

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service

# People Strategy

2024 - 2028



Making Cumbria a safer place for all



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## Executive Summary

### Putting our communities first

The people strategy recognises the huge value that every member of our workforce brings to the service, the public and our communities. We are committed to ensuring we recruit, retain and promote individuals who demonstrate the highest standards of behaviours and skills and continue to put the interests of our communities first.

### Dignity and Respect

We ensure that all staff are aware of their own conscious and unconscious bias, that we listen to our workforce through regular open dialogue, ensuring that decisions are evidence based, objective and without discrimination. We will support all of our workforce to be the best version of themselves and communicate in an open transparent and respectful way.

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI both within the our service and the wider communities in which we serve. We will lead with kindness, curiosity and empathy, embracing difference and removing barriers to ensure equal opportunities for all.

### Integrity

We role model integrity at every level of the organisation, creating a positive learning culture where we seek feedback, listen to each other, and encourage open, honest constructive dialogue.

### Leadership

There are positive role models and leaders at every level within the organisation. We really value the flexible, supportive leadership demonstrated within the service and are committed to leading with kindness, curiosity, empathy and fairness. Ensuring that our workforce feels accountable and responsible for everything they do, receiving appropriate reward and recognition.



## Introduction

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) recognise that our workforce is our most valuable asset and is crucial to providing our communities with high quality services.

The skills, knowledge, experience and diversity of our workforce has a direct impact on the success and quality of the service we can deliver to the communities across Cumbria.

The People Strategy is a statement of our intent to support and develop every member of our workforce throughout their employment with CFRS. We are fully committed to making CFRS a great place to work. We want to help our workforce to become more resilient, develop their skills and maximise their wellbeing at work.

We also recognise that the way we lead, manage and behave is fundamental to how people view the Service, so we want to reiterate our commitment to all our staff throughout this strategy. It is essential to demonstrate our commitment to fairness, equality, respect and continuous improvement.

The Service has been through a period of significant change and as the Service continues to adapt to these changing circumstances, we recognise this can be worrying for some staff when the changes impact upon them. The period of change across the Service is likely to be ongoing as we progress into the future. It is essential that this strategy is closely aligned to our work on transformation, collaboration and hosted services to ensure that all enabling services effectively support the needs of the service. We will ensure that we will continue to support and develop our teams to enable all of us to deliver the best possible service to our communities.

Every fire and rescue service is unique, but whilst Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service may have different cultural and people determinants due to our differences in leadership, governance, service delivery model and size, there are common goals and principles which should be consistent throughout the sector.

In developing our Strategy we have considered underpinning principles within the NFCC People Strategy, the national Core Code of Ethics and the inspection process from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and most importantly the continual support and development of our staff to ensure we deliver a first class professional Service to the communities across Cumbria.



## Service Vision

Over the lifetime of this strategy we will focus on our key commitments in addition to or in conjunction with the strategic direction set by the PFCC, Government, HMICFRS and NFCC.

These will be supported by specific action plans/policies to support change and measure improvement.

As part of our cultural journey we have created an environment where our workforce have a voice and we continue to encourage dialogue, feedback and the sharing of views, opinions and perspectives. The effective communication of this strategy to our workforce is key to its success as it will support understanding and engagement with what we are aiming to achieve and the fundamental part they all play.

As an organisation we are dedicated to evolving our service delivery model that continues to put our communities first by focusing on collaborative working with our partners and stakeholders to add value to the work they do, to reduce overall risk and vulnerability across Cumbria.

This strategy will ensure we achieve this, and our workforce will receive the appropriate support and development to deliver this strategy. The oversight of this strategy will be provided by the service's Workforce Development Group.

We encourage our workforce to be fully engaged with the principles and objectives of this strategy and for it to be discussed in a variety of forums.



**The vision for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is:**

*A community-focused, professional and trusted Fire and Rescue Service that makes Cumbria a safer place for all.*

**The People Strategy supports this vision and is underpinned by 6 key objectives:**

1. We will ensure that we have the right people in the right posts at the right time in order to deliver our services to the community.
2. We will promote a positive inclusive culture where all employees display our values and behaviours and contribute to making CFRS a great place to work.
3. We will continue to review the employee offer, ensuring that our employees feel supported and valued.
4. We will ensure that the service is an inclusive organisation where all employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to opportunity.
5. We will maximise the health and wellbeing of our staff.
6. We will ensure all of our employees are equipped with the right skills, tools and guidance to enable them to perform their roles to a high standard in a way which promotes compassion, accountability, support and trust.

## Responsibility

Responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of this Strategy rests with the following:

### Assistant Chief Fire Officer (People)...

is accountable for the delivery and review of this Strategy.

### HR Managers...

are responsible for the development and delivery of all HR policies and procedures to support this Strategy and for monitoring the achievement of the departmental plan on a page (POAP).

### The Area Manager Preparedness...

is responsible for development and delivery of the Learning and Development Plan which supports this Strategy and for monitoring the achievement of this plan.

### The Resourcing, Talent and Wellbeing Lead...

is responsible for the development and delivery of all resourcing and wellbeing policies and procedures to support this Strategy and for monitoring the achievement of the departmental plan on a page.

All employees within **HR, Resourcing, Talent, Wellbeing and Learning & Development** are responsible for delivery of their team plans.

### All leaders, managers and employees across the service...

have a role to play in supporting the implementation of this strategy and ensuring that Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is a great place to work.

The oversight of this strategy will be provided by the service's **Workforce Development Group**.



# 1.

**We will ensure that we have the right people in the right posts at the right time in order to deliver our services to the community.**

Recognising that our workforce is crucial to be able to deliver the service to our communities outlined in our Community Risk Management Plan and that the relationship and benefits a diverse workforce bring to improving community outcomes we will continue to improve our approaches to recruitment and promotion in an equal and inclusive way.

We will continue to learn from best practice nationally within the fire and rescue sector and externally, enabling our workforce to develop to their full potential and allow the service to use a range of resourcing methods to ensure we can attract, recruit and retain individuals who meet the needs of the Service and the communities which we serve.

We will build within our recruitment and promotion processes the Leadership Framework, the Core Code of Ethics and the Service values, ensuring that the most suitable leaders are recruited and appointed.

We will develop an effective succession planning process that will be overseen by the Workforce Development Group.

We appreciate the need for different approaches to recruitment, promotion and retention based on the different workforces that we employ. Our Wholetime, On Call and Corporate workforces are all equally valuable to CFRS and we are committed to ensuring our process are accessible to all, balancing the need for both consistency and flexibility in approach.



## 2.

**We will promote a positive inclusive culture where all employees display our values and behaviours and contribute to making CFRS a great place to work.**

We know the best organisations are those that work together, encourage contributions and constructive challenges from everyone in the organisation, share responsibility for successes and learn together from mistakes. The People Strategy will build on this by developing an open and transparent learning culture that promotes fairness and trust, appreciating that different people bring different perspectives, ideas and knowledge, and which together adds a valuable strength and resilience to the organisation.

We want to continue to develop a culture of curiosity where we recognise that we may have different perspectives, however our workforce can be confident that their views will be listened to by their peers and leaders through regular open dialogue.

We will continue to embed the core code of ethics, ensuring it is genuinely understood by everyone and that it is embedded in everything that we do.

We recognise that all our workforce are role models, internally and also within their communities. We are committed to leading with kindness and respect.

We will support the delivery of key national action plans, including the NFCC Culture action plan, HMICFRS spotlight report on culture and values and HMICFRS report on misconduct.

We will set up a Culture and Values Board which will ensure that employees across the organisation and within our staff networks have a voice and are able to positively contribute to shaping the future direction of our culture.

We recognise and accept the difficult findings some of the national reports regarding the culture in the Fire and Rescue Sector and are committed to making sure all of our employees feel safe and supported within the workplace and have confidence to speak up should they witness or experience any actions or behaviours that aren't in line with our values. We will ensure that confidential reporting mechanisms are available to all employees.

A positive and open culture not only allows employees to be comfortable being who they are, it amplifies their own skills and abilities to allow them to do their best and most satisfying work whatever their role. Building a great service, with great people, which is recognised as a great place to be, also gives us the greatest opportunity to attract and retain staff from the widest possible talent pool.

## 3.

**We will continue to review the employee offer, ensuring that our employees feel supported and valued.**

We will develop a culture where individuals perform to the best of their ability and own their development/career because they have a sense of belonging and feel valued.

This will include the potential and current workforce being committed to the service values and behaviours, exploring opportunities to support our communities in more flexible and different ways of working, underpinned by the National Core Code of Ethics and Professional Standards.

We will regularly review our policies and procedures, ensuring that they are up to date, align with best practice and accessible to all of our workforce. Our policy review framework and links to the NFCC people programme will allow us to identify areas of improvement.

In order for our workforce to feel supported and valued they need to be listened to. Often the best solutions come from individuals at all levels of the organisation.

We are committed to listening to our employees and maximising their avenues to provide feedback and dialogue, through staff surveys, staff engagement visits, employees networks, trade unions and our new Culture and Values Board.



## 4.

**We will ensure that the service is an inclusive organisation where all employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to opportunity.**

CFRS is fully committed to equality, diversity and inclusion recognising that a service which values and supports equal treatment, equal opportunity, inclusion, involvement and transparency has the best chance of its prevention, protection and response delivery meeting the needs of its communities and supporting those who are most vulnerable and at greatest risk of harm.

CFRS aspires to build a workforce that is more balanced and representative of the communities we serve. Operationally, we would like to improve the gender balance and ensure that members of LGBTQ and disabled communities or from diverse ethnic backgrounds recognise that CFRS offers exciting career opportunities for them.

Where there are barriers which prevent anyone in our communities considering that CFRS may be a career choice for them, we will seek to understand these barriers in order to remove or reduce these wherever possible.

We will ensure that equality impact assessments are completed for all relevant policies and procedures and engage regularly with the workforce to ensure fairness and transparency.

We will provide effective learning materials that support cultural change and a good understanding of all areas of EDI and difference including blended/ virtual learning.

We will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect a modern diverse service focused on removing all barriers to ensure all our workforce can thrive and “achieve the very best of themselves”.

We will actively engage with groups that represent underserved groups in the Service and or the community e.g. Women in the Fire Service (WFS), Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA).



## 5.

**We will maximise the health and wellbeing of our staff.**

CFRS is committed to ensuring that all employees are provided with the access to the support that is needed to maintain and enhance good physical and mental health and wellbeing.

We want to encourage our staff to lead healthy lives and make choices that support their wellbeing and where they are able to make good decisions about maintaining a beneficial work/ life balance. An important element of this is staff being aware that the service will continue to look at ways of supporting family friendly processes, flexible work patterns and individualised employee support whenever possible.

This People Strategy will assist with the delivery of our Wellbeing calendar which shares our programme of wellbeing activities and initiatives aimed at delivering improved health and wellbeing awareness.

We will continue to work to dispel the stigma surrounding mental health and will continue to support effective health, wellbeing and fitness to maintain a safe and healthy workforce.

Our commitment to employee safety is maintained through continually learning from operational incidents, accidents and near misses to reduce future occurrences, including workrelated post-traumatic stress disorder and we will maintain our full commitment to encouraging more open conversations about mental health issues.



## 6.

**We will ensure all of our employees are equipped with the right skills, tools and guidance to enable them to perform their roles to a high standard in a way which promotes compassion, accountability, support and trust.**

CFRS staff need to be equipped with the appropriate skills, knowledge and competencies to ensure we are able to effectively meet our future challenges and changing risk profile.

Fundamental to this goal is the development and provision of excellent training products and the delivery of high quality learning outcomes for all of our staff.

Within the People Strategy, our commitment is to the whole service, which extends across both our operational and corporate teams, and prepares and develops staff as they progress through each stage of their career.

Operationally, our training and development is designed to meet the risks that are reasonably foreseeable for their roles and ensuring this training uses national best practice and standards – we will adopt the professional standards outlined in the Fire Professional Framework and use NOG to shape training development.

We will use our appraisal processes and create a culture of crucial conversations with our employees to understand their career aspirations, both in and outside of CFRS. Invest in key skills development to ensure our leadership team provides open, supportive leadership inspiring their teams to achieve their potential.

We will support leaders and managers with their people skills, ensuring that they feel equipped and able to have difficult conversations in the most supportive way. Leading with kindness, and curiosity to ensure that they get the best out of all employees.

We will ensure that leadership opportunities are inclusive and accessible across all of our workforce, wholetime, on call and corporate.





# Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service

## Our Code of Ethics



Putting our communities first



Dignity and Respect



Equality, diversity and inclusion



Integrity



Leadership

    @cumbriafire

Making Cumbria a safer place for all

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