

To Andy Roe  
Commissioner  
London Fire Brigade

5<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Dear Andy,

Thank you for your update on the progress that's been made to change the culture of London Fire Brigade.

When I submitted our review last year, I knew you were being handed a colossal challenge and that an enormous commitment at leadership level was required to root out a cancer that threatened to undermine the brave and dedicated work of your staff.

I am really heartened to see the work that has been done to make deep inroads into addressing the bad practices that were holding your organisation back.

I know from speaking to some of those who gave evidence to us that there is a great sense of relief and vindication at news that people have been removed from the Brigade because of their toxic behaviours. The fact that you wish to see a law change so that they are barred from working elsewhere has also been welcomed.

Many told us that some of the bullies were 'untouchable' and that they did not expect to see change. I am pleased that they have been proved wrong and hope they will be able to walk into work with their heads high, no longer feeling afraid of abusers.

I am also greatly encouraged by the work that's been done on the Privacy for All programme and hardwiring dignity into every aspect of the workplace. Your work on better engaging with London's communities, transforming the People's Services Directorate, rebuilding trust in leaders and improving wellbeing is also greatly appreciated. It is the change that those who gave evidence to us wanted to see.

When we presented our findings last year, I felt strongly that we were opening a Pandora's box and I said publicly at the time that London Fire Brigade was not the only emergency service struggling with these behaviours.

That has certainly proved to be the case as we have seen numerous fire brigades subsequently plagued by allegations of racism, bullying and misogyny. It has been

extremely disappointing to me to see some of the leaders in your sector refuse to accept these problems exist in their brigades and fail to grasp the nettle like you did and demonstrate the leadership we need to see to change this culture.

I would like to thank you again for taking the time to give me such a detailed update on the work you have undertaken and I wish you all the best in continuing to build a strong and inclusive culture where everyone feels they belong.

The actions you have taken mark a turning point for the culture of public service organisations across the country and I hope that others will follow your lead.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Afzal'.

Nazir Afzal OBE