



CFRS Weekly Update – 2/4/26

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

Occupational Health team officially returns in-house

We are delighted to confirm that the return of the Occupational Health team for Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service to an in-house service has now been completed following the conclusion of the previous shared arrangement with Westmorland & Furness Council.

I am sure this decision will be welcomed by staff who remember the success of the in-house service previously – as stated when the move was first announced, this decision has been made in line with the service's intent to look after our people, enabling us to deliver the right support from taking care of your mental wellbeing, to staying fit and active, to receiving physiotherapy.

I am sure you will join me in giving a warm welcome to the new-look team:

- ▶ **Gayle Carruthers**, Occupational Health Advisor
- ▶ **Wendy Charlton**, Occupational Health Nurse
- ▶ **Sarah Harrison**, Occupational Health Nurse
- ▶ **Melissa Taggart**, Occupational Health and Wellbeing Coordinator

To help the team to manage queries efficiently, please contact Occupational Health via the main landline – 01768 812600 – or use the team email – [**occhealth@cumbriafire.gov.uk**](mailto:occhealth@cumbriafire.gov.uk) – rather than individual work mobiles.

As always you can continue to access additional wellbeing support through our service Wellbeing Hub here: [**CFRS Wellbeing Hub | Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service**](#)

Ian Seel

Area Manager – Strategic Change and People

New CFRS Occupational Health Referral Forms

The referral process itself has not changed. However, CFRS now has its **own dedicated CFRS referral forms** to ensure all submissions are directed to the CFRS Occupational Health team.

Please ensure you select the forms that **begin with 'CFRS'** and choose the correct form from the list below.

If you are unsure which form to use, or would like to confirm that we have received your referral, please contact us at occhealth@cumbriafire.gov.uk.

CFRS – Fitness for work referral	CFRS – Fitness for Work Referral Use this form for new management referrals when: • You need advice on whether an employee is fit to attend work. • You require guidance regarding a medical condition. You will receive a full Occupational Health report once the assessment is complete. At the end of this form, you may also choose to refer for physiotherapy or counselling .
CFRS – Fitness for work referral additional information	CFRS – Fitness for Work Referral: Additional Information Select this form if: • You have already submitted a Fitness for Work referral, and • You need to provide further information or ask a question about the existing referral.

CFRS – Counselling Only Mgt Referral	CFRS – Counselling Only (Management Referral) Use this form to refer an employee for counselling only . Please note: • The employee will be referred solely for counselling. • You will not receive an OH report or Occupational Health advice.
CFRS – Physio only	CFRS – Physio Only Use this form to refer an employee for physiotherapy only . Please note: • The employee will be referred solely for physiotherapy. • You will not receive an OH report or Occupational Health advice.
CFRS – Ill health retirement form	CFRS – Ill Health Retirement Form: • Before completing this form, please contact People Management for guidance: HR@cumbriafire.gov.uk • This is a referral for Ill Health Retirement
CFRS – Ill health retirement form additional information	CFRS – Ill Health Retirement: Additional Information Use this form if:

	• You have already submitted an Ill Health Retirement form, and • You need to provide further information.
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Gayle Carruthers

Occupational Health Nurse

Next HMICFRS inspection dates confirmed

Our next inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services will commence on **Monday 2 November 2026** with the fieldwork (in-service element) beginning **Monday 4 January 2027**.

Work has been ongoing since the last inspection to build on the areas for improvement the HMICFRS identified but also to ensure we do not lose sight of the excellent work you all delivered and the HMICFRS recognised with our five good grades.

If you have any suggestions, ideas, or wish to contribute to any area, please feed this into your line manager or any manager throughout the service.

Lauren Woodward

Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery

Refuelling of service vehicles

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service has always aimed to achieve the best value for money when providing fuel for our fleet.

Due to rising fuel prices, we will be carrying out regular reviews of fuel purchases.

Please ensure the following when refuelling service vehicles:

- ▶ Use a station fuel pump (on-site refuelling) instead of a public petrol station whenever possible
- ▶ If you must use a petrol station, use regular fuels only instead of premium fuel options

Technical and Fleet Services

Firefighter hands in alerter after 37 years of service



After 37 years of serving Sedbergh Fire Station, surrounding communities, and Cumbria as a whole, firefighter Glenn Bowman has hung up his helmet.

It is the end of an era for Sedbergh – Glenn joined the service on Friday 31 March 1989 and has committed more than 120 hours per week, time at community events and recruitment support. Fittingly, his final day in service included a shout.

The crew marked Glenn's retirement with a celebration at the Hirst Centre at Sedbergh School, and presented him with a signed football shirt from his beloved Leeds United.

Thank you for your passionate and committed service and sacrifices, Glenn!

RPEEPs set to come into force

New regulations to help improve the safety of residents who may need support to evacuate their building in the event of a fire come into force in England from 6 April 2026.

These changes are known as the Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025.

They introduce a new process called Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (RPEEPs).

A new page has been created on our website to highlight these changes to our communities: cumbriafire.gov.uk/rpeeps

A dedicated page has also been created in the members section of the NFCC website: [NFCC information to support RPEEPs - NFCC](#)

Reminder of processes for reporting building issues

Emergency on a non-PFI building

Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm

Call 0300 124 0113 ext. 600055

Out of hours

If there is an emergency with the estate outside of these hours, an out-of-hours contact is available on **07697007468**. This should only be used for emergency situations when the fault affects the provision of emergency services to the public or is an immediate health and safety risk to members of staff.

Non-emergency on a non-PFI building

To report a new non-emergency building issue to the Estates team, a SharePoint form has been set up.

To access the form, scan the QR code on your *Report a building issue* poster on site or find alternative options below:

- ▶ On the SharePoint homepage as *Log a New Building Issue* down the right-hand side
- ▶ In the *Systems & Portals* section under *New Building Issue*
- ▶ On each individual station page under *New Building Issue* in the Resources section

Once the form is open, you will need to fill in the necessary information.

Any issue on a PFI building

For PFI fire stations – Penrith, Carlisle East, Carlisle West, Workington, and Patterdale – please follow the process on site.

Details of how to report faults should be available on the back of all doors on PFI stations.

Eggert Fruchtenicht

Senior Estates Maintenance Officer

EDI and Road Safety roles

The service would like to place their thanks on record for the work that has been undertaken by Kelly Drury and Steve Brockbank in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Road Safety respectfully.

Both fixed-term contracts have concluded, with budget constraints restricting the service from continuing with these roles.

The service is exploring alternative options to ensure the key workstreams are continued and our teams and communities continue to get the best engagement, training and support.

If you have any ideas or suggestions, please don't hesitate to share them with a manager.

Lauren Woodward

Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery

Launch of new NFCC Fire Control webpage

We are pleased to announce the launch of [NFCC Fire Control webpage](#) on the National Fire Chiefs Council website – a vital new resource designed to enhance the public and fire sector understanding of working in Fire Control.

The new webpages bring clarity to this complex and critical area of work, explaining the operational responsibilities at the heart of fire control.

Sarah Cuthbert, Chair of NFCC Mobilising Officers Group, said: “It gives me great pleasure to introduce the launch of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Fire Control webpage which is a significant step in recognising and celebrating the professionalism, expertise, and dedication of fire control personnel across the UK FRS.

“By launching this webpage, NFCC reaffirms its commitment to improving communities understanding of fire control’s contribution to emergency response and to recognising the expertise of those who work tirelessly behind the scenes, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

“I encourage you to explore the webpages and learn more about the important role fire control plays in protecting our communities. It is a truly rewarding career where no two days are the same, and where you will always know you have made a difference.”

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Fire Control project team, NFCC Mobilising Officers Group and NFCC colleagues who have contributed to the development and production of this webpage.

Access to the new webpage is available in the main NFCC menu: [Working in the Fire Sector - NFCC](#)

Sarah Cuthbert

Chair of NFCC Mobilising Officers Group

Kerry Blair

Head of NFCC Operational Response and Fire Control

**Business Continuity arrangements – Industrial action reminder
(Operational Staff only)**

Quick gentle reminder to complete the survey when you have a moment. Your response really helps the service with business continuity planning.

Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZZPYGK6> or please scan the QR code:



Thank you to those who have already responded.

Jemma Taylor and Helen Clark

HR Managers



Vacancies

Chief Resilience Officer (Cumbria Combined Authority role)

EXTERNAL VACANCY

Salary: £81,049–£83,933 (per annum)

Hours: 37 hours per week

Contract: Fixed term until March 2028

Location: Penrith (including agile working and working from home)

Closing date: Monday 20 April 2026

Interviews: Technical interviews will be held on Wednesday 29 April 2026 and final interviews will take place on Friday 8 May

Find out more and apply: [Job profile](#)



The latest issue of *Status* magazine has now been released and printed copies should be landing on stations across Cumbria.

Inside you'll find news, features and exciting updates from across the service including:

- ▶ How the Fire Contaminants project is delivering safer stations
- ▶ Fire Cadet Olivia sharing how the programme changed her life
- ▶ Full picture recap of our last Annual Awards ceremony

You can also read a digital copy of the magazine [here](#).

This issue has been designed in-house instead of outsourcing to an external designer, giving us greater flexibility over the content as well as delivering a significant costs saving.

If you have a story idea you'd like to pitch for a future issue of *Status*, please email [**CFRS.Update@cumbriafire.gov.uk**](mailto:CFRS.Update@cumbriafire.gov.uk)

Liam Waite

Communications Officer

New Project and Programme Management Framework

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service has implemented a new Project and Programme Management Framework, effective 1 April 2026. The framework applies to all new projects commencing from this date.

A number of awareness sessions have already taken place to introduce the framework and outline how it will be applied in practice. The framework provides guidance and sets out a consistent approach to ensure that projects across the service are managed, monitored, and reported in a standardised way.

To find out more about the framework, please visit the new *Projects & Programmes* area on SharePoint:

SharePoint > Departments > [!\[\]\(05be7c7a8995decd503647c99211f7c2_img.jpg\) **Projects & Programmes**](#)

This area provides the service with up-to-date information on all projects.

If you require any further information, or would like to take part in an awareness session, please contact the Programme team at:

[**programmeteam@cumbriafire.gov.uk**](mailto:programmeteam@cumbriafire.gov.uk)

Joanne Cullen

Project Delivery Lead

Fantastic turnout makes Whitehaven's car wash a success

A fantastic turnout from wholetime and on-call firefighters and our Fire Cadets – and great support from the people of Whitehaven – made our latest car wash a huge success on Saturday.

Despite some very challenging weather at times the team were amazing and cash on the day was £915.83, with QR and card payments hoping to push the total over the £1,000 mark!

Ashley Conway

Crew Manager – Blue Watch, Whitehaven

Stress Awareness Month: Support for fire and rescue personnel

Every April, Stress Awareness Month encourages open conversations about stress, its impact, and ways to protect our mental wellbeing. It has run annually since 1992 and aims to reduce stigma and help individuals build healthier, more resilient lifestyles.

Held from 1–30 April, the campaign raises awareness of how stress affects mental and physical health and promotes tools and strategies to help people cope. Stress can contribute to issues such as anxiety, depression, and weakened immune response, making awareness and early support essential.

The 2026 theme, #BeTheChange, encourages individuals to take small, proactive steps to improve their wellbeing and support others. It focuses on personal action and connection as drivers of healthier environments.

Why this matters for fire and rescue staff

Fire and rescue personnel face intense pressures – from traumatic incidents to long shifts, high risk environments to workloads and deadlines. These experiences can build up over time, increasing the risk of burnout, anxiety, and other mental health challenges. Around one in four workers report being unable to cope with workplace stress, highlighting the need for dedicated support.

Support through the Fire Fighters Charity

The Fire Fighters Charity provides confidential, tailored mental health and wellbeing support to serving and retired fire service staff and their families. Their services are designed with the unique demands of emergency responders in mind:

- ▶ Mental health guidance and counselling for stress, trauma, and emotional difficulties
- ▶ Self-assessment tools to help identify early signs of stress
- ▶ Personalised wellbeing programmes designed specifically for fire and rescue personnel
- ▶ Crisis support, including a support helpline **0800 389 8820** or crisis line **0300 373 0896**

This support is vital in reducing stigma and ensuring firefighters feel safe to ask for help when they need it.

Useful links

- ▶ [CFRS Wellbeing Hub | Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service](#)
- ▶ [Mental health - Fire Fighters Charity](#)
- ▶ [Fire Fighters Charity | Hub Page | Rightsteps](#)
- ▶ [Stress Awareness Month 2026 - The Stress Management Society](#)
- ▶ [Stress Awareness Month 2026 | Awareness Days](#)

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

