



## CFRS Weekly Update – 17/7/26

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### Weekly Update – At a Glance

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- ▶ Asbestos medicals reminder
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- ▶ Grey Book pay award – operational staff only
- ▶ Ulverston open day shines in the sun for Fire Fighters Charity
- ▶ Service supports paddleboarding safety event at Coniston
- ▶ Policy Update – Substance Misuse
- ▶ Fire Fighters Charity: Introduction to Relaxation & Mindfulness webinar

**\*\* 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

### **Cumbrian team crowned best tactical firefighters in the north west**



Cumbrian firefighters have triumphed against hefty competition from services across the north west to be crowned the best tactical firefighting team in the region.

Competing in the 2026 North West Regional Tactical Firefighting Challenge with teams from Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, and Merseyside services at the latter's Training and Development Academy last Friday, Cumbria's five-person team came out on top with a makeup which was fittingly representative of our service as a whole, consisting of four on-call firefighters and one wholetime firefighter.

Crew Managers Christian Neen, Ryan Fitzwilliam and Ryan Collins and firefighters Pat Campbell-Jenner and Sean Fitzsimmon were commended for their use of CFRS's new fireground setup and tactical firefighting procedures, impressing judges and the other services with their innovation in tactical firefighting, including use of 38mm hose and tactical ventilation.

The result, which was judged by peer assessment, is also a credit to the hard work and dedication of their trainers, Station Manager Tom Harding, Watch Manager Tom Jermy and Crew Manager Andrew Stark, who have worked closely with the team using the facilities at Service HQ to prepare for the competition – including the impressive new custom-made training house.

The service was praised by Anna Stec, Professor of Fire Chemistry and Toxicity at University of Lancashire, for its thorough procedures for managing contaminants to protect staff both on and beyond the fireground.

Dave Love, Area Manager for Response at Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service, said: “It was an immensely proud moment to see our team come away with this recognition, facing such strong competition from our neighbours in the region and in challenging conditions on the day.

“It was especially rewarding to receive really positive feedback on our innovation in fireground setup and how our team managed contaminants, both areas which have been the subject of a huge amount of time and effort to make sure we work safely and effectively.

“This success reflects not only the hard work and dedication of those who were directly involved on the day, but equally the contributions of people across both our operational and corporate teams who work every day to enable us to deliver the best possible service for our communities.”

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### **Asbestos medicals reminder**

We would encourage all firefighters to attend their asbestos medical appointments wherever possible, as appointment availability is limited. Occupational Health has experienced a number of missed appointments, resulting in valuable clinical time being lost.

As the doctor attends on a rotating schedule across different areas, we cannot guarantee appointments that fit specific duty systems or watch patterns. Given that asbestos remains an occupational risk within the firefighting role, attendance at these medicals is important.

**Gayle Carruthers**

Occupational Health Adviser

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## **Leavers process**

If a member of your team is leaving the service due to retirement or resignation, please contact the Recruitment team as soon as possible and we will provide advice on the next steps to follow.

We are currently trialling a new process, which is not yet available on our website.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the Recruitment Team at [Recruitment@cumbriafire.gov.uk](mailto:Recruitment@cumbriafire.gov.uk).

## **Toria Barnes**

Resourcing, Talent and Wellbeing Lead

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**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

**Women in the Fire Service UK walk around the Old Man of Coniston**



## Vacancies

### **Associate Instructors – Fitness**

#### **INTERNAL ONLY**

**Salary:** £13.47 per hour

**Locations:** Countywide (with a focus on North and South Lakes)

**Hours:** Zero Hours (will include some evening work)

**Contract:** 12-month fixed term

**Closing date:** Sunday 26 July 2026, 11.59pm

**Interviews:** Monday 3 August 2026

For more information: [\*\*CFRS0182 - Associate Instructors - Fitness \(Internal Only\)\*\*](#)  
[\*\*Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service\*\*](#)

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## **CBRN Fire Rescue Service Station Commander – Counter Terrorism Policing secondment**

### **EXTERNAL SECONDMENT**

**Location:** National CBRN Centre, Coventry, West Midlands, CV8 3EN, GB

**Contract:** Two years fixed term

**Rank/Grade:** Station Manager or equivalent

This position is offered as a two-year secondment to the National CBRN Centre. To qualify, you must confirm in your application that you have received approval for secondment.

**Closing date:** Monday 27 July 2026, 11.59pm

For more information: [\*\*CBRN Fire Rescue Service Station Commander - Counter Terrorism Policing - West Midlands Police Careers\*\*](#)

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**Other**

**Payroll update**

Due to a payroll provider error in implementing CFRS's new PAYE reference, it has come to our attention that there have been several cases where employees' tax codes do not appear to be correct. We are unable to manually change your tax code as direction needs to be given by HMRC.

At this stage, Payroll is unable to resolve this directly. We are working with Payroll to review the situation. In the meantime, we recommend that affected employees contact HMRC to review and correct their tax position.

### **What we recommend you do**

Employees can resolve this by contacting HMRC and ending your employment under the old PAYE reference number. Alternatively, you may be able to log into your HMRC account via Government Gateway and update your employment listing under the *Check your current pay, pension and Income Tax details* found within the *Pay As You Earn (PAYE)* menu once logged onto the website. The link to the HMRC login and contact number for HMRC can be found below:

**[HMRC online services: sign in or set up an account: Sign in or set up an account - GOV.UK](#)**

Contact number: 0300 200 3300

Our old PAYE reference is: 783/A50.

The new PAYE reference that is valid from April 2026 onwards is 120/NF08783.

**If you are worried about experiencing financial hardship as a result of this error, please contact the HR team for support.**

**HR team**

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### **Grey Book pay award – operational staff only**

Following conclusion of the National Joint Council (NJC) negotiations, we can confirm that this year's annual pay award has now been agreed at 3.8 per cent effective from 1 July 2026. The increase to salary will be reflected in July's pay.



**For corporate staff**, unfortunately an agreement has not yet been reached regarding the pay award. We will continue to monitor and keep you updated with any developments.

**Jemma Taylor and Helen Clark**

HR Managers

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### **Ulverston open day shines in the sun for Fire Fighters Charity**



Ulverston Blue Light Hub hosted its annual open day at the weekend, with brilliant support from the community making the event a memorable one for a good cause as all proceeds went to the Fire Fighters Charity.

The event was supported by the Barrow Fire Cadets unit, who showcased the Core Code of Ethics and did their unit proud, and Barrow Fire Station, while there was also a presence from St John Ambulance South Cumbria Network, Cumbria Police, North West Ambulance Service, Coastguard, Blood Bikes, Ulverston Leisure Centre, Core Cuisine, and Aaron Rossie Ice Cream. Thanks also go to Furness Plastics, who supplied signs for the day.





### **Service supports paddleboarding safety event at Coniston**



Firefighters and Fire Cadets supported a family-friendly community event on the shore of Coniston Water promoting responsible use of paddleboards and water safety.

Targeted at anyone with an interest in paddleboarding from novices to experienced boarders, the event was organised by Cumbria Water Safety Partnership and involved a combination of practical 'have-a-go' activities, information and advice sharing, and giveaways.

Free paddleboarding sessions were offered throughout, with 40 people taking part in supervised tasters, while people could also learn how to spot dangers, how to 'Float to Live' in an emergency – more than 100 people were engaged with over the course of the day.

The event involved partners including Border Kayaks, GLL, Lake District National Park Authority, RNLI.

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## **Policy Update – Substance Misuse**

The HR Team has recently updated the Substance Misuse policy following changes to the way testing will be conducted. The latest policy is now available on the website: [\*\*A-Z Policies, Procedures and Guidance | Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service\*\*](#)

The main updates are outlined below:

- ▶ Responsibility for with cause, random testing following an incident, and alcohol testing has transferred from the Occupational Health (OH) team to our external 24-hour provider, Abbott Toxicology
- ▶ Pre-employment drug testing for operational roles will continue to be undertaken by the Occupational Health team
- ▶ Two new appendices have been added to support managers and employees:
  - Appendix C – A process flowchart outlining the steps for both "with cause" and "after event" testing
  - Appendix D – An Abbott Toxicology information sheet explaining how managers can access and request their services

The HR Team regularly review and update policies to ensure they remain fair, compliant, and supportive for employees. All changes have been made with the support of our Trade Union colleagues. Should you have any specific queries please don't hesitate to contact the HR Team [\*\*hr@cumbriafire.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:hr@cumbriafire.gov.uk)

**Rachel Rollins**

HR Advisor – HR Team, People and Talent

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**Fire Fighters Charity: *Introduction to Relaxation & Mindfulness* webinar**

We are pleased to share an opportunity to attend a free webinar delivered by the Fire Fighters Charity:

*Introduction to Relaxation and Mindfulness*

**Thursday 23 July 2026, 2pm**

**Microsoft Teams meeting**

**Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/3887598187238?p=YgkaMfwDFnhUfhBKX3>**

Meeting ID: 388 759 818 723 8

Passcode: jN9Ht6vW

Mindfulness and relaxation strategies can help to reduce stress levels, improve wellbeing, and support us in managing the demands of everyday life. This interactive workshop will provide practical techniques that you can use both at work and at home.

During the session, you'll:

- ▶ Learn what relaxation and mindfulness mean in everyday life
- ▶ Explore what 'true' relaxation is and how to practise 'active' mindfulness
- ▶ Take part in relaxation exercises, guided visualisation and mindfulness meditation
- ▶ Receive information about further wellbeing support available through Fire Fighters Charity

Whether you're completely new to mindfulness or looking to refresh your knowledge, this session is open to all staff and offers a great opportunity to focus on your wellbeing.

We encourage anyone interested to join and take some time for themselves.

## **Annie McInerney-Thompson**

Recruitment, Fitness & Engagement Coordinator

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To have your news included in this section please email:

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

