London Fire Brigade Firefighter Named Rising Star

Joint Press release (Women in the Fire Service UK & London Fire Brigade)

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Rebecca Rowe, a Firefighter for London Fire Brigade has been named ‘Firefighter Rising Star Award’ winner in the Women in the Fire Service Awards 2022.

Rebecca (Bex), who joined London in 2018 as a firefighter at Paddington, was nominated twice in the national awards for remarkable contributions to the Fire Service.

The ‘Firefighter Rising Star’ category recognises individuals who have demonstrated a determination to succeed in their role and been an advocate and ambassador on gender equality and empowerment issues.

About Rebecca

Nikki Upton, Rebecca’s colleague and ‘Rising Star’ nominator, described her as having demonstrated huge determination throughout her life and the path that led her to be a firefighter. She said Bex had been a visible role model for women as a professional athlete, but had also demonstrated a huge level of resilience when faced with career ending injuries. And that when Bex no longer played professional sport she turned her attention to how best she could represent women and became a firefighter at the age of 37.

Nikki described her colleague’s passion and drive to see other women succeed as ‘infectious’, saying her love of the job was so clear to see that Bex’s fiancé Kirsty also applied to be a

firefighter. Rebecca is one of an all-female team of five training to ski coast-to-coast across Antarctica in November 2023.

London Fire Commissioner Andy Roe said: "This is a huge achievement and everyone at London Fire Brigade is extremely proud of Firefighter Rowe for winning this much deserved award.

"She is an excellent role model for all our staff and we hope that her story will encourage people from all backgrounds and particularly women to consider a fire service career."

Speaking on the notification of her award, Rebecca said being a firefighter appealed to her as it's such a diverse job and no day is the same. She said:

"I'm very shocked and honoured to win the award as there are so many other amazing firefighters out there.

"I don't do the job for praise, but to make someone's worst day slightly better if I can.

"For me – it's the best job in the world and it never feels like a job."

About Women in the Fire Service

Women in the Fire Service UK is a not-for-profit organisation who work in partnership with its corporate members to advance equality in the sector.

WFS Patron, Dany Cotton QFSM, said:

"I'm delighted that Bex has been awarded the Firefighter Rising Star Award. Her passion and dedication make her a fabulous role model for women of all ages and her determination is a reminder to all of us to never give up!"

Category sponsors of the Firefighter Rising Star Award were

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan said: “Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service are delighted to have been able to sponsor the WFS Firefighter Rising Star Award and we are equally thrilled to congratulate this year’s winner, Rebecca Rowe from the London Fire Brigade.

“Rebecca has shown real drive and incredible fortitude to succeed in her role as firefighter, as well as demonstrating her wider commitment towards gender equality and empowerment across the Fire and Rescue Service.

“As a Service, we are proud to champion gender equality and we are proud to support the recognition of Rebecca’s excellence through the presentation of this prestigious award.”

Emma Watling was also nominated for an award, the Exceptional Allies Award. Emma was instrumental in forming LFB FireChoir in November 2018, taking on the role of choir leader. Being positive and full of energy she gave FireChoir a most wonderful role model. Covid brought challenges and Emma’s enthusiasm kept FireChoir motivated, and videos for Christmas and Remembrance Day were a reminder that FireChoir could still be together. Emma engendered a spirit of community and teamwork and brought together a diverse and unlikely group of people. Her kind, compassionate and caring nature was describe as “a beacon of light and love” in dark times.

Winners and runners-up receive prizes, as well as an invitation to attend a special award ceremony in June.

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Notes to the Editor

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There were a total of sixty nominations across five categories from twenty-five Fire Services.

- 8 nominations in the Young Person Role Model Award
- 18 nominations in the Bright Light Award
- 9 nominations in the Firefighter Rising Star Award
- 17 nominations in the Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award
- 8 nominations in the Exceptional Allies Award

Award Sponsors:

1. Cold Cut Systems Ltd – Young Person Role Model Award
2. Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service – Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader Award
3. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service – Firefighter Rising Star Award
4. Serve and Protect Credit Union – Bright Light Award
5. Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service and the National Fire Chiefs Council End Point Assessment Partnership – Exceptional Allies Award

The Women in the Fire Service Awards opened to entries in November 2021

and closed on 15th March 2022. The Award Ceremony takes place at The Fire Service College on Friday 10th June 2022.

#WFSAwards22

Women in the Fire Service UK is a volunteer-led, not-for-profit organisation which exists to advance equality, addressing gender imbalance in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). Women are vastly underrepresented in firefighting. Government figures (2021) show just 7.5% of firefighters in England are women.

For more information about Women in the Fire Service visit: https://www.wfs.org.uk

For more information about London Fire Brigade visit:

https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/