

Date: 4 January 2022

Dr Onkar Sahota AM
Chair of the London Assembly
City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London
E16 1ZE

Dear Dr Sahota

Thank you for your letter of 9 December regarding the Urgent Motion on London Fire Brigade (LFB) that was agreed by the Assembly on 1 December. I welcome the Assembly's interest in the Independent Culture Review, the sentiment expressed in the Motion and that it was agreed unanimously by Assembly Members.

The findings of the Review, which I commissioned with the support of the Mayor, laid bare shocking examples of unacceptable behaviour at the Brigade. This undermines the courage and dedication of thousands of members of staff and unpicks in one moment our reputation, pride and ethos. It is a difficult read for me, everyone at the Brigade and for the communities we serve, particularly the Grenfell community. At a time when regaining trust and rebuilding relationships is a top priority for me, I know it will shake the public's confidence in the Brigade.

I have accepted the report's recommendations in full and will be fully accountable for improving our culture. The Review made clear what steps need to be taken to improve our workforce culture, and we have already taken immediate actions:

- We introduced a new external complaints service, which 113 people have used so far. This service is also conducting a historic review of discrimination, bullying and harassment cases from the last five years.
- Eight LFB staff have been suspended while investigations against complaints are taking place. We are being transparent with our staff, communities and stakeholders on how the service has been used and are publishing data on this which will be updated weekly. You can view this here: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/independent-culture-review/external-complaints-service-for-staff/>
- We launched a new support hub for staff which has been accessed over 500 times.
- We have taken a new approach to leadership and are meeting teams across the Brigade to talk about our culture. There have been over 170 face-to-face meetings with teams and watches, and our programme of these will continue into the New Year.
- We are being accountable to our communities as we change and we are engaging with our communities to ensure they are an essential partner in our change.
- Posters and leaflets about accepted behaviours at work and how to access support are being put up at all LFB locations.
- We will introduce body-worn cameras in January for staff working with the public during Home Fire Safety Visits to help rebuild trust and protect both the public and our staff.

- I have appointed Dr Jenny Simnett to lead an independent review of People Services at LFB. Jenny will provide an objective assessment on the capacity and capability of the department and provide an options appraisal for us to consider at the end of this month.

Over the next six months we will:

- Review our HR provision to ensure that it offers a professional, quality service that is trusted and respected by staff.
- Expand our Brigade Values to include a public service first approach, in conversation with staff, and embed them in all our systems and processes.
- Build better engagement with our communities, by building a better understanding and better relationships at borough level, and improving post-incident care.
- Recruit firefighters who value diversity and ensure all our staff understand and respect London's diverse communities.
- Put plans in place to address the underrepresentation of staff with protected characteristics at all levels in LFB.
- Develop ways of monitoring our culture on a local and Brigade-wide level to identify problems and build on best practice e.g. Key Performance Indicators.
- Ask our independent audit committee to audit our progress against the Review in the first instance, and explore a long-term solution to external audit moving forward.

I wrote to all Assembly Members with my immediate response to the Review when it was published on 25 November and further on 14 December when His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) announced that the Brigade would be moved into enhanced monitoring, known as 'Engage'. I will also be meeting the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee further in January to provide an update and look forward to the Fire Plenary in early February where I am sure that the Assembly will want to discuss the Review as well.

I hope this summary has been helpful, if you would like further information on our response to the Review please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Roe', with a stylized, cursive script.

Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner