

25 November 2022

Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner

Dear Andy,

Now that you are in possession of my Independent Cultural Review, I would like to thank you for your leadership and courage in opening up the culture of your organisation for public scrutiny.

There are few leaders that would have agreed to confront cultural problems like this in such a rigorous and transparent fashion and it is your credit that you have allowed us to leave no stone unturned.

While the review will undoubtedly make painful reading, as it includes accounts of abhorrent behaviours that have no place in London Fire Brigade, I am a big believer that sunlight is the best disinfectant.

As someone who has dedicated their life to public service, I am sure you will share my disappointment that some members of staff are clearly not demonstrating London Fire Brigade values and are letting down the many committed people who deliver incredibly valuable work for Londoners every day.

It has been particularly distressing for me and my team to hear painful accounts of bullying, racism and misogyny. Many of the people who came to us were reduced to tears and are clearly carrying a great burden. They do not feel they are being listened to, complaints go nowhere and they have no recourse to justice or protection from bullies.

I know our review has been a difficult process for many staff to go through and some have told us they had flashbacks of being humiliated by senior staff members after sharing their experiences with us. It is precisely because of this that I don't want their testimony to be in vain.

Their stories, as difficult as they are to read, ought to be the catalyst for change. I hope you will ensure this is a watershed moment for the Brigade, which will see it become not only a modern fire and rescue service that's at the heart of a great world city, but also the inclusive and representative public service that I know you want it to be.

Yours sincerely,

Nazir Afzal