

Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner

The Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP
Sent via e-mail

The London Fire Commissioner is the
fire and rescue authority for London

Date: 14 March 2024

Dear Dame Diana Johnson

We are writing to share two updates related to London Fire Brigade's (LFB) work which illustrate the extent of the transformation occurring within the organisation.

As of this week, LFB has completed all 29 recommendations directed at the Brigade by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report. This milestone follows a decision from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) last week to remove the Brigade from enhanced monitoring, otherwise known as 'Engage'. While this is not the end point in the LFB's journey, the HMICFRS decision is recognition of the significant work that has been undertaken over recent months and years to improve the culture of the organisation both internally and in how it engages with the communities it serves.

Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 improvements

The Grenfell Tower fire was an appalling tragedy, and we owe it to the 72 people who lost their lives to ensure that LFB learns and improves as a result. LFB accepted every recommendation in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report and has been working hard to make significant changes to the way the organisation operates as a result.

Following significant investment from City Hall, the Brigade has introduced new technology, firefighting equipment and processes to protect London and Londoners. For example:

- LFB has changed the way it tackles fires in high-rise buildings. The entire fleet of high-reach vehicles has been replaced and three new 64-metre turntable ladders are now in service, the tallest ladders across Europe.
- New command units, equipped with technology to improve an incident commander's ability to respond at the incident ground, entered service at the end of 2023.
- London firefighters now carry escape hoods that can protect individuals from toxic smoke, as they are being rescued from a fire incident. Since this kit was introduced in 2018, over 200 Londoners have been rescued in this way.
- Control officers now benefit from improved training which has transformed how they provide fire survival guidance to people involved in a fire.
- LFB has introduced new software that allows members of the public to provide Control officers with a video feed from an incident.
- Communications during incidents have improved, with new fire ground radios allowing firefighters wearing helmets and breathing apparatus sets to communicate effectively with their teams and Control officers when inside buildings.
- Drones are now used to provide live images and thermal imagery to better enable incident commanders to develop tactics to tackle fires.

Completing these recommendations is an important milestone in the Brigade's journey to improve and adapt to the evolving risks London is facing. Long term, sustainable change in large, complex organisations takes time and while LFB's transformation programme is on track, it is by no means finished. The Brigade is committed to continuing this journey so that it can continue to be trusted to serve and protect London. LFB is the first organisation to complete all its Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 recommendations, and the improvements made so far will pave the way forward for further change as we await the next report from Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. A document is attached to this letter with further information about the completed recommendations.

HMICFRS progress recognised on culture

Last week HMICFRS took the decision to remove LFB from enhanced monitoring ('Engage'). This decision follows an inspection carried out by HMICFRS between 19 -22 February 2024.

The Inspectorate found that LFB had clearly involved staff in the development of its values and done significant work to communicate these values to staff. The Inspectorate also found that LFB has made clear progress towards improving its human resources function. This includes improved processes to deal with behaviours such as bullying and discrimination and a comprehensive plan in place to improve vetting. The Inspectorate was also assured of the sustainability of the Brigade's ongoing plans to change culture.

Alongside efforts to improve internal culture, the Brigade has also strengthened its approach to community engagement. A dedicated Community Engagement Team is now in place to provide support after incidents and ensure communities can shape local risk management and planning. This engagement enables the Brigade to better understand and meet the needs of the diverse communities it serves.

Along with the Mayor of London, we welcome the HMICFRS's decision to move LFB out of enhanced monitoring and are pleased that HMICFRS has recognised the significant work that has taken place over the last few years. Though the progress is encouraging, the work to ensure that the Brigade has a safe and dignified workplace culture can never stop.

As London Fire Commissioner and Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience, we have always been clear that efforts to ensure we provide the best possible service to London will always continue. We are grateful for the support and challenge we have received from stakeholders across Whitehall, Westminster and City Hall, and our hope is that you will continue to work with us and hold us to account as we continue to serve and protect London.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner



Baroness Fiona Twycross
Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience