

Dear Say So SPoC,

Welcome to the [REDACTED] in our series of newsletters and updates to keep our member organisations informed of developments.

Creating Excellence

Say So Sherlock continues to evolve with more recently added features (or coming soon),

- ‘Reports’ can now be [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to support reaching most appropriate outcomes (legal/HR/training etc.)
- [REDACTED] can be called upon to populate ‘cultural dashboards’ being developed by FRS’s
- [REDACTED] organisations [REDACTED] [REDACTED] can be in direct communication with concern raisers (even if anonymous) to offer support.
- Capture [REDACTED] for rapid circulation and consideration

site visits

Our relationship team continue to be busy in your sector too. In the past [REDACTED] they have made 6 in-person visits and [REDACTED] online teams calls reaching [REDACTED] firefighters and staff (including [REDACTED] new starters). This is spreading the word about ‘speak up’ and emphasising how each of our member organisations understand how sometimes it can be difficult to raise workplace issues but nevertheless they want to hear them. We have arrangements in place to meet internal staff groups and [REDACTED] this autumn.

So what are we learning? Well certainly, with our reps meeting firefighters and staff in their workplaces on a weekly (almost daily basis) we are picking up current issues and feelings. These range from frustrations about [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to a perception that front line staff are not being supported



sufficiently by [REDACTED]. There is also the regular ‘we don’t see the organisation leaders’. On the positive side, many of the firefighters we meet seem content with [REDACTED]. That said, the constant threat of [REDACTED] cannot be overlooked and our briefings touch upon how they can alert their employers to any such concerns about themselves or others in a confidential way if that’s what they prefer. The tragic incident in Bicester was a reminder of the operational risks faced and the impact of such events (that may be longstanding and significant). We at Say So tip our hats at the bravery shown daily by all emergency services on behalf of the communities they serve. In the coming months and years the true impact may be revealed whenever people feel they can disclose in a way they feel comfortable to do so. It is clear that, as a group, [REDACTED] know the most about what’s going on and we are able more and more to access that information.

What is the data telling us?

The main players in the fire sector concern footprint, taken from a primary category standpoint:

Primary category	All 2024	1st half 2025
Abuse (Emotional, Physical, Sexual, Verbal, Psychological)	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Management/Supervision	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Code of Conduct (other than abuse)	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Equality	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Of those who raised concerns anonymously

2 nd half 2024		1 st half 2025
[REDACTED]	didn’t want additional stress of being identified	[REDACTED]
	feared detrimental action by colleagues	
	feared detrimental action by employer	
	do not want the attention	

Our data gathering on this factor is now showing some potentially interesting changes. For those remaining anonymous there is almost a [redacted] split between those not wishing additional stress or attention and those who actively fear some detrimental action against them. This appears to indicate such fear amongst staff has risen. Data will tell us how or if this will change over time but this is food for thought for FRS's leaders.

[redacted] % fear being identified would cause personal difficulty or challenge

Can we interpret what this particular data examination tells us? [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

When conducting our visits to work locations we are still hearing that raising a concern to their employer will result in (paraphrased) ‘my cards will be marked’, ‘I will be labelled a troublemaker’ and ‘this will impact upon future decisions made about me’. It is quite apparent therefore that employers should seek to find ways to confront and overcome this narrative.

[redacted] %
sexual abuse concerns

Concerns about *sexual abuse in this sector* have [redacted] again by over [redacted] % in first half of 2025 compared to 2024. This is the second period that we have noticed this positive factor for all Fire and Rescue Services using Say So and says much about [redacted] workplaces for all. This is particularly [redacted] as year on year we are briefing more and more firefighters and staff to make them familiar with the reporting process and the protections offered and overall volume of concerns raised have increased.

Concerns raised about Process, Procedure and Policy issues have [REDACTED] to 5.5% of overall totals compared to 9% in 2024 in the FRS sector. Does this mean people are [REDACTED] working procedures? Are FRS's [REDACTED] in this area? Its early but if this trend continues conclusions may become more clear.

Trust and confidence (and feeling of safety) remains our priority to ensure voices are heard. Ensuring each matter raised is appropriately responded to and that feedback is provided helps build that trust.

Other matters

We attended the Blue Light Show at Olympia in June and spoke with senior leaders and other influencers. During one panel question session, Chair of NFCC Phil Garrigan, was asked,

“What one thing do you see as important for building a good workplace culture?”

he answered ,

‘I think having a good anonymous reporting line is important’.

This of course is music to our ears and it is great that this message is being re-enforced from the top.



In June we attended the ASFA counter-suicide conference hosted by LFB. The statistics for emergency services are truly worrying and the speakers all gave impassioned and evidenced views of the problem and what support is currently available. We are now linking up with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to offer Say So as a means to build data and connect those suffering MH issues with offers of support.

What became clear at the conference was that pro-active measures to stay mentally healthy, as well as physically fit/healthy, should be considered by everyone, including employers. We noted that London Fire Brigade are beginning to engage in MH resilience but clearly more of this is required.

In July we attended the AFSA summer conference hosted by Essex Fire and Rescue Service. As usual there were many fantastic speakers, groups and workshop activities that widened our knowledge. In particular, [REDACTED] stood out for me. He is a wonderful example of public service and dedication with 35 years as a firefighter and then 20 years as green book staff serving the community and keeping vulnerable

people and children safe. His account of the great welcome he received in the Sikh and other minority communities was entirely moving and inspirational.

Another inspiring speaker was my friend and former colleague [REDACTED] who as usual spoke with eloquence and authenticity about politics and prejudice. [REDACTED] told of his experience and thoughts from his elevated level at [REDACTED]

The sad and tragic incident at Bicester Motion impacted closely and directly so many firefighters and staff across three services. Martyn Sadler and Jennie Logan were known beyond Oxfordshire FRS but, in any case, and understandably the impact of the tragedy has been felt deeply across all of the FRS community.

Say So is committed to supporting FRS's in encouraging and maintaining positive mental health among their workforce and we are currently considering how we can

[REDACTED] for the firefighting community. We are also working on how we could provide [REDACTED] and individuals who can provide necessary support.

We are continuing to grow and help our members improve their workplaces and working culture and we have certainly noticed the dial moving to find more and more CEO's, COO's and other senior risk managers more receptive of 'listening to their staff'.

Do have a wonderful remainder of 2025 and we look forward to seeing you on our travels around the UK.

Stay Safe

Shaun Keep
Co-Founding Director
Say So