

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.

Risk Critical / Operational

Wildfire Extreme Risk temporary notices

As I am sure you are all aware, the dry and warm weather continues and the vegetation outside is both extremely dry and starting to show signs of significant stress. We are not seeing the greening that we would normally expect to see at this time of year.

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service has responded to a number of wildfires already this year and **Extreme Wildfire Risk temporary notices** are now being posted around the county at main visitor locations, so crews should be aware that the wildfire risk is going to remain high for the foreseeable future.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO HELP COMMUNICATE OUR GENERAL ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON WILDFIRE PREVENTION

- Do not have any open fires/campfires or barbecues in the countryside
- Extinguish cigarettes completely
- Take all litter home
- Take care when parking vehicles – do not block access roads, tracks or gates
- Please park carefully – be aware that vehicle exhausts and catalytic convertors can get very hot and if parked on dry vegetation they might start a fire

Please let me know if you would like any guidance on wildfire messaging and please let me know if you have any queries.

Thank you for helping to reduce potential ignitions and for raising awareness of the high wildfire risk.

Martin Slack

Group Manager

Exercise Acid Rain

On Saturday, 3 May, crews from Barrow, Ulverston and Milnthorpe came together to undertake *Exercise Acid Rain*. The exercise was also supported by Police CBRN colleagues and Cumbria Local Resilience Forum.

The purpose of the exercise was to test the effectiveness of Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service's response to a mass decontamination incident when called upon by National Resilience.

This involves crews following a structured procedure to set up the specialist equipment in order to effectively and simultaneously decontaminate potentially hundreds of people.



Across the UK there are just 28 mass decontamination units (MDU), one of which is within CFRS stationed at Barrow.

In order to maintain capability, and contribute to building resilience across the UK, the service must not only run these exercises regularly but guarantee a minimum of 24 specially-trained firefighters are available on duty 24/7.

National resilience guidelines stipulate that from the moment the fire service arrive on scene they are required to set up two decontamination units – one for crew (MD 4) and one for the public (MD 1/2/3) – and be ready to receive and treat casualties within 40 minutes, which the service is comfortably achieving.



Crews working in the warm zone, where they are engaging with casualties and contaminants, wear specialist power respirator protective suits that provide them with up to one hour of protection from any hazardous material.

These specialist firefighters will assist casualties to move through the MDU, disrobe, and showering, and they will provide a clean re-robe pack to replace contaminated clothing.

As well as decontaminating the casualties, the service is required to consider the environmental impact of the incident and make provision to minimise the spread of the contaminant.



All contaminated wastewater from the showers is channelled into a wastewater containment dam for testing and safe disposal.

I would like to thank all attending personnel for their dedication and professionalism in ensuring that the service maintains an effective mass decontamination response.

Tom Wright

Station Manager, LCU 9 (Barrow, Broughton, Coniston and Walney) and National Resilience SPOC

Breathing Apparatus Incident Managers course

The Breathing Apparatus (BA) Incident Managers course is designed for any ICL 1 Incident Commander who is responsible for planning, implementation and oversight of BA operations at incidents and/or during training.

The Learning & Development department has been offering Watch Manager (WM) BA Observer places for WMs to attend their shift/stations fire behaviour training course.

This will continue to be available and places should be requested via email to FireService LD FireService.LD@cumbriafire.gov.uk

The BA Incident Managers course is additional to the aforementioned, and will be the first in a continued programme of BA command training offered by L&D.

The course is aimed at developing competent, confident commanders to manage BA operations safely and effectively, in line with Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service updating service procedures and National Operational Guidance.

The course will be delivered with a combination of theory, table top, and practical elements.

Course details:

Location: Headquarters, Penrith

Duration: 9am–5pm

Dates:

- Friday, 23 May 2025
- Friday, 27 June 2025
- Friday, 4 July 2025

Course capacity: From four to 20 people

Key learning outcomes:

- Recap and understand the process of Rapid Deployment
- Recap and understand the application of BA Stage 1 and BA Stage 2
- Understand the application of BA Sector Command
- Understand the application of CFRS 12 Rules of BA

- To raise awareness of fire behaviour indicators and their importance in developing an appropriate firefighting and tactical ventilation strategy
- Develop knowledge and understanding on the selection of appropriate firefighting and tactical ventilation strategies

Who should attend?

Initially we are accepting nominations for all Watch Managers to attend this course on one of the dates above.

Once we have provided the opportunity for WMs to attend, the course will be opened up to **all** ICL 1 commanders and will be mandatory as we continue to move forward in the development of BA operations in the service.

How to apply:

Course nominations should be sent via email to FireService LD FireService.LD@cumbriafire.gov.uk with the following details:

- Name and station/shift
- Fire Service Number
- Course date applying for

Spaces on the course are limited, so early nominations are encouraged to ensure you can attend a course that best suits you.

Once confirmed on the course, joining instructions will be sent.

For more information, please contact FireService LD FireService.LD@cumbriafire.gov.uk for details.

We look forward to seeing you.

Tom Harding

Station Manager, Learning & Development

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week 2025 takes place from **Monday, 12 May to Sunday, 18 May** and this year's theme is **community**, highlighting the vital role that supportive communities play in fostering mental well-being.

Mental Health Awareness Week is an opportunity for us to come together, raise awareness and support each other in our mental health journeys.

By focusing on the power of community, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

Join us for Wear It Green Day on Thursday, 15 May and take part in a **Coffee & Quiz** event at 11.30am via a Microsoft Teams event. Keep a look out for your invite and bring along something **green**!



Green is the international symbol for mental health awareness, often represented by a green ribbon.

Here's why green is used for mental health awareness:

- **Symbolism:** Green is associated with nature, growth, renewal, and hope, which are all positive attributes linked to mental well-being
- **Call to action:** Wearing green is a visual cue to show support and encourage conversations about mental health
- **Visibility:** Green is a vibrant and recognisable colour that makes it easy to see and remember the message of mental health awareness

How you can help:

- **Take time to talk:** One thing we can all do is be there for each other. If you think someone might be struggling with their mental health, reach out and remind them that they're not alone
- **Use and share resources:** Access and distribute the resources on SharePoint under the Staff network group section [Mental Health](#) and on the [CFRS Wellbeing Hub](#) to educate and support our community
- **Share your stories:** If you feel comfortable, share your personal experiences with mental health to inspire and support others

Let's make Mental Health Awareness Week 2025 a time to connect, support and uplift each other.

Kelly Drury

Watch Manager, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Other

ICT assets survey

We are working with ICT to capture an accurate record of all ICT assets that have been assigned to staff and stations.

We need to capture an accurate list which is as up-to-date as possible because we need to understand: what ICT equipment we have; who it has been assigned to; what risks there may be due to ageing equipment; and where this equipment is currently.

In some instances equipment has been reassigned or passed on but records have not been updated, or they have been ordered as part of a wider project and are assigned to the individual who lead the project rather than the staff they have then been issued to.

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

Computer mice, power cables and keyboards are not part of the survey – at this stage, we are mainly looking for assets assigned to individual staff such as laptops, phones and monitors.

What is an asset tag?

The asset tag is an identifying blue sticker with a barcode that ICT puts onto devices that are issued to staff.

On mobile phones this will be under the case or may be under the battery.

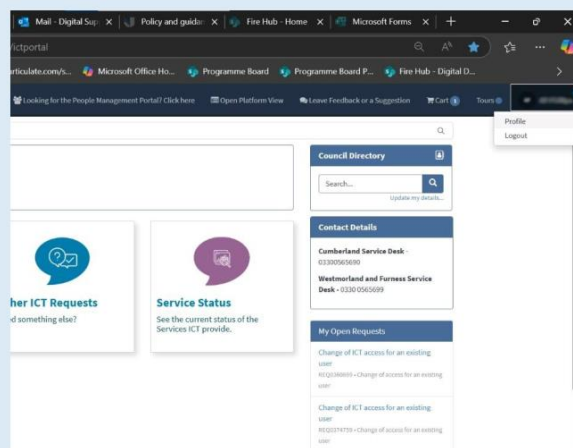
If you cannot find or there isn't an asset tag, please complete the form with as much information as you can.

This is your “Asset Tag” – it’s the identifying number that ICT use to record all devices.
It may not be easily found on some devices

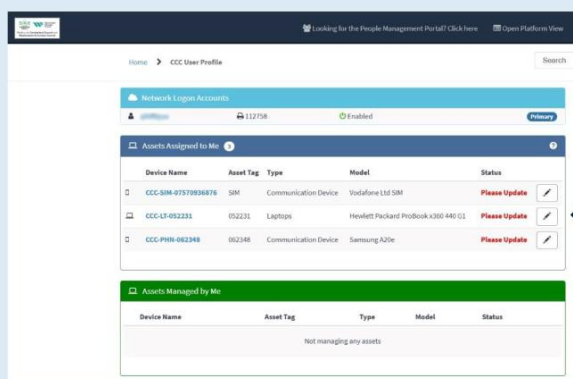


To find what has been assigned to you – you can also go to ICT Servicedesk and open your personal log from there.

FIRST:



Click here,
select “profile”



Edit any
errors here.

Please complete one form for each piece of equipment that you are recording:
<https://forms.office.com/e/LtyPwjGRkb>

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please email
digitalsupport@cumbriafire.gov.uk

Digital Support team

ABS-RSS reminder

ABS-RSS are due to be published on Sunday, 31 August 2025.

You can access these on your Pension Portal:

<https://members.lppapensions.co.uk/Home>

If you have any issues accessing your account please let us know.

Simon Long

Senior Pensions Advisor

VE Day 80th anniversary

Staff across the service marked the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day by observing a two-minute silence on Thursday, 8 May, joining millions across the nation in doing so.

It was a poignant moment to reflect about the sacrifices made by those that served and the VE Day generation – firefighters were among the first to respond when bombs fell across the UK, putting their own lives at risk while others took shelter.



Liam Waite

Communications Officer

Forthcoming HR training sessions

- **Managing absence**

Monday, 9 June

10am–12pm

Community Room, Penrith HQ

- **Informal workplace concerns**

Monday, 9 June

1pm–2pm

Community Room, Penrith HQ

- **Chairing a hearing**

Thursday, 26 June

1pm–2pm

Community Room, Carlisle East

- **Whistleblowing / Speak Up / How to raise concern / make a complaint**

Tuesday, 8 July

11am–12pm

MS Teams

- **Whistleblowing / Speak Up / How to raise concern / make a complaint**

Tuesday, 15 July

11am–12pm

MS Teams

- **Managing absence**

Tuesday, 15 July

10am–12pm

Community Room, Workington

- **Workplace Complaints (full process)**

Tuesday, 15 July

1pm–3pm

Community Room, Workington

If you would like to attend please book on via PDR.

Sessions are relaxed and informal, encouraging peer support through safe conversations.

Jemma Taylor

HR Manager

Living Well Groups

The Fire Fighters Charity would like you to know about an opportunity to be part of a social group for retired members of the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS).

The group will offer a relaxed and sociable event where we will occasionally invite guest speakers from local organisations and charities to talk about topics that you might like to hear about.

The group will have a very positive focus, as well as a strong social element; it is as much about bringing the retired Fire and Rescue Service community together as it is about connecting with the Fire Fighters Charity.

The group will be run by volunteers who are also veteran FRS personnel.

The meetings will be held at **Jubilee House, Eamont Park, Eamont Bridge, Penrith, CA10 2BN.**

The first meeting is on **Thursday, 15 May** from **1.30pm–3.30pm.**

Subsequent meetings are on **Thursday, 12 June** and **Thursday, 17 July.**

The group is open to anyone who has completed five years' continuous service in the FRS **in any capacity**; we welcome retained, wholetime, control, non-uniformed.

Attendees can come along by themselves or as a couple and partners can attend in their own right.

If you know of other people who are beneficiaries and who may be interested in this group, please pass on the information, or direct them to me.

channaford@firefighterscharity.org.uk

07970 107 933 (please text if this is your preferred way to get in touch and I will ring you back)

Best wishes,

Clare Hannaford

Communities Development Lead, the Fire Fighters Charity

Annie Mac's Wealth of Health: Chatting your way to better wellbeing

Fancy a cuppa and a chat?

Turns out, talking isn't just nice – it's actually brilliant for your mental health!

Let's look at why having a good natter matters so much.

Why talking does wonders:

Having a heart-to-heart can:

- Make you feel less alone (Mind UK says we all need that connection!)
- Help sort through jumbled thoughts when everything feels a bit much
- Let off some steam when emotions are building up
- Create friendships that have your back when times get tough
- Show others it's totally normal to have ups and downs

Simple ways to get chatting

Ready for a chinwag? Here's how to make it count:

- Find a comfy spot where you can relax – maybe over tea or during a walk in the park
- Start with someone you trust – your bestie might be perfect for those first chats
- Share how YOU feel – “I've been feeling a bit low lately” works better than “Everyone gets depressed.”
- Listen with your whole heart when others open up – sometimes a supportive nod means everything!
- If things feel too heavy, the lovely folks at organisations like Samaritans are always up for a chat or the Fire Fighters Charity
- Pop along to a local group – Mind runs brilliant meetups where everyone “gets it.” Others include Andy’s Man Club, Firefighters Phone App chats, or TogetherWe (based in Workington)
- Check in with mates regularly – “You alright?” can open doors to important conversations
- Remember everyone's different – some friends might share everything while others need time
- As the Mental Health Foundation says, talking helps us make sense of our world. So go on, have that chat – your mind will thank you for it!

- Please have a look at your emails next week because we will be sending information about Mental Health Awareness

Helpful contacts:

- Visit www.firefighterscharity.org.uk or call their helpline at 0800 389 8820
- Visit www.mind.org.uk or call 0300 123 3393
- Visit [TogetherWe – mental health and wellbeing support service in Cumbria](#)
- Visit www.nhs.uk/mental-health
- Call 116 123 (free from any phone) or email jo@samaritans.org (24/7)
- Visit www.anxietyuk.org.uk or call 03444 775 774
- Visit www.thecalmzone.net or call 0800 58 58 58 (5pm–midnight).
- Visit [ANDYSMANCLUB - It's Okay To Talk](#)
- Visit CFRS [Mental Health First Aiders](#) on SharePoint

Annie McInerney-Thompson

Recruitment, Fitness and Engagement Coordinator

To have your news included in this section please email:

CFRS.update@cumbriafire.gov.uk

Our Code of Ethics



Putting our
communities
first



Dignity and
respect



Equality,
diversity and
inclusion



Integrity



Leadership

