

**Please reply to:**

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Date: 16th March 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

REF: The Equality and Social Justice Committee Meeting 26th February 2024

Regarding the Equality and Social Justice Committee Meeting on 26/02/2024, I wish to raise a complaint against Hannah Blythyn MS, Deputy Minister for Social Partnership and her two Welsh Government Officials, Liz Lalley Director for Risk, Resilience and Community Safety and Dan Stephens Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector.

I am writing to you in my capacity as the National Secretary of the Fire Leaders Association and representing Mr Huw Jakeway, the Chief Fire Officer South Wales Fire & Rescue Service.

At the meeting of the Equality and Social Justice Committee held on 26/02/2024 Chaired by Senedd Member Jenny Rathbone, Deputy Minister Hannah Blythyn knowingly misled the meeting in response to a question from Sarah Murphy, Senedd Member for Bridgend.

In her response to a question from Sarah Murphy MS regarding the appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer (Stuart Millington), Deputy Minister Hannah Blythyn stated that when she appointed the Commissioners to intervene in South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority they found that Huw Jakeway Chief Fire Officer had left his post and there was an operational vacuum that had to be filled.

This was a blatant untruth and has greatly hurt Mr Jakeway. It has called into question his professionalism and integrity. The Deputy Minister in her response to Sarah Murphy MS implied that Mr Jakeway had vacated his post before the Commissioners had arrived and that Mr Jakeway had left the Service without leadership.

Mr Jakeway continues to be the Chief Fire Officer of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service until he retires in early April 2024 as stated in his open and public correspondence published on the Services' website on 3rd January 2024.

Mr Jakeway was continuing in his usual capacity as Chief Fire Officer until the 7th February 2024, when the newly appointed Commissioners arrived in the Service. It was the Commissioners, appointed on Terms of Reference laid down by Deputy Minister Hannah Blythyn who made the decision to place Mr Jakeway on extended leave, pending his retirement date of April 2024.



A short while after their arrival, the Commissioners met with Mr Jakeway on the 7th February and informed him they were placing him, with immediate effect on special leave and he was to vacate his office and the Services Headquarters that same day. Mr Jakeway received correspondence from the Commissioners stating that he is placed with immediate effect on “Special Leave with Pay” until he retires, the correspondence then clearly states that he is not required to be part of the on-call rota system and all equipment and devices must be returned to Service Headquarters by the close of play on Monday 12th February 2024.

It was in fact the Commissioners, acting on the Terms of Reference set by the Deputy Minister who created the ‘operational vacuum’. Clearly this is contrary to the Deputy Minister stating that the CFO had left his post to the Committee which has now been placed on the public record. Mr Jakeway has not left his post. The Deputy Minister was accompanied by two Welsh Government Officials, Liz Lalley Director for Risk, Resilience and Community Safety and Dan Stephens Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector. It is also our belief that they both knew that this statement was not correct at the time, but they chose not to factually correct the Deputy Minister or the Committee.

Public officials and elected representatives are charged with upholding certain standards and in particular the Nolan Principles, with honesty, integrity and accountability being very much to the fore. Deputy Minister Hannah Blythyn was not honest when she stated publicly that Mr Jakeway had left his post and thereby creating an operational vacuum, which needed to be filled by the immediate appointment of an interim Chief Fire Officer. The Deputy Minister must be held accountable for their words and actions and in this specific case, the Deputy Minister must be held accountable for responding to a question from Sarah Murphy MS in an untruthful manner, which has caused hurt and significant distress to Mr Jakeway, this has wrongly challenged his professionalism and integrity.

We now demand a written apology from the Deputy Minister to Mr Jakeway and an immediate correction to the written transcript, and any other written, audio or video record of the meeting of the Equality and Social Justice Committee meeting of 26/02/2024 to reflect the matter we have raised.

We would expect this matter to be dealt with immediately and I await your confirmation that a letter of apology has been sent to Mr Jakeway and that the necessary amendments and corrections are made to the records of the aforementioned meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glynn Luznyj', with a small asterisk to the right.

Glynn Luznyj MA MIFireE

National Secretary

Fire Leaders Association