

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Recruitment Pack

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service



April 2025



Making Cumbria a safer place for all

cumbriafire.gov.uk



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A Message from the Chief Fire Officer

Thank you for your interest in the Assistant Chief Fire Officer roles in Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. This is an exceptional opportunity for individuals who are not only committed to public service but also possess a strong work ethic, a relentless drive for cultural change and a passion for continuous improvement. As we look to strengthen our leadership team, we are seeking candidates whose personal values align closely with the core values that define our service and an unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of the communities we serve.

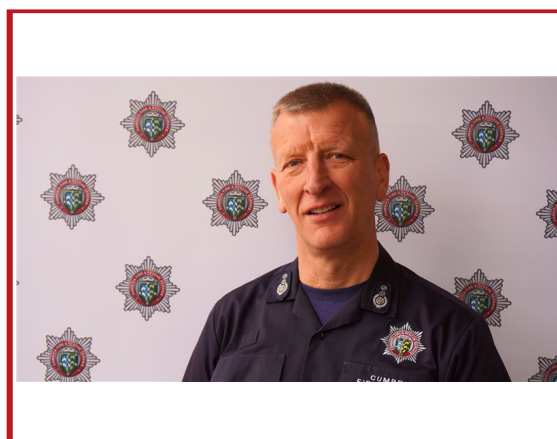
We are particularly looking for leaders who excel in creating high-performance environments whilst maintaining a strong people focus. This role requires someone who can inspire, support and develop teams to consistently perform at their best whilst driving cultural change that promotes inclusivity, respect and personal accountability at all levels. The ideal candidate will possess a proven ability to communicate effectively and lead with empathy ensuring the service's mission and values are embedded in every aspect of our work.

In this position, you will be instrumental in leading the transformation of our service, championing continuous improvement and fostering an environment where excellence is not just expected but achieved. Your leadership will directly influence the delivery of high-quality services and the development of a positive, forward-thinking culture. You will be expected to demonstrate resilience, integrity and a steadfast commitment to making our service an even stronger and more inclusive organisation.

If you are passionate about making a tangible difference, committed to leading teams through change and determined to drive a culture of improvement and excellence, we welcome your application. Together, we can continue to build a service that is ready for future challenges.



Paul Hancock
Chief Fire Officer
Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service



Our Recruitment Processes

It has never been a more exciting time to consider your future with Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

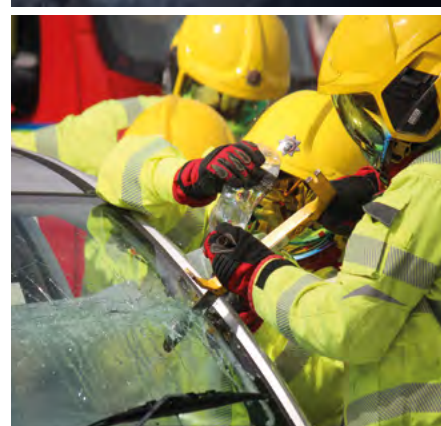
Our service is passionate about the communities we serve and dedicated to developing our workforce - if you're looking to progress in an inclusive, supportive, and dynamic fire service, we are the right service for you.

Following a significant period of change, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is at the beginning of our journey as we have moved from the governance of the County Council to the Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner. This exciting opportunity brings with it the chance to innovate, integrate, and do things differently, and one key focus is ensuring our Selection and Promotion processes are fair, inclusive, and allow all candidates to be their best selves on the day.

As a service, we have begun to introduce some measures that aim to reduce unconscious bias, remove barriers, maintain standards, and modernise how we recruit. This is on-going work and we will continually monitor changes made, seek feedback from all involved in the process, and review in line with national approaches.

Some of the changes we have made so far are:

- ▶ For this process, candidates will be provided with the presentation topic before they are invited to interview on Monday 19th May 2025, giving them time to prepare and present the best version of themselves.
- ▶ We are utilising NFCC recruitment best practice tools and aligning our interview questions with the NFCC Leadership Framework, balancing the process for internal and external candidates.
- ▶ We have made significant changes to our application process, clearly indicating which sections are confidential and won't be shared with the shortlisting panel, and which sections will, with the aim to reduce unconscious bias.



- ▶ We have included information in the advert where candidates can begin the conversation around reasonable adjustments, enabling the Resourcing and Talent team to have the initial conversation with the candidate (if successful to the next stages) and seeking consent on whether this is shared with the assessors or panel members.
- ▶ We are committing to offering candidates a discussion with our Chief Fire Officer during the process, enabling potential candidates to get to know the service in a friendly and informal way, and to share key information on the process, as well as asking questions directly to people working in CFRS and living in Cumbria.

At a time of ongoing reform of public services, it has never been more important to ensure we have the right people in the right roles, and successful applicants joining CFRS will be entering an engaging and empowering environment, building on our existing open and inclusive culture to seek continual improvement in performance across the Service. We are dedicated to improving outcomes for communities and driving our services forward to be the very best they can be.

Our Assessment Methods

We utilise a wide range of assessment methods to enable recruiting managers and panel members to make confident and thorough decisions, and for candidates to make the most of the experience and support their development.

Some of our assessment methods are:

- ▶ Interview panels, including Staff and Stakeholder panels
- ▶ Discussion exercises, both individual with a panel or group
- ▶ Skill based assessments, such as writing a briefing, delivering a presentation, analysing data and presenting trends
- ▶ Drill Exercises
- ▶ Practical Assessments
- ▶ Psychometric Testing
- ▶ Assessment Centres.

Assessment methods will always be made clear on the advert, in the recruitment pack where relevant, and shared at any virtual or in-person engagement sessions/days.

If you have any questions about our assessment methods, please contact: recruitment@cumbriafire.gov.uk



Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

We value the diversity of our employees and aim to recruit a workforce which reflects our communities in Cumbria. We actively encourage applications from all suitably qualified individuals, irrespective of people's age, disability, gender, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or other personal circumstances.

We have guidance in place to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and consistently at every stage of the recruitment process, including the consideration of reasonable adjustments.

Some of our inclusive recruitment actions are:

- ▶ Offering flexible working where possible
- ▶ Placing job adverts across a number of jobs boards, especially on Women in the Fire Services' jobs board
- ▶ Providing candidates with clear expectations, timelines, and communications throughout all processes
- ▶ Removing employment history from the application form
- ▶ Encouraging supportive discussion and implementation of reasonable adjustments
- ▶ Using skill-based assessment tasks where relevant
- ▶ Collecting and analysing EDI data to inform inclusion outcomes.

Positive Action

As a service, we are dedicated to considering reducing under-representation where identified and supporting individuals with protected characteristics.

At the beginning of recruitment processes, we work to identify any under-representation in the role; consider support for those who have different needs; and recognise disadvantages for those with protected characteristics. We also utilise, where possible, workforce data to identify barriers and under-representation.

We then work to ensure that Positive Action is in place to meet the needs of any of the identified individuals. Positive Action will be in place as long as the relevant conditions for that recruitment process apply, and the impact of any positive action measures will be monitored and progress towards the aim will be reviewed.

If you have any queries about Positive Action, please don't hesitate to get in touch with our Resourcing and Talent team, on recruitment@cumbriafire.gov.uk

Key Definitions

Equality

Equality ensures that every individual has equal opportunities, regardless of their background, identity or experience.

Diversity

Diversity refers to the representation and recognition of people with different characteristics. In the UK, it is against the law to discriminate against someone with a 'protected characteristic'. These include:

- ▶ Age
- ▶ Disability
- ▶ Gender reassignment
- ▶ Marriage and civil partnership
- ▶ Pregnancy and maternity
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Religion or belief
- ▶ Sex
- ▶ Sexual orientation.

In addition to protected characteristics, we aim to consider diversity of other characteristics, such as socioeconomic background, as well as considering intersectionality, wherein people may have multiple, overlapping identities that can impact their experiences.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about going beyond representation and recognition, to valuing these differences and enabling everyone to thrive at work.

We strive to have an inclusive workplace, where people feel they can perform to their full potential, and that they belong in the organisation without needing to conform or mask their identities

These key definitions have been supported by information on [CIPD.org](https://www.cipd.org).

About Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is a large rural service covering the picturesque Lake District to the Pennines in the east and from the industrialised West Cumbrian coast to the estuaries in the south of the county. Cumbria is the third largest County in England and is the second least densely populated, with a population just under 500,000, 52% of those live in rural areas.

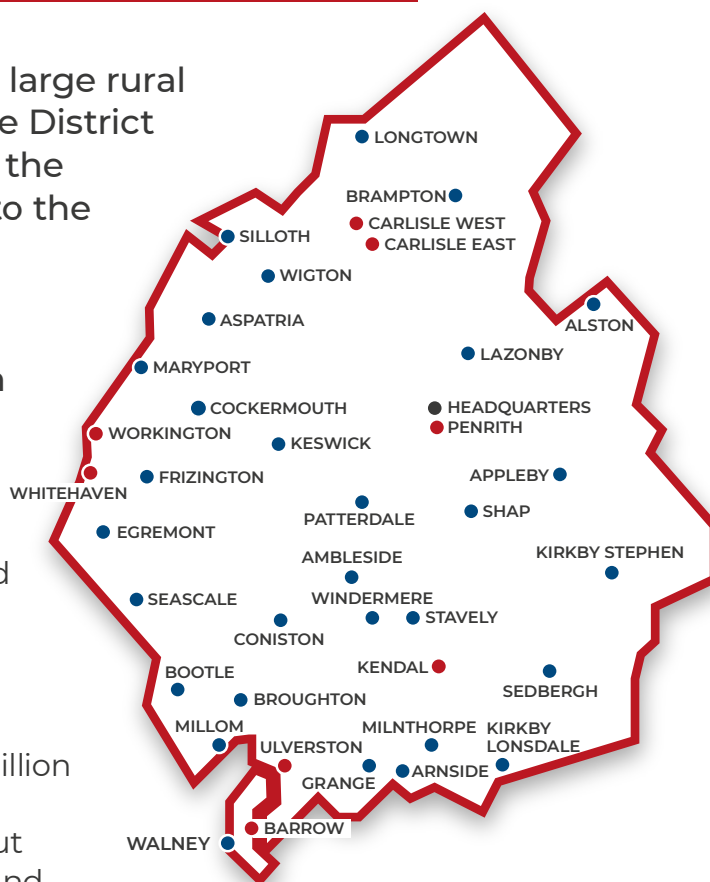
CFRS has approximately 600 firefighters and fire service staff. Cumbria is supported by 38 fire stations. We have 8 wholtime stations and 30 on-call fire stations.

The mountains and lakes attract millions of visitors each year. Last year, nearly 50 million people visited Cumbria. This significantly increases risk across the county throughout the year and increases our response demand.

Cumbria has sites of significant national risk, including Sellafield and BAE Systems in Barrow. The county hosts large scale events attracting thousands of visitors such as Appleby Horse Fair and Kendal Calling. CFRS is heavily involved in the strategic safety planning of these sites and annual events.

Cumbria also has infrastructure challenges, because we have the country's fourth largest road network with 7,900km of roads. From the M6 to busy urban streets in built up areas and narrow country roads in remote rural areas. There are 3,729km of unclassified roads, many of which are winding with steep gradients and poor accessibility, so the Service has a diverse fleet of vehicles to meet our challenging geography.

CFRS places particular focus on education for young drivers, delivering Road Awareness for young people aged 18-25 regularly. Courses aim to raise awareness of the dangers on the roads and effects of road traffic collisions. The Service also delivers many Call, Push, Rescue courses, teaching emergency life support skills to members of the public.



Key

- = Wholtime/Day Crew and Wholtime/Day Crew with On-call
- = On-call

CFRS has a team of Fire Protection Inspectors who audit medium and high-risk premises, and our shift-based firefighters inspect low risk premises. Our Fire protection activities are wide ranging and through effective collaboration the Service focuses on those who are deemed to be high risk.

Cumbria is no stranger to severe weather. Over the past 15 years, the county has experienced significant flooding events. Storm Desmond in December 2015 caused unprecedented damage and destruction throughout the county. The 'Beast from the East' and Storm Arwen left many homes and villages cut off for days.

CFRS has specialist resources and training to deal with wildfires, water rescue, flooding and firefighters are also trained for large animal rescues.

CFRS focuses on Prevention, Protection and Response to keep communities and visitors safe every day, every year.

CFRS is led by a newly shaped Service Leadership Team, made from both Operational and Corporate services, that combines industry knowledge, proven excellence in their fields, and a passionate commitment to continually drive the service forward.



Our Vision and Values

Our vision

A community-focussed, professional, and trusted Fire and Rescue Service that makes Cumbria a safer place for all.

Our values

We believe passionately in the delivery of excellent public services to make Cumbria a safer place for all. To do that we need to be clear about the values and behaviours that we need to drive change and achieve our high standards.



Putting our communities first



Dignity and respect



Equality, diversity and inclusion



Integrity



Leadership

► Putting our communities first

We put the interest of the public, the community, and service users first.

► Dignity and respect

We treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

► Equality, diversity, and inclusion

We continually recognise and promote the value of equality, diversity, and inclusion, both within the fire and rescue service and the wider communities in which we serve.

► Integrity

We act with integrity including being open, honest, and consistent in everything that we do.

► Leadership

We are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership.

Living in/Relocating to Cumbria

As a place to live, Cumbria takes some beating. Its home to some of England's highest mountains, biggest lakes and most breath-taking scenery. The scenic views are matched by the openness of its communities and the friendliness of its people.

From the stunning beauty of the Lake District to the lively and bustling market towns and the rich history, Cumbria offers something for everyone. This unique piece of England inspires a lasting affection among residents and visitors alike. But there is more to Cumbria than meets the eye. What brings people here and keeps them coming back is, quite simply, the unbeatable quality of life.

Time and again the county comes top of the league in surveys looking at Britain's best places to live. With excellent schools, low crime, good house prices and big opportunities for those who choose to live and work here.

If you are considering relocating here, there are a few things you should know:

- ▶ Cumbria's schools consistently achieve above national average results in a range of areas and the percentage of children who gain access to their first preference schools are amongst the best in the country.
- ▶ Cumbria has some of the lowest crime rates in England
- ▶ It has an amazing outdoor offer.
- ▶ Its GP practices have the country's highest levels of patient satisfaction.



Connectivity to and from Cumbria is excellent:

Train: Cumbria has excellent mainline rail links, opening up access to Newcastle, Leeds, Glasgow and London.

Road: Cumbria is linked to the rest of the country by the M6, to Scotland via the M74/75 and to Newcastle upon Tyne by the A69.

If you are travelling further afield, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and Newcastle are located less than 90 minutes' drive from the county.

This is only a brief glimpse of what Cumbria is all about, of what it's like to live and work here. To get a real taste of this beautiful, interesting and exciting county, you'll really have to come and experience it for yourself.

For more information, please visit:

- ▶ Cumbria Tourism www.cumbriatourism.org
- ▶ Information and statistics about Cumbria www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk
- ▶ Visit Cumbria www.visitcumbria.com
- ▶ The Lake District www.golakes.co.uk
- ▶ Doing Business in Cumbria www.cumbriachamber.co.uk

Relocation Package

We have a Relocation Assistance Scheme available. Further details on this package will be discussed with the successful candidate.

Key Documents

Please note, these are document versions we have now, and some are currently under review.

Annual Report – 2022/23

Click [here](#) to view the report.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

On 20 January 2023 we received the report from our most recent HMI inspection (tranche 3), the third set of reports. Our Service was assessed against the following areas:

- ▶ How effective they are in keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks;
- ▶ How efficient they are in keeping safe and secure from fire and other risks; and
- ▶ How well they look after their people.

Click [here](#) to view the report.

Community Risk Management Plan – 2024-2028

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2024-2028 was published June 2024 following a six week public consultation earlier that year. The document helps the organisation understand and manage issues that could impact the organisation and the community.

The CRMP identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks, in order for the service to prioritise its staff and resources to carry out our important response, prevention and protection work.

Click [here](#) to view the plan.

Please see below our current Service Strategies

Response Strategy - click [here](#)

Prevention Strategy - click [here](#)

Protection Strategy - click [here](#)

Equality and Diversity Strategy - click [here](#)

People Strategy - click [here](#)

Our Governance

On 1 April 2023, the governance of CFRS transferred from Cumbria County Council to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority)

For more information, please click [here](#).

The Office of the Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) has developed the new Police, Fire and Crime Plan 2025 - 2029, that incorporates both Policing and Fire priorities.

To view the plan, please click [here](#).



Our Code of Ethics



Putting our communities first



Dignity and respect



Equality, diversity and inclusion



Integrity



Leadership



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