LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Staff network policy (including equality action groups, wellbeing support groups and common interest groups)

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Owner:	**Head of Culture and Organisational Development**
Responsible work team:	**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out the Brigade's arrangements for all Staff Networks, including Equality Action Groups (EAGs), Wellbeing Support Groups (WSGs) and Common Interest Groups, and applies to all employees.

1.2 The Brigade is committed to promoting equality, improving wellbeing, embracing equality, diversity and inclusion as well as promoting the importance of togetherness in building strong teams, where you are treated with respect and their contribution is valued.

1.3 The Brigade recognises that difference comes in many forms, including, but not limited to those defined in the Equality Act 2010 as protected characteristics. The Brigade believes that when you can work in an environment that is truly inclusive, you will feel a sense of belonging that will lead to being happier and feel able to contribute more and deliver better outcomes for Brigade and the communities we serve.

1.4 Staff networks – including Equality Action Groups, Wellbeing Support Groups and Common Interest Groups – play an important role in supporting the delivery of the Brigade's strategy. As voluntary, staff-led groups established by staff for staff, they form an integral part of the London Fire Brigade's culture and contribute to the achievement of the Brigade's commitments, plans and strategic priorities.

1.5 This policy should be applied in line with the Brigade's values:

- Service – We put the public first.
- Courage – We step up to the challenge.
- Learning – We listen so that we can improve.
- Teamwork – We work together and include everyone.
- Equity – We treat everyone fairly according to their needs.
- Integrity – We act with honesty.

2 Definitions

2.1 **Staff Network**: The collective term for all formally recognised, voluntary staff-led groups within the London Fire Brigade, including Equality Action Groups (EAGs), Wellbeing Support Groups (WSGs), and Common Interest Groups. Established by staff, for staff these networks provide opportunities for connection, peer support and signposting to appropriate organisational resources, while offering a structured route for representation, collective voice and organisational feedback. Staff Networks contribute to wellbeing, shared interests and continuous improvement, in alignment with Brigade values and strategic priorities.

2.2 **Equality Action Group**: A staff-led network that promotes equity, inclusion, and fair treatment for employees at risk of disadvantage, discrimination, or underrepresentation, particularly in relation to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. EAGs are formed in response to lived or evidenced inequality and may align with LFB's inclusion priorities.

2.3 **Protected Characteristics**: the term defined by the Equality Act (2010) given to groups that are protected under the Act from unlawful discrimination in employment or provision of goods, services or facilities to the public. The protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

2.4 **Wellbeing Support Group**: A staff-led network that provides safe spaces for colleagues to connect over shared experiences affecting personal or occupational wellbeing. Unlike EAGs, they are not ordinarily centred on protected characteristics, but on factors influencing physical, mental, emotional, or psychological health, such as menopause, bereavement, cancer recovery, neurodiversity, or mental health.

2.5 **Common Interest Network**: A Common Interest Network is a group formed by staff around a shared interest, identity, or activity that contributes to connection, enjoyment, or personal development at work. This may include social groups (e.g., choir, book club), hobby-based groups (e.g., cycling, photography), or identity-affirming communities not directly related to equity or wellbeing.

2.6 **Staff Network Board**: refers to the bi-monthly board meeting made up of the chairs/leads and vice-chairs/co-leads of the EAGs, WSGs and Common Interest Groups, along with the Board Chair and Co-Chair and the Inclusion Team. Each group is expected to either attend or send a deputy to ensure active contribution and engagement within the Brigade's staff network ecosystem.

2.7 **Member**: An employee who formally joins an EAG, WSG or staff network, in line with the constitution of the group.

2.8 **Chair**: The person elected by the members of each group. Each group may vary the title of their chair, and election process as defined within their constitution.

2.9 **Vice chair**: The person elected by the members to act as vice-chair of the group and provide crucial support to the chair.

2.10 **Executive Members**: Executive Members are those who hold an official role within the committee, such as Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Events Officer, or any other formally designated position. These members have defined responsibilities for the governance, coordination, and delivery of the group's activities and are accountable for representing the group within the wider organisational network. Each group may vary these roles and responsibilities according to their Chair. Each group may also have specific roles relating to the purpose of the group (e.g. Women's Representative).

2.11 **Executive Sponsor**: The London Fire Commissioner and all Directors act as Executive Sponsors to all groups.

2.12 **Senior Allies**: The members of the SLT who advocate for, sponsor and drive change for that group. They may educate others, openly use their voices to challenge prejudice and raise awareness as well as sponsor and mentor where appropriate. A Senior Ally is responsible for supporting the committee and providing continuity, giving support to the chair and ensuring they have access to guidance and giving platform to equality support issues. They should attend events (ideally across groups, particularly in relation to intersectional issues), find ways to resolve issues structurally and have oversight of group activity. A list of senior allies be found on Hotwire here. Each group will determine the process for selecting their own Senior Ally.

2.13 **Allies**: Members of staff who advocate for, sponsor and drive change in support of that group. Allies can be of all ranks and grades and all occupational groups.

2.14 **Charter**: The document which an EAG, WSG and Common Interest Group will keep up to date every year outlining the officers of the group, the main goals of the group that year and their activities to meet the goals. A template charter can be found here on Hotwire.

3 Purpose of each Staff Network

3.1 The brigade believes in the ability of staff to self-determine their status as either an Equality Action Group, a Wellbeing Support Group or a Common Interest Network. That status should be decided by the members and Executive Committee and codified in their constitution and charter. The reason to distinguish between the three different type of groups is to provide appropriate support and funding, to be clear on the aims and objectives of the group and to offer clarity to staff who should be aware of what the group exists to achieve.

3.2 An Equality Action Group (EAG) is a staff-led network that promotes equity, inclusion, and fair treatment for employees at risk of disadvantage, discrimination, or underrepresentation, particularly in relation to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. EAGs are formed in response to lived and evidenced inequality and may align with LFB's inclusion priorities. Their purpose is to:

(a) Provide peer support and advocacy for underrepresented staff.

(b) Influence cultural change and highlight barriers to inclusion.

(c) Amplify the voice and visibility of staff who have faced inequity

3.3 For further information about EAGs, including governance, structure, annual objectives and reporting requirements, please refer to the EAG Charter Template.

3.4 A Wellbeing Support Group (WSG) is a staff-led network that provides safe spaces for colleagues to connect over shared experiences affecting personal or occupational wellbeing. Unlike EAGs, they are not ordinarily centred on protected characteristics, but on factors influencing physical, mental, emotional, or psychological health.

3.5 A Common Interest Network is a group formed by staff around a shared interest, identity, or activity that contributes to connection, enjoyment, or personal development at work. This may include social groups (e.g., choir, book reading), hobby-based groups (e.g., cycling, photography), or identity-affirming communities not directly related to equity or wellbeing. Common Interest Groups will not be eligible to funding in the same way that EAG and WSGs are. This is to ensure the brigade uses public funds wisely. Common Interest Groups are encouraged to partner with the LFB Welfare Fund to draw on their funding.

3.6 Each group must set out whether they are primarily an Equality Action Group, a Wellbeing Support Group or a Common Interest Network. This is their primary purpose and must be set out in their constitution and charter.

4 Establishing a Staff Network

4.1 To establish a new group, staff must complete the New Application form. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team (DEI) or Wellbeing Team will review the application and advise on next steps.

4.2 For any group to be formally recognised by the Brigade, and to access organisational support the following steps and requirements must be met.

(a) Have in place a constitution and charter, demonstrating:

(i) which type of group they wish to be;

(ii) the group's goals, activities, and officer roles, which must be updated yearly as required;

(iii) how the groups' work will support its members;

(iv) a minimum of five (5) active members to ensure sustainability, with sufficient capacity to form a committee;

(v) benefits to the Brigade, furthers the values and beliefs of the brigade and acts in its best interests. All groups must apply the NFCC Code of Ethics in their work and apply with all relevant legislation.

4.3 Once the above requirements are met and the application has been approved, the group will be formally recognised and able to access the full support of the Brigade, including governance, consultation and communication channels.

4.4 The DEI team will review the EAG charters on an annual basis, to ensure that they have continued approval and to ensure they are able to remain active. The Wellbeing Team will review WSG charters on an annual basis, to ensure that they have continued approval and to ensure they are able to remain active. Common Interest Groups will also be reviewed by People Services staff on an annual basis.

4.5 The DEI and Wellbeing teams will be responsible for assessing a group's application against the criteria set out at point 4.2 above and make a recommendation on whether the application should be taken forward to the Staff Network Board. These teams will have a responsibility to advise the applicant on their application and offer advice on what is and is not acceptable. Only the Director for People may withdraw an application or reject it following approval from the Staff Network Board.

4.6 Where an EAG application is denied, a written statement will be given to the group outlining the reasons for rejection. The person drafting the application will be offered feedback and support if an application is rejected by the DEI team. If an application is rejected for any reason, the applicant will be able to go through an appeals process.

4.7 An appeal may be made, outlining the reason for the appeal and attaching evidence to support the appeal. A panel consisting of the Director of People, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Wellbeing, Head of DEI and Head of Culture and Organisational Development will hear the appeal. Any person previously involved in the decision-making process should excuse themselves on the grounds of a being conflicted. The appeal panel will respond directly to the applicant and either reverse the decision or uphold the decision. No further process of appeal is possible after this has been concluded.

4.8 Some groups may be separately constituted within trade unions at a local or national level, such as FBU Sections and have their own local branches. These other organisations will be allowed to become Affiliate EAG/WSGs, if they share the aims and objectives of this policy. To hold affiliate status, the leaders of that section should sign a memorandum of understanding with the Chair of the Staff Network Board. Once given affiliate status, that group will be entitled to all the ordinary support outlined in this policy except for funds being allocated for political activities, which is expressly prohibited by the brigade.

4.9 The Brigade can support activity aligned to its equality and general objectives but cannot provide direct financial donations to trade unions for member-only activity. Any support should be structured as partnership working, open to all staff, and consistent across all recognised unions.

5 Staff Network Governance

5.1 Each EAG, WSG and Common Interest Network constitution will set out:

(a) The name of the group;

(b) the primary purpose (i.e. whether they are an EAG, WSG first);

(c) the aims and objectives of the group;

(d) the criteria for membership and application process;

(e) the composition of the executive committee including number and description of roles and their decision-making powers;

(f) clear arrangements for decision-making, including voting procedures;

(g) how amendments are made to the constitution, including how the group is dissolved by its members;

(h) the structure and frequency of meetings, including arrangements for Annual General Meetings or equivalent forum where leadership roles are elected and confirmed;

(i) how meetings and decisions are recorded and reported;

(j) how progress against aims and objectives will be measured and reported;

(k) how annual membership numbers will be measured and reported to People Services; and,

(l) responsibilities of executive committee members, including respecting confidentiality.

5.2 At a minimum, each group must have an elected Chair and Vice Chair, who will together form part of the group's Executive Committee. Leadership positions must be filled through a transparent and fair election process, open to eligible members and conducted in line with the group's constitution, normally at an AGM or equivalent meeting. Each group may have up to seven Executive Committee positions in total. However, if a group believes that additional roles are necessary to deliver its objectives, it may request approval from Staff Network Board to vary its constitution to expand its committee as part of the application process.

5.3 All holders of Executive Committee positions will be formally recognised within the post holder's appraisal (performance and development reviews). Line managers will record these responsibilities, accordingly, ensuring that the time, contributions and impact of their work in this space is acknowledged and valued.

5.4 Each group will be required to keep a list of its members securely and in accordance with Policy number 351 (Data protection and privacy policy) and completed data protection impact assessment. EAGs will be required to share the number of active members it has at the end of each financial year, when requested. This is to ensure that the brigade continues to support staff in the most effective ways.

5.5 List of members can be defined as those who sign up to join the group and are on their mailing lists. Each group is required to update this list on a bi-annual basis by requesting members to renew their membership. Group members should be encouraged to play an active role in the organisation and delivery of the activities for their groups. As part of the evaluation of their activities, groups will report annually to People Services the number of staff that have attended their events.

5.6 Each EAG, WSG and Common Interest Network is expected to actively contribute to the Staff Network Board Meetings and perform in line with their charter and constitution, and the DEI and Wellbeing teams will work with groups who may need extra support to do so. Failure to do so may result in the Brigade suspending support and resources to that group.

5.7 A group may be disbanded either by a decision of its members or Executive Committee to close the group or vary the group's purpose, in accordance with its constitution, or by the Director of People issuing a formal notice to disband the group. Where notice is issued, the Director of People will provide the reasons in writing to the Executive Committee and/or remaining members, where applicable.

6 Supporting Staff Networks

6.1 The Brigade recognises that groups provide valuable insight and feedback to help improve how we operate. Accordingly, the Brigade will support committee members in fulfilling their roles.

6.2 The Brigade also recognises that involvement in an EAG, WSG or Common Interest Groups offers opportunities for members to develop their skills and experience. The DEI, Wellbeing Teams and other People Services team will offer training and development for Executive Committee members to support their professional development as leaders of these groups.

6.3 The Brigade will provide dedicated training for the chair and vice-chair of each EAG, WSG and where necessary Common Interest Network at least once every two years, as well as specific training for senior allies.

6.4 Committee members of EAGs and WSGs with designated roles under an approved constitution are entitled to:

(a) Attend committee meetings during working hours or as detached duty with at least seven days' notice provided to line managers. Where executive committee meetings take place outside working hours, members may claim compensatory leave or Leave in Lieu of Overtime (LILO) equivalent to the duration of the meeting plus reasonable travel time from home.

(b) Up to four days per year of work release or detached duty to attend meetings or undertake EAG or WSG activities subject to approval by both the EAG or WSG chair (or vice chair in their absence) and the member's line manager

(c) Claim, in addition to the above, up to two-day shifts (e.g. 10.5 hours x 2 for operational staff and 7 hours X 2 for FRS staff – full time equivalent) per calendar month as compensatory leave or LILO for committee-related work carried out outside of normal working hours.

6.5 Examples of committee related activities eligible for compensatory leave or LILO include, but are not limited to:

(a) Attending internal meetings related to EAG or WSG objectives

(b) Organising events aligned with the EAG or WSGs objectives

(c) Contributing to brigade policy development in formal meetings

(d) Designing, delivering or attending training events

Please note that social activities or sporting gatherings are not eligible for compensatory leave or LILO, so Common Interest Groups are not eligible for this facility.

6.6 The provisions and processes relating to LILO and CL as set out in the policies listed in 7.4 shall apply. However, they must also be approved by the EAG or WSG Chair or Vice Chair in writing, who will notify the DEI or Wellbeing Team for monitoring and record-keeping purposes. No payment shall be made for LILO or CL accrued in relation to these meetings.

6.7 Requests for release from duty, claims for LILO or compensatory leave exceeding the provision laid out in section 6.4, require prior written approval from the EAG, WSG chair or vice chair and the DEI team.

6.8 The claiming of expenses as set out in the expenses policy listed in 7.4 shall apply.

7 Supporting Staff Network activity

7.1 Brigade Senior Leaders and Line Managers are strongly encouraged to actively support staff participation in EAG and WSG conferences, events and activities where operationally possible. These opportunities play a vital role in fostering a more inclusive, supportive, and engaged workplace. Through participation, employees gain greater awareness of inclusion and diversity issues, develop their professional networks and contribute to a positive organisational culture. Such engagement has been shown to improve staff morale, retention, professional help, productivity, and overall wellbeing, while also helping to reduce sickness and absence. Where possible, Senior Leaders and Line Managers should support staff participation in Common Interest Network activity, as it creates a sense of belonging, facilitates networking and contributes to a more positive organisational culture.

Line Managers are also encouraged to:

- Promote upcoming EAG and WSG events during team meetings, one-to-one meetings, briefings and internal communications
- Ensure all staff are made aware of these opportunities
- Facilitate equitable access to participation, considering different roles, shifts, and working patterns

7.2 Members (Non-Executive Committee Members) may request Planned Release of Personnel (PROP) to attend official EAG or WSG meetings, including General Meetings or Annual General Meetings (AGMs). Requests should be made through Executive Members for consideration.

Approval will be subject to:

- Operational Requirements
- Agreement from the Establishment and Performance Team (EPT)

Attendance must be recorded on StARS as ES for a full day absence or ESP for partial absence which shall be entered by EPT.

EAGs and WSG should plan to hold quarterly meetings that consider a variety of working patterns to ensure fair and balanced opportunities for participations. Meetings scheduled outside of normal working hours will not qualify for compensatory leave or Leave in Lieu of Overtime (LILO).

Any expense claims related to attendance must be submitted and managed in accordance to Section 7.4 of this policy.

7.3 Attendance by Members (Non-Executive Committee Members) at EAG or WSG conferences or external related events is at the discretion of their Line Manager (station officer rank or equivalent or above). Funding for such attendance should be met from the relevant local department budget. If a request to attend is declined, the line manager must provide a clear rationale for the decision. This decision, along with the justification, must be reported to the DEI and/or Wellbeing team accordingly. This process ensures transparency, supports consistency in decision-making, and enables monitoring of equitable access to inclusion and wellbeing opportunities across all staff groups. Line Managers are encouraged to take into account a variety of factors when making their decision, including but not limited to:

(a) The overall workload and performance of the individual;

(b) The ability to share work fairly across the team;

(c) The number of other requests by that individual and team to attend meetings, conferences and events in a twelve-month period;

(d) The levels of absence across the team at any given time;

(e) The benefit to the individual of attending a meeting, conference or event and whether that can be classed as a development opportunity.

7.4 Where stated in section 6 or 7 of this policy, compensatory leave, LILO, and reimbursement of expenses will be claimed in accordance with the terms of the relevant Brigade policy:

- Policy number 515 – Compensatory leave taking arrangements policy – attendance at training courses and other planned events – operational staff
- Policy number 430 – Casual overtime duty, leave and allowances and public holiday rates – operational staff
- Policy number 924 – Overtime and compensatory leave policy – FRS staff
- Policy number 573 – Control staff overtime and LILO policy
- Policy number 514 - Subsistence and public transport expenses policy

7.5 For the purposes of this definition, fares and subsistence incurred by ordinary members will be payable by the local department.

8 Funding and coordinating Equality Action Group activity

8.1 The Brigade is committed to funding official and approved Equality Action Group and Wellbeing Support Group activities. The funding for groups will formally sit in the DEI Team and as a result the Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is the cost centre manager for this budget. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team will put in place a clear process for requesting funding. The Wellbeing Support Group budget will be managed from the same fund.

8.2 The Staff Network Board will receive regular updates on all expenditure which will be circulated with the Staff Network Board minutes. The Cost Centre Manager will retain responsibility for making final funding decisions in accordance with corporate financial regulations and governance standards.

8.3 The DEI and Wellbeing Teams will implement structured processes to evaluate the effectiveness of funded activities, such as event evaluation forms, post-project reviews and outcome assessments. Failure to utilise these processes may result in funding being withheld in future.

8.4 EAGs and WSGs can run campaigns within the Brigade. All campaign and communications activity must be pre-approved by the DEI, Wellbeing and Communications teams, in line with established guidelines. Only approved activities will be eligible for central funding and communications support and must fully comply with Brigade branding and non-political engagement policies. Breaches of these guidelines will result in withdrawal of funding.

8.5 In or around January each year, the DEI Team will request and consolidate funding submissions from all EAGs, WSGs and Common Interest Groups, covering planned activities for the upcoming financial year. Funding requests for events, training, development and campaign activity must demonstrate alignment with stated objectives and measurable outcomes to be approved

8.6 The DEI team will arrange an annual planning meeting in or around January each year, to help shape departmental and Brigade-wide objectives. This planning meeting provides an opportunity for groups to present priorities, propose change initiatives and influence strategic direction before the publication of annual plans in April.

8.7 All funding and activity proposals submitted to the annual planning meeting will be presented to People Services Leadership Team for final review and approval.

8.8 All approved activities will be recorded in a Corporate Staff Network Calendar, which will act as a central planning and coordination tool for Equality Action Groups, Wellbeing Support Groups and other Staff Network equality focused events and initiatives across the Brigade.

8.9 Routine expenses, such as catering, guest speaker bookings and other logistics, will be processed on an ongoing basis using the authorised supplies listed on SAP Ariba. The relevant Pro-Forma and Risk Assessment must receive pre-approval from a member of the DEI Team.

8.10 Departments may choose to contribute to the cost of group activities, including funding for travel, conferences or specific events. Such contributions must come from local budgets and be authorised by departmental cost centre managers, in line with financial regulations. Individual attendance at external conferences will be paid for from local departmental budgets.

8.11 Local managers or senior leaders outside the DEI or Organisational Development cost centres cannot authorise EAG, WSG or Staff Network expenditure. Where a member of staff enters a supplier arrangement without appropriate permissions, they will be in breach of brigade financial regulations and may be held liable for payment.

8.12 At its discretion, People Services may open additional funding rounds to support new or emerging equality initiatives. Where this is the case, the relevant team will:

(a) Set out a clear and time-bound process for applying for additional funds

(b) Lead a cross-departmental Planning Group to support the decision making and delivery of additional activities.

Membership of this group will include representatives from:

(i) People Services

(ii) Communications

(iii) Any Other Relevant Department.

9 The Staff Network Board

9.1 Each Equality Action Group, Wellbeing Support Group and Common Interest Network will be invited to participate in the Staff Network Board, which will meet at least bi-monthly. Additional one-off meetings may be convened as required to emerging organisational priorities or equality issues. The dates for the bi-monthly meeting are sent out to each Chair by the end of January.

9.2 All Staff Networks are expected to attend all these meetings. If the Chair is unable to attend, it is their responsibility to nominate the Vice Chair or a member of the Executive Committee to attend in their place, ensuring that every group remains represented.

9.3 Where no representative is available to attend, the Chair must formally submit apologies to the Staff Network Board Chair for the purposes of record-keeping and inclusion in the meeting minutes. As standard practice, failure to attend without apology on three occasions will be treated as a resignation from the post.

9.4 The Staff Network Board will serve as the central forum for collaboration, communication, and coordination across all Equality Action Groups, the Wellbeing Support Groups and other Staff Networks. Its key functions will include:

(a) Sharing best practice among Equality Action Groups, Wellbeing Support Group and Staff Networks

(b) Providing updates on ongoing work, planned events, and lessons learned

(c) Reviewing and discussing relevant budgets, including regular financial and spending updates

(d) Receiving updates from all Staff Networks and their related governance structures

(e) Raising issues and challenges faced by individual or collective Staff Networks

9.5 The Staff Network Board will be chaired by an elected representative chosen by members of the Network through a transparent and fair election process. The Chair will ordinarily be a senior member of brigade staff. Members of the Staff Network Board may nominate candidates when the post becomes vacant and a vote will be held with one vote per group (EAG, WSG and Staff Network).

9.6 The Chair will be responsible for leading meetings, setting agendas, ensuring balanced participation, and serving as the key liaison with the brigade senior leadership as required. The Staff Network Board will be supported by colleagues from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team and the Wellbeing Team.

9.7 The Board will also elect a Vice Chair, who will support the Chair in carrying out their duties and act as Deputy Chair when the Chair is unavailable. The Vice Chair will also take responsibility for specific workstreams as agreed by the Board and be appointed in the same manner as s.9.5

9.8 Departments are expected to actively support the Staff Network Board by:

(a) Attending relevant meetings when invited

(b) Sharing departmental information and updates relevant to equality, wellbeing or staff engagement

(c) Proving resources or data to inform discussions

(d) Allowing staff sufficient time to participate fully in meetings and related activities as set out in this policy

9.9 The DEI Team will provide administrative and operational support to the Staff Network Board. This will include:

(a) Recording and circulating meeting minutes and agreed actions

(b) Managing the publication of minutes and documents on the relevant Hotwire pages (with redactions where necessary)

(c) Providing general logistical and advisory support to the Chair and members

(d) Maintaining a repository of documents including agendas, reports and updates

(e) Maintaining a list of allies

(f) Maintaining the budget for all EAG, WSG and Staff Networks.

9.10 The Communications Team will provide regular updates to the Staff Network Board and respond to questions and queries.

10 Senior Allies and Executive Sponsors

10.1 Each EAGs, WSGs and Common Interest Groups may request the support of a Senior Ally to strengthen leadership engagement and ensure the group's priorities are represented within the relevant decision-making forum.

10.2 A Senior Ally will typically be a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), who acts as a visible advocate, supporting the group's activities, promoting inclusion across the organisation, and helping to champion initiatives within their area of responsibility

The purpose of appointing a Senior Ally is to:

(a) Strengthen the strategic alignment between group activities and Brigade priorities

(b) Provide senior representation and advocacy for DEI and Wellbeing issues

(c) Ensure the experience of group members helps to influence organisational policy, culture and decision making

(d) Encourage active collaboration and communication between EAGs, WSGs and senior leaders

10.3 A Senior Ally provides visible support and practical advocacy for an EAG, WSG or Common Interest Network. The Allies help amplifying messages, sharing expertise and model inclusive behaviour across their areas of influence

Key responsibilities include:

(a) Acting as a public supporter and role model for the group within the organisation

(b) Promoting group events, campaigns and initiatives through internal communications

(c) Provide mentorship and advice to group committee members

(d) Encouraging inclusive leadership practices within their departments and teams

(e) Offering feedback and insight from leadership discussions that may affect the objectives of that group

10.4 EAGs and WSGs are encouraged to build relationships directly with Senior Allies whose remit, influence and strategic responsibilities align with the group's priorities. Senior Allies are not required to share the protected characteristic or lived experience represented by the group;

rather, their role is to champion objectives and help advance agreed priorities at senior level. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team will support this process and ensure that arrangements are appropriately recorded for organisational oversight.

10.5 The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team will coordinate with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure a fair, open and transparent process for appointing Senior Allies is in place.

10.6 Appointments should be confirmed annually, with the option for renewal or rotation to ensure continued alignment with organisational priorities. This will be agreed with the Staff Network Board.

10.7 The London Fire Commissioner and all Directors act as Executive Sponsors to all groups equally.

11 Sponsorships

11.1 EAGs, WSGs and Common Interest Network may enter into sponsorship agreements with external organisations to support their activities, events or initiatives in accordance with the Brigade's Sponsorship, fundraising and donation policy, as well as the brigade's Financial Regulations, Procurement Policy and Code of Ethics and all other applicable policies and code of practice which you can find here

11.2 This includes full adherence to relevant legislation such as anti-bribery and corruption laws, data protection and privacy regulation and conflict of interest protocols.

11.3 In line with the Sponsorship policy, appropriate due diligence must be completed as part of any sponsorship proposal. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that:

(a) All sponsorship arrangements, fundraising activities, and donations are lawful and, in the Brigades, best interests.

(b) Any sponsorship or donation supports and upholds LFB values; London Fire Safety aims and other organisational principles.

(c) Arrangements are formally recorded and represent value for money, with benefits proportionate to the level of sponsorship or donation.

11.4 All publicity, promotional materials and acknowledgements relating to sponsorships, fundraising campaigns, or donations are managed in accordance with the policy and the Brigade's communications and branding standards

11.5 This must be followed when the Brigade is contemplating entering into an agreement for its services, facilities or activities to be sponsored and/or because of donations. Whilst a group may seek sponsorship, ultimately, the group only exists because the brigade exists – so reputationally, the brigade retains the right to reject any and all sponsorship arrangements requested by any group.

11.6 Additionally, all potential sponsorship arrangements must support or further LFB values, London Safety Plan (CRMP) aims and Brigade principles and must align with the strategic objectives and values of the Brigade. The process for identifying, evaluating and approving sponsors will be coordinated by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team in collaboration with the Communications and Engagement Directorate and the General Counsels Department to ensure consistency with organisational policies and legal obligations.

11.7 All relevant members of staff must ensure that sponsorships, fundraising campaigns and donations are transparently recorded, approved by heads of service within Communications and People Services, and reported in line with the Brigade's governance process.

11.8 All proposed sponsorships agreements must be reviewed by the Staff Network Board, which will assess the suitability, alignment, and potential risks associated with the sponsorship. The Board will then make a formal recommendation to the relevant heads of service within People Services and Communications. Final authority to approve or decline the sponsorship agreement rests with the relevant heads of service, who may consult with the General Counsel's Department and other relevant directorates as necessary.

11.9 All approved sponsorship agreements must be documented in writing, clearly outlining the terms and conditions, scope of sponsorship, deliverables, duration and termination clauses. A copy of the signed agreement must be retained by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team and logged in accordance with the Brigade's other records management policies. Any material changes to the terms of the agreement must be re-approved through the original review and approval process.

11.10 There will be no ability to appeal denial of sponsorship arrangements.

12 Help and support

12.1 Please contact the Equality Action groups by email to ESGplanning@london-fire.gov.uk or the HR Helpdesk on extension 89100 or by email to IT.HR@london-fire.gov.uk.

12.2 This policy may also be available on request in other alternative accessible formats as set out in Policy number 290 – Guidance note on translation and interpretation. Please contact Communications on extension 30753 and by email to communications.team@london-fire.gov.uk to discuss your needs and options.

12.3 The Brigade invites your engagement so that it can learn so if you have a suggestion that can improve this policy then please submit your idea via the Staff Suggestion Scheme on Hotwire as set out in Policy number 887 – Staff suggestion scheme. Any changes do need to go through the agreed engagement, consultation, negotiation or governance requirements.

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	13/05/2026	SDIA	L – 30/04/2026	HSWIA	01/05/2026	RA	NA

Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Page 9	EIA date updated.	29/04/2024
Page 8 para 11.3	Staff Suggestion scheme access details added.	17/05/2024
Page 7, para 8.6	Hyperlink and title for PN514 updated.	28/04/2026
Page 9	SDIA and HSWIA updated.	05/05/2026
Page 31	Reviewed as current with major changes, the title of the policy has been amended and the EIA has been updated.	30/06/2026

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	**FOIA exemption**	**Security marking classification**