



CFRS Weekly Update – 27/2/26

Weekly Update – At a Glance

- Confirmation of temporary appointments
- Support study into effect of extreme heat on firefighters' mental skills
- Online panel to reflect on fire setting behaviours photography project
- Annual leave for corporate (Green Book) staff
- Return to Work forms
- Fire Fighters Charity: Pre-retirement online workshops
- Policy updates
- UNISON members – Branch AGM invite 2026
- Pensions team station drop-in clinics
- Declaration of 'Gifts & Hospitality' AND 'Contacts with Suppliers' **Please note – this applies to ALL employees**

**** 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

Confirmation of temporary appointments

We are delighted to confirm the following temporary appointments which will come into effect from **Monday 9 March 2026**:

- **Andrew Lowes**, currently Station Manager of Prevention and LCU5 (Alston and Lazonby) will temporarily be redeployed to the Operational Assurance department
- **Alasdair Guthrie**, currently Watch Manager seconded to Technical Services department, has been temporarily promoted to Station Manager of Prevention and LCU5 (Alston and Lazonby)

These outcomes follow those confirmed in *CFRS Weekly Update* on 16 January 2026.

Ben Ryder and Lauren Woodward

Assistant Chief Fire Officers

Support study into effect of extreme heat on firefighters' mental skills

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service has been contacted by researchers from Hope University in Liverpool. They are running a major study, funded by the Fire Service Research & Training Trust, to understand how working in extreme heat affects firefighters' mental skills – like paying attention, remembering information, and making quick decisions.

Previous research shows that even short periods in very hot conditions can reduce these mental abilities. The new project will look at what other things might make this worse, such as being physically tired, feeling anxious, being less experienced, feeling uncomfortable, or using different cooling methods.

To help with the study, researchers want to interview firefighters about a difficult live fire search and rescue incident they have taken part in. They will ask firefighters to describe the event from receiving the call to the moment the situation was under control. Interviews can be done in person in Cumbria or over MS Teams.

The goal is to use this information to develop simple tests that measure how ready a firefighter is to think clearly after heat exposure. These tests could eventually help decide when it is safe for someone to go back into a dangerous environment and may support improved safety across the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

Anyone from CFRS, on any duty system, can volunteer as long as they can clearly remember and describe an incident where they were working in a firefighter role. Researchers are primarily interested in incidents where you were directly involved, particularly domestic or commercial fires, but are also interested in other incident types such as water rescue, height rescue, RTC, etc.

If you have taken part in an incident in a role outlined above and would be prepared to be interviewed by the Hope University research team please contact me by calling 07825 340313 or email to colin.wright@cumbriafire.gov.uk

Colin Wright

Group Manager – Learning and Development department



Other

Online panel to reflect on fire setting behaviours photography project

Open Eye Gallery invites you to join an online panel discussion reflecting on *Firehawks*, a photography project about fire-setting behaviours produced in collaboration with fire services and people with lived experience of fire-setting behaviour.

Panel members: Stephen King (photographer), Joanna Foster (fabtic), Helen Lloyd-Williams (Firesetting Intervention Scheme Manager, London Fire Brigade), Peter Fitzpatrick (Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service), Liz Wewiora (Open Eye Gallery's Head of social practice).

The panelists will discuss how a creative project can explore and provide a greater understanding and perspective of fire-setting behaviour, and what is possible when the art sector collaborates with a frontline sector.

[How can firesetting behaviour be explored by creative processes? Online panel discussion – OEG](#)

Annual leave for corporate (Green Book) staff

All corporate employees have had their standard leave entitlement added to FireWatch for now. Please note that this will not include annual leave purchases or carry over from 2025 or 2024 as yet. Once completed annual leave record sheets have been returned, further adjustments will be made to individual records to account for annual leave purchases and carry over.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the HR team.

Takara Hanks

Senior HR Advisor – HR Team, People and Talent

Return to Work forms

We have just published and rolled out to managers the new *Return to Work* form. Please note that this form needs to be completed for every occurrence of sickness absence regardless of whether an employee has breached an attendance expectation and requires more formal absence management.

The form should be completed by line managers during the return to work meeting. Following this meeting, the line manager should make sure that a return to work date and meeting date have been recorded on iTrent and FireWatch to close down the absence.

The *Return to Work* and *Self Certification* forms then need to be emailed to **HR@cumbriafire.gov.uk** to be filed on FireWatch.

- [Return to Work Meeting Record CFRS.docx](#)
- [Self Certification Form - Reviewed 2024.docx](#)

If you feel that you would benefit from further support when it comes to managing absence, please do not hesitate to email HR@cumbriafire.gov.uk or you can access the absence policy on the CFRS website using this link: [Absence and Wellbeing for All Staff | Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service](#)

Emily Grey

HR Advisor

Fire Fighters Charity: Pre-retirement online workshops

The Fire Fighters Charity has organised pre-retirement workshops, open to any FRS staff who are approaching or considering retirement in the next few years.

Are you retiring from your job in the fire and rescue service in the next few years? Whether you're excited or anxious about the prospect of retiring, this significant period of change brings with it its own challenges.

This two-hour online workshop is designed to support you in making the most of your retirement by managing common feelings of changes to identity after retirement and planning for health and wellbeing.

- Delivered online to a small group
- Course workbook provided
- A supportive, relaxed, and interactive environment
- Appropriate for staff of all job roles within the fire service
- For anyone approaching retirement in the next few years

Sessions are taking place as follows:

- **Monday 2 March, 2pm–3pm:**
<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/adycqS6FSYa0QAswlyHmjg>

- **Thursday 23 April, 2pm–3pm:**
<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/z5xExSZjQ8WO9qi40fNrGg>

Vanessa Fidler

Pay, Reward and Pension Advisor

Policy updates

The below policies have been reviewed and updated where necessary. A summary of the changes can be found below. Following comments and feedback with trade union body representatives, through Policy JCG, these refreshed policies have now been published and are available on the website: [A-Z Policies, Procedures and Guidance | Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service](#)

Work Life Balance

- Statutory changes in relation to flexible working requests
- Change to a panel for flexible working request outcome appeals
- Inclusion of information on corporate and operational pension implications in relation to career breaks

Workplace Injury

- Updated to include corporate contractual provisions
- Clarification on how stress and infectious diseases will be treated

Absence and Wellbeing

- Addition of multiple contracts paragraph to clarify management responsibilities in relation to employees who have more than one contract with the service
- Clarification of wording around extensions to occupational sick pay in relation to accidents involving third party liability
- Clarification of the temporary adjustment provision
- Addition of *Return to Work* form
- Explanation of scrutiny of sickness absence monitoring for the service

Management of On-Call Availability

- Update to banding system in relation to cover

Takara Hanks

Senior HR Advisor – HR Team, People and Talent

UNISON members – Branch AGM invite 2026

Please see the letter [here](#) inviting you to our AGM which will be held on **Tuesday 3 March** at **Cumbria Constabulary HQ**.

You can also find a nomination form [here](#) should you be interested in joining the branch committee.

We look forward to receiving these back from you, as applicable, on or before the published dates.

Tracey Barber

Asst Branch Secretary and ULR, PIP Accredited Rep, Fire and Rescue Convenor
Cumbria Police, Fire and Rescue Branch, UNISON

Pensions team station drop-in clinics

The Pension Team will be running pensions drop-ins at stations across the county to give you the opportunity to meet us face to face to ask any questions you may have in relation to Pensions (purely on a factual basis, no advice will be given) or if you need help logging onto PensionPoint, etc.

The sessions will be drop-ins – there is no need to book – and there is no obligation to come and see us but we will be on station for two hours for each session.

Meet the team at our...

Pensions drop-in clinics

Our Pensions team is hitting the road and visiting stations around Cumbria for a number of drop-in clinics. This is your chance to meet the team face-to-face and ask any questions you might have about your pension. Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity...



Whitehaven

- ▶ Wednesday 4 February 2026
- ▶ 9am-11am

Workington

- ▶ Wednesday 4 February 2026
- ▶ 12pm-2pm

Penrith

- ▶ Thursday 19 February 2026
- ▶ 1pm-3pm

Keswick

- ▶ Wednesday 4 March 2026
- ▶ 10am-12pm

Carlisle East

- ▶ Wednesday 11 March 2026
- ▶ 12pm-2pm

Kendal

- ▶ Tuesday 31 March 2026
- ▶ 10am-12pm

Barrow

- ▶ Thursday 2 April 2026
- ▶ 11am-1pm

Wigton

- ▶ Date TBC
- ▶ Time TBC

No need to book – just turn up!

Making Cumbria a safer place for all



   @cumbriafire  cumbriafire.gov.uk

Melissa Taggart

HR and Pensions Development Assistant

Declaration of 'Gifts & Hospitality' AND 'Contacts with Suppliers'

****Please note – this applies to ALL employees****

This information is being circulated on a quarterly basis. Please note that this is a friendly reminder for all employees to complete if applicable.

As part of the Joint Corporate Governance Framework, the financial regulations set out that the Chief Fire Officer has a responsibility “to foster a culture that will not tolerate fraud and corruption” and “to adopt and maintain effective anti-fraud, anti-corruption and anti-money laundering arrangements.”

This includes having policies to capture the receipt of gifts and hospitality over the value of £25 by any senior officers and all employees including where gifts and hospitality have been declined.

In addition, for similar reasons we are seeking to capture contacts by senior officers and all employees who have had communication with current or potential suppliers or contractors.

For example, it might be that an officer/employee has met informally/attended a visit or seminar hosted by a potential supplier.

We would use the information to consider the appropriateness of that officer/employee being involved in a procurement process where the supplier may be a potential bidder.

This is to help us demonstrate that we have a process to ensure independence around procurement.

This is **not** meant to capture 'normal day business' of contacting suppliers to raise orders and query supplies, etc.

The registers are held on CFRS SharePoint and can be accessed via the below link:

[Fire Hub - Service Forms - Series 1000 Forms](#)

Or via these specific links:

 **[Gifts & Hospitality register](#)**

Supplier Contacts register

Please complete these registers following **any** occurrence of a reportable gift, hospitality or supplier contact as the year progresses to avoid having to recall them in a block at year end.

Please think back to **January 2025** and record any instances back to then, which was when this was first raised as an audit requirement.

Can managers who have team members who are unable to access the SharePoint links above please highlight this audit requirement to them and facilitate the completion of the form on their behalf when needed.

As part of the CFRS statutory accounts, details of our anti-fraud and corruption procedures are published and to maximise completeness we will circulate a reminder to complete these registers on a quarterly basis.

Emma Brough

Finance Officer

To have your news included in this section please email:

CFRS.update@cumbriafire.gov.uk

