters out there. I don't do the job for praise, but to make someone's worst day slightly better if I can. For me – it's the best job in the world and it never feels like a job."

Runner-up: **Katie Bluck** (Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service)

Gemma Hodges, Katie's colleague, and nominator described Katie as a dedicated member of the Fire Service who had completed a course with Gower College to be a 'Mental Health in the Workplace Practitioner' to support her colleagues. Crew Manager Katie is a qualified 'Frontline Coach & Mentor' through the University of South Wales, benefitting the firefighters that she leads at Pontardawe. Katie has also been involved in Female Awareness Sessions and webinars to raise consideration for the Service. Gemma stated how Katie had shared her experiences as a firefighter and the progression opportunities available with the University of South Wales Public Service students prior to their graduation.

Roger Thomas, Chief Fire Officer at Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service said: "We are extremely proud of Katie. In her short career to date, she has already demonstrated that she is a confident and highly skilled firefighter, as well being a very positive influence and a great role model. Receiving this award is a wonderful achievement and a great recognition of Katie's commitment to our Service and the communities we serve."

Speaking on the notification of her award, Katie said: "I am delighted to have been nominated for the WFS 'Firefighter Rising Star Award', and I feel very grateful to have received runner-up in the category. ?Thank you for recognising my achievements so far on my journey within the Fire and Rescue Service. I would like to personally extend this recognition to the supportive and progressive colleagues that I am surrounded by who enable me to continue to pursue my aspirations."

Young Person Role Model Award sponsored by Cold Cut Systems Ltd

Winner: **Uroosa Arshid** (Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service)

Damien West, Uroosa's colleague, and nominator described her as having overcome many barriers and challenges to achieve her lifelong ambition of being a firefighter. As the first hijab-wearing firefighter in the UK, he revealed how Uroosa sharing her story with the world led to her becoming a role model to many people because of her passion, enthusiasm and determination to succeed. Damien told the panel how Uroosa's story had received coverage around the world and had inspired many young people to chase their dreams, many of whom wrote to her to thank her for sharing her story. The award submission explained how Uroosa was a role model in so many ways and to so many people. How determined she was to show young people that they could succeed at whatever they put their minds to. And how Uroosa was passionate about ensuring young people could see a young role model, who looked and sounded like them, working in the fire service.

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service said: "It is great news that Uroosa has been named winner of the Young Person Role Model award. Uroosa is a fantastic firefighter and being able to tell her story has now given young people around the world hope that they can achieve their dreams of becoming a firefighter, no matter who they are. On behalf of everyone at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, we want to congratulate Uroosa on this amazing award."

Speaking on the notification of the award, Firefighter, Uroosa said: "It is such an honour to have been nominated and to have won this award. It is an overwhelming feeling because it is not something I set out to do, I just wanted to achieve my dream of becoming a firefighter. However, my story has helped inspire other people, which is something I am extremely proud of. Thank you to my family and colleagues, as this wouldn't have been possible without their ongoing support."

Runner-up: **Faatimah Mangera** (West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service)

In the awards entry, Faatimah is described as having an "infectious can-do positive attitude to life with a sense of humour to brighten anyone's day". Since completing the Prince's Trust Team programme she has delivered several disability awareness sessions to groups of young people working with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. She inspires others through her humour and openness and determination to achieve her goals - reflected in the young people she has met and supported in their individual journeys. Faatimah has developed her confidence and self-worth and applied this to her life. She has been valuable in her contributions to not only the Youth Interventions Team, but more importantly, to the young people she has peer mentored and shared her story and experiences with. She

has helped shape the way the team works with young people and helped to increase the quality of the work the Service carries out with young people with disabilities.

Speaking on the notification of the award, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Prince's Trust Volunteer, Faatimah said: "I like helping the younger youth change their ways of thinking, it just comes naturally to me, so I'm humbled to be recognised. You can't make change without being heard and putting your voice out there. I am really honoured and grateful to have been thought of for this prestigious award."

Award panel judge and WFS Patron, Dany Cotton said: "Faatimah is such a worthy runner up in the Young Person Role Model Award. She is such an inspirational young woman whose positive influence reaches so many different groups of people.

#WFSAwards22

For the full list of award nominees visit:
https://wfs.org.uk/2022/05/06/women-in-the-fire-service-award-winners-announced/

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