

Weekly Update – At a Glance

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**** Please note that the above information should be shared with all staff on parade.**

Detailed information for each of these headlines can be found below.

Wildfires update – teams and information required

During March, Ulverston day duty staff, Amber and Purple watch have now been given the two-day initial basic wildfire operations course. This means Ulverston day duty staff are now one of our wildfire teams to be called upon in the event of a wildfire incident.

The days went well and both shifts really engaged and interacted during the training.

In light of the recent dry weather we have had in Cumbria, and the incidents we have been deployed to, can crews be reminded of the importance of information required when dealing with vegetation/wildfires:

- Area affected
- Fire behaviour, including flame length
- Suppression tactics, direct or indirect
- Wildfire prediction is being used, F0-F3
- LACES safety protocol, this should be implemented at all wildfire incidents and form part of an informative message to NWFC when in place

When making up for resources we are utilising our wildfire stations and equipment, which are located at:

- Millom, 4x4 and Mule with fogging unit
- Silloth, 4x4 with Argo Cat
- Keswick, Vario 4x4 appliance
- Appleby, 4x4/Unimog
- Ambleside, 4x4

- Windermere, 4x4 and Mule with fogging unit
- Sedbergh, 4x4 with Argo Cat
- Ulverston, 4x4
- Grange, Bowser (currently based at Ulverston due to work being carried out at Grange)

Please can all crews also familiarise themselves with the wildfire plans we have, which cover certain areas of land in Cumbria and over the border.

These hold important information regarding key contacts, access points, RVPs, hazards, and water supplies and can be found [here](#).

Martin Slack

Group Manager, Service Delivery – Cumberland

Fire contaminants and National Operational Guidance Foundation for Firefighting project

Over the past year or so, you will have seen a change in direction for Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) in terms of Breathing Apparatus teaching.

This is due to CFRS adopting the Foundation for Firefighting National Operational Guidance (NOG) to enhance firefighter safety and operational effectiveness.

This initiative standardises firefighting procedures across the service, ensuring all personnel follow nationally-recognised best practices.

This phased approach includes policy updates, practical training, and ongoing monitoring to ensure compliance.

By adopting the NOG Foundation, CFRS reinforces its commitment to firefighter health and operational excellence, contributing to a safer firefighting service for the community.

Concurrently to this, SLT have agreed to implement a project plan for moving the service forward concerning fire contaminants.

The project aims to improve firefighter safety by reducing exposure to harmful contaminants encountered during firefighting operations.

As part of the project, I have been seconded from my role on Carlisle East Red Watch and, being a cancer survivor myself, it is a role I feel passionate about.

My aim is to assist CFRS to do all we can to reduce the risks we all face at work.

My role will be to engage with crews, work alongside the Service Lead for BA (T/SM Tom Harding) and the L&D Training Team.

The first part of this project will be to produce a gap analysis for contaminants.

To do this, I intend on visiting all stations to engage with you all and assess the scope for the project.

This work will be firefighter-focused and will work alongside the national studies recently carried out highlighting the level of exposure to carcinogens created by fire.

Can all managers please be aware, I will be planning time in to meet your watch and station – please try to be as accommodating as possible.

I will also be starting to hold regular meetings for the Decontamination Working Group once we have completed the initial analysis.

If anyone would like to attend, please email ryan.irving@cumbriafire.gov.uk and I will send more information.

A 'Tactical Firefighting' working group will also be set up as part of the project and will be chaired by T/SM Tom Harding.

Further information will be communicated for this group; however, if anyone would like any further information in the meantime, please email tom.harding@cumbriafire.gov.uk

Ryan Irving

Crew Manager, Firefighting Tactics and Contaminants

Vacancies

Internal Expressions of Interest

We have the below internal opportunities for expressions of interest available for our staff:

Fire Service Watch Manager – L&D, BA Lead Instructor

- Location: Penrith Service HQ
- Salary: WM Grey Book (+10% L&D Allowance)
- Job Type: Temporary Cover (initially 6 months) – 42 Hours per week.

- Eligibility: INTERNAL ONLY. Competent, substantive, permanent firefighter or above with an in date ICL1 qualification.
- **Closing Date: Monday 14th April at 12pm.**
- **Interview Date: Thursday 17th April (virtual interviews)**

Key responsibilities

- Assist with the design and delivery of BA Training and Assessment across the Service
- Lead the team of BA Instructors both within the department and on station (Associate Instructors)
- Manage a small team of Crew Managers within Dept
- Manage departmental resources – including equipment and facilities
- Attend Regional and National BA Meetings, Seminars and Collaboration Events
- Maintain accurate records and reports related to L&D activities

About you:

- You must be a competent, substantive, permanent firefighter or above with an in date ICL1 qualification to apply
- Applicants must have sound working knowledge of IT systems
- Willingness to attend a number of residential courses to obtain the relevant Instructor/Teaching qualifications, if not already achieved
- Strong leadership and team management skills
- Excellent communication and interpersonal abilities
- Strong organisational skills

Extra information:

- This is a fantastic opportunity for professional development – Instructor Qualifications
- A supportive and collaborative work environment

Contact information:

For more information about this position, please contact GM Colin Wright on 07747 340313, alternatively please email me at colin.wright@cumbriafire.gov.uk

TO APPLY – Go to the Internal Expressions of Interest page to complete the short interest form: [Internal Expressions of Interest | Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service](#)

Resourcing and Talent Team

Other

Sexual harassment – mandatory e-learn

It is fantastic that 72 per cent of the workforce have completed their mandatory e-learning.

Please can we reach out to staff who have not yet managed to do this – perhaps add a reminder to drill nights and allow five to 10 minutes for staff to complete.

We are setting a challenge to aim to increase this figure by the end of April and your support in improving this is greatly appreciated.

Jemma Taylor

HR Manager

Decision to make permanent appointments at Station Manager, Watch Manager and Crew Manager levels

Background

In recent months, the service has experienced a growing number of temporary appointments, specifically at Station Manager, Watch Manager and Crew Manager levels.

These temporary positions have raised concerns among staff leading to uncertainty around leadership continuity and the potential impact on operational effectiveness and morale.

Feedback from personnel has highlighted the ongoing challenge of temporary leadership with concerns raised about stability, career progression and continuity of service delivery.

The Service Leadership Team (SLT) has carefully considered these factors and recognises the need to address these issues proactively.

Decision

Following a thorough review and in response to staff feedback, the Service Leadership Team has decided to offer permanent appointments to certain Station Manager, Watch Manager, and Crew Manager positions.

These appointments will be made for staff who have successfully completed the promotion process for the relevant position & subject to role availability.

This decision is intended to:

- Address concerns raised by staff: many staff members have expressed the desire for clarity and consistency in leadership. The temporary nature of the current appointments has contributed to concerns over long-term stability.
- Create stability: ensuring permanent leadership is in place at these levels will provide the necessary stability for teams to perform at their best and foster confidence in leadership.
- Improve operational efficiency: permanent appointments will streamline leadership responsibilities and reduce the disruption that comes with frequent changes in role holders ultimately improving the overall effectiveness of the service.

Process

The process to make these permanent appointments will be conducted through professional discussions with respective candidates.

This will involve:

- a comprehensive review of the candidates' qualifications, experience and performance in their temporary roles;
- engagement in one-on-one professional discussions to ensure the candidate's commitment and values align with those of the service; and
- feedback from relevant peers and teams to further inform the decision-making process.

It is important to note that this is a one-off process designed to address current leadership challenges.

The permanent appointments will be made based on the candidates' demonstrated suitability and the need to establish a stable leadership structure in the short to medium-term.

Rationale

The decision to move forward with permanent appointments follows a clear rationale:

- Staff feedback: numerous staff members have raised concerns about the impact of temporary appointments on team morale and service delivery. Providing permanent leadership addresses these concerns and reinforces the service's commitment to supporting its people.
- Service stability: stability at station manager, watch manager and crew manager levels is essential for operational success. Permanent appointments will allow for greater continuity in decision-making and strategy delivery ultimately benefiting and improving service performance.
- Retention and development: the appointment of permanent leaders provides clarity for individuals in these roles and helps retain experienced staff by recognising their contributions and providing them with clear, long-term career opportunities.

Conclusion

SLT is confident this decision will result in a more stable, effective and responsive leadership structure.

By addressing the current challenges of temporary appointments, the service will better position itself to meet operational and staff needs moving forward.

We are committed to ensuring a fair and transparent process and we look forward to engaging with candidates through professional discussions to finalise the appointments.

This decision is a key step in reinforcing leadership continuity and fostering a positive working environment across the service.

Service Leadership Team

CFRS IT Assets Survey

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service needs to capture an accurate record of all digital assets that have been assigned to staff / stations and equipment.

In the first instance, please can you capture all the equipment that has been assigned to you.

Please complete one form for each piece of equipment that you are recording:

<https://forms.office.com/e/LtyPwjGRkb>

Digital Support team

Salary Sacrifice Leased Car Scheme – Going Live!

The Commissioner and Chief Fire Officer are pleased to announce that Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service Salary Sacrifice Leased Car scheme will be live from Monday 14th April 2025.

Are you interested in a new low emission car? We are offering a fantastic opportunity to access a large range of major car brands with the monthly leased payments sacrificed directly from salary (please see flyer below).



HASSLE-FREE WAY TO LEASE YOUR DREAM CAR

VPD:
P20



Lease via our salary sacrifice scheme and access special offers exclusive for NHS and public sector colleagues!



The monthly cost includes:

- Insurance
- Road Tax
- Routine Servicing
- Breakdown Cover
- Tyre Replacement
- Windscreen Cover

fleet
SOLUTIONS
proudly part of the **NHS**

CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT!



- 1 Register**
Head to our website and select the **'Login/Register'** button on the homepage.
- 2 Create your account**
Click **'Create Account'** and complete the details. You will need your organisation's VPD code*.
- 3 Email**
You will then be emailed a link to login as well as a temporary password. Make sure you change this regularly to ensure security.
- 4 Find your dream car**
You can now browse our range of vehicles available, including our special offers.
- 5 Be one of the first to know**
Subscribe for our weekly marketing emails to find out our latest special offers.



VPD:
P20



#ColleaguesFIRST *Image for illustrative purposes only. www.nhsfleetsolutions.co.uk

Before placing an order, it is important you that read the scheme policy and brochure to fully understand how the scheme works and any personal financial implications.

[Salary Sacrifice Car Scheme Policy](#)

[CFRS NHS Fleet Solutions Brochure](#)

By clicking the below link or scanning the QR code on the above flyers you can access NHS Fleet Solutions website where you can browse some of the latest offers or order a vehicle of your choice.

[NHS Fleet solutions](#)

Creating an account (see above flyer) - For security it would be wise when creating an account to use your work email address, rather than your personal email, please create a different password to the one you use for work.

The **VPD** numbers to use for the Fire Car scheme is:

- Fire Scheme VPD – **P20**

Lucy Taylor

Financial Accountant

Issues with contracts and other employment documents

We are aware that there have been some errors with documents being issued by our hosted HR Admin team, and we are working directly with them to resolve this.

If you have recently had an updated contract, a contract extension, or any other employment document and you have noticed an error, please get in touch with Ollie Wright via my direct email: Orlanda.wright@cumbriafire.gov.uk and I will work to rectify it and reissue where required.

Thank you!

Ollie Wright

Resourcing, Talent and Wellbeing Lead

Chairing a Hearing – HR training

There are still spaces available on the session planned for **Thursday 17th April** from 10am to 11.30am at Kemplay Bank, Penrith. Please book on via PDR.

Jemma Taylor

HR Manager

Matthews drop-in session – Statement of Service

Members who are still employed and impacted by Matthews (Second Option Exercise) should have now received their service statements.

Vanessa Fidler from the Pensions team will be holding a drop-in session to give members an opportunity to ask questions and provide support on understanding the service statements.

The drop-in session will be held on teams on **Tuesday 22nd April** from 12pm to 1.30pm.

If you would like to attend the session, please email pensions@cumbriafire.gov.uk and a link will be sent to your email.

Please be aware the session is specifically for Matthews and is not intended to answer questions relating to McCloud (age discrimination).

Simon Long

Senior Pensions Adviser

Changes to green book leave year

As previously communicated, the final meeting to confirm decisions regarding the proposed change to the start dates of green book leave will be held on **Wednesday 16th April** at 1pm via Teams. Please see the link for this meeting below:

[Join the meeting now](#)

If you have any questions or are unable to make the meeting and would like to talk through the changes, please contact HR@cumbriafire.gov.uk

Toria Barnes

Senior HR Advisor

Annie Mac's Wealth of Health: The powerful connection between physical activity and mental health

Regular physical activity isn't just great for your body – it's a powerful tool for supporting your mental wellbeing too.

The evidence is clear; staying active can significantly improve your mood, reduce anxiety, and help manage stress.

Let's explore how movement benefits your mind, drawing on insights from leading health organizations.

How exercise boosts your mental health

According to the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), even modest amounts of physical activity can make a real difference to your mental state.

Research they've reviewed shows that regular exercise helps reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety while promoting a more positive mood overall.

"Physical activity has been shown to reduce anxiety, depression, and negative mood states while improving self-esteem and cognitive function," the ACSM notes in their position statements on exercise and mental health.

The UK Fire Fighters Charity, which provides mental health support to firefighters and their families, emphasises how physical activity can help manage the significant stress inherent in high-pressure professions.

They've found that regular exercise helps their community build resilience against the psychological challenges they face daily.

The science behind the benefits

What's happening in your brain when you exercise? Several important processes:

- Your body releases endorphins – natural mood lifters that create feelings of positivity
- Regular activity increases the production of important brain chemicals like serotonin and dopamine
- Exercise reduces levels of stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline
- Physical activity improves sleep quality, which directly affects mental wellbeing

MIND, the mental health charity, highlights that you don't need to become a marathon runner to experience these benefits.

Their research suggests that activities as simple as a brisk 30-minute walk five times per week can significantly reduce depression symptoms.

Finding what works for you

The best physical activity for your mental health is one you'll actually do consistently.

The ACSM recommends finding activities you enjoy rather than forcing yourself through exercise you dread.

Whether it's swimming, dancing, cycling, or simply walking in nature, the key is regular movement that fits into your life.

The UK Fire Fighters Charity emphasizes that team sports and group exercise classes offer the added benefit of social connection – another crucial factor for good mental health.

Getting started

If you're not currently active, MIND suggests starting small with achievable goals.

Even a 10-minute walk can boost your mood, and you can gradually build from there.

The important thing is consistency rather than intensity, especially when you're beginning.

Walking during your dinner break is an excellent start.

The mental benefits from getting away from your desk is invaluable.

Remember that physical activity is just one component of mental wellbeing.

Combining regular exercise with other supportive practices like good sleep habits, healthy nutrition, and social connection creates the strongest foundation for your mental health.

By making movement a regular part of your routine, you're giving both your body and mind valuable support that can enhance your quality of life in meaningful ways.

If you would like further information about improving your physical activity, please contact our fitness team.

Annie McInerney, 07795 521 942 annie.mcinerney@cumbriafire.gov.uk

Steve Garner, 07706578004 steven.garner@cumbriafire.gov.uk

Steve Relph, 07766492059 steven.relph@cumbriafire.gov.uk

To have your news included in this section please email:

CFRS.update@cumbriafire.gov.uk

