



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

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Zack Polanski AM
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The London Fire Commissioner is the
fire and rescue authority for London

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Dear Chair,

I am writing in response to your letter to the London Fire Commissioner on 4 March following the Fire Committee session looking at the wellbeing of London's firefighters. My team and I have looked carefully at the letter and its two recommendations, and our response is set out below.

Recommendation 1: LFB should use the mental health and wellbeing data it has, as well as data shared by external partners such as its Occupational Health provider, to explore how the support it offers could be tailored to the specific needs of occupational groups or roles who are reporting higher levels of mental health problems.

London Fire Brigade (LFB) gathers anonymised mental health and wellbeing data through a range of means internally including sickness absence data, staff surveys, staff appraisals and through our counselling service. We also gather data from external partners including our occupational health provider and our employee assistance programme. It is important to highlight that this data is viewed in aggregate so that general trends and areas of focus can be identified. Data specifically relating to individuals is not reviewed and individuals cannot be identified, ensuring personal data is protected.

LFB already analyses data by occupational groups and roles. For example, in Q4 2024/25 LFB identified that staff in Control were more likely to be off work with stress, anxiety and depression (SAD) than other LFB employees. As a result of this, a range of support interventions were targeted at Control staff including the Firefighters Charity delivering a 'Stress and Resilience' workshop for Control staff and delivery of 'Sunny Minds' sessions targeted around dealing with callers at their most vulnerable. Additionally, Control staff were also invited to attend the Firefighter's Charity Reset programme, which aims to develop and improve resilience and overall mental fitness and includes a programme of workshops and activities tailored to individual needs. Since introducing these interventions, SAD absence in Control staff has reduced from a high of 5.15% in December 2024 to 2.93% in March 2026.

A further example is LFB's approach to post-critical incident care, the Emergency Services Trauma Intervention Programme (ESTIP), which is targeted at front line staff because they are more likely to be exposed to potentially traumatic incidents. ESTIP, which is an emergency services best practice intervention, is a peer-based intervention where trained Peer Trauma Diffusers provide support to colleagues and signpost to further services after critical incidents.

The Brigade has also proactively identified specific roles for routine periodic screening with our Counselling and Trauma Service (CTS) because they have increased risk of being exposed to

emotionally challenging incidents. These include Fire Investigation Officers, National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers, Fire Brigade Union representatives, Professional Standards Unit team and Learning Support Advisors. This enables early identification and intervention for psychological distress and burnout.

LFB will ensure that data continues to be reviewed to identify the specific needs of groups reporting higher levels of mental health problems and inform appropriate interventions.

In your letter, you refer to the London Ambulance Service's (LAS) mental health screening tool. LFB met with LAS and Optima in November 2025 in relation to this tool, which is broadly based on the Health and Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards. The Brigade will be reviewing existing stress management processes in 2026/27 and this will include an organisational assessment of workplace stressors.

Recommendation 2: LFB should explore how the 'IGLOO' framework (Individual, Group, Leader, Organisation, Outside) could support delivery of its wellbeing strategy and mental health policy, ensuring a multi-stakeholder approach to mental health. This should include a specific focus on strengthening peer-to-peer support at group level.

LFB consults with a range of stakeholders regarding our mental health policies and wellbeing strategies including Equality Support Groups (ESGs) who provide advice and guidance on the development of policies and interventions. This includes a Mental Health Working Group that provides specific support on wellbeing and mental health policy, guidance and initiatives. All policies, guidance and interventions that have an impact on staff health and safety are subject to formal consultation with trade unions through the Brigade Joint Committee for Health, Safety and Welfare (BJCHSW).

The Brigade is familiar with the IGLOO framework and will utilise it to review our current mental health and wellbeing support services so that they continue to meet the needs of all LFB staff and ensure there is a strong focus on strengthening peer-to-peer support at a group level.

Thank you for the Fire Committee's attention on this critical topic and I hope that this response reinforces our commitment to providing the best mental health and wellbeing support possible to London's firefighters and all LFB staff.

Yours sincerely,



Spencer Sutcliff
Deputy Commissioner
London Fire Brigade