



**Communications  
and Engagement  
Strategy  
2022 - 2025**

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**Cumbria  
Fire & Rescue  
Service**



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## Overview

The success of a modern fire and rescue service is now measured in its ability to help to build safer and stronger communities with reduced anti-social behaviour, better education, and residents who are satisfied and engaged – no longer is it enough just to respond to emergencies or help to prevent them from happening in the first place.

We can only achieve this by being a fire and rescue service that works with residents, businesses and communities to deliver the best services possible within the available resources, by knowing our communities and the people who live there. This approach will help minimise the number of accidental and deliberate fires, and road traffic collisions.

To succeed in building an integrated approach to the safety of our communities, we must continually communicate, consult and engage with our stakeholders and communities; listening to what they want to achieve and helping them to do so, to help us to achieve our own objectives.

Most importantly of all, we must fully engage with our staff, to build their understanding and support for the constant changes which are inevitable in a modern fire and rescue service, and to develop them as our ambassadors for the community safety agenda which is now central to our work.

Fire and Rescue Services will, as we know, continue to face more change. The Service's increasing leadership role in community safety, security and resilience will bring about the ongoing changes in the role of the Fire and Rescue Service and what local communities want and expect of it.

Effective change management is dependent on good communications that support our vision and aspirations. Good internal communication can help to ensure that we achieve our strategic aims: that everyone is pulling in the same and right direction, especially when we are going through change.

Good communication is both a duty and an opportunity. A duty to reach out to all our stakeholders to demonstrate they are valued. It is also an opportunity to learn from others, give direction, celebrate achievement and acknowledge when further development is needed.

Strong external communications will enhance trust and confidence in CFRS and understanding of our objectives. Stakeholders will be targeted to enable the Service to reach them efficiently and effectively, and with maximum impact.

This Strategy creates a framework for the development of robust communications across the Service. The purpose of this strategy is to contribute to the development of all employees to become effective communicators and ambassadors for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.



# Vision, aims and objectives

## Our vision

A fire and rescue service that works with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources.

## Our aim

To deliver a planned and sustained approach to communications and engagement that will enable effective stakeholder involvement in CFRS, support the delivery of the Service’s strategic priorities, and underpin the organisation’s decision-making processes, and protect and enhance its reputation.

This strategy will aim to:

- To ensure mechanisms are put in place to create meaningful, two-way dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders.
- To ensure that Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service communicates in an open and transparent way with its stakeholders.
- To protect and enhance the reputation of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.
- To ensure that the Service communicates safety messages with the public.
- To ensure that the Service’s stakeholders are kept informed about the work of the Service.
- To enhance levels of staff engagement and satisfaction.

### Our communications and engagement activity will have four key dimensions:

#### To inform

Providing our stakeholders with the information they need, either to perform their role, understand the organisation and its goals, share facts or report progress.

#### To listen

We will enable the organisation to listen to stakeholders and respond to feedback.

#### To engage

Encourage involvement and invite dialogue from stakeholders.

#### To influence

Shaping good corporate decision-making and beneficial stakeholder positioning and

### Communications principles

These principles will underpin Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service’s approach to communications:

- Visible leadership – CFRS senior team must be an active and highly visible presence within the whole Service to convey the vision for the service as well as demonstrating the Service’s behaviours.
- Consistency – regular communications at a consistent time and in a consistent branded format.
- Relevance – ensuring that people’s time is not wasted with information that is not relevant to them.
- Professionalism – starting with the assumption that colleagues are professionals who take their job seriously and want to do the best for the service and the people of Cumbria.
- Recognition – focus on highlighting where best practice exists and recognising the people involved.
- Engagement – all leaders and managers to actively drive and participate in strategies that support and encourage the commitment, engagement and wellbeing of all CFRS staff.

## Our stakeholders

### Internal

Our objective is to have an informed and engaged workforce that understands what the service is trying to achieve, is invested in delivering that vision, understands how their work contributes to achieving it and is positive about working for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

### How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Create an environment where our staff understand and share the organisational vision and objectives
- Develop a culture of professionalism and continuous improvement through communicating best practice and learnings
- Have effective channels, which ensure CFRS staff get timely information required to undertake their role efficiently and effectively
- Equip and empower management and staff to help them take responsibility for effective communication in their work
- Create the right culture, values and behaviours to make CFRS a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- Ensure two-way communications and engagement channels are in place to gauge staff morale, and have strategies to address any areas of concern
- Provide communications expertise to support the delivery of CFRS priorities

Wholetime operational staff
On-call operational staff
Non-operational staff
Wider Cumbria County Council staff
Managers
Cumbria County Council Cabinet
Cumbria County Council Councillors
Trade Unions

## Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service Internal Communications Framework- Communication channels for staff and distribution methods

Channel	Distribution method
CFRS Weekly Update	Distributed via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email</li> <li>• LearnPro</li> <li>• Printed on Stations by Watch Manager (On-call &amp; Wholetime)</li> <li>• Stored on CFRS SharePoint</li> <li>• Working on implementing a Comms Archive on Gartan (roster system, daily usage)</li> </ul>
Text Message System	Used for urgent communications for example, major incidents or system issues.
WhatsApp	All station teams have a WhatsApp group set up (personal numbers) where we can cascade updates to via Watch Managers.
Ask SLT Sessions	All staff invited to attend. Area Managers give short updates to encourage questions.
Yammer	All staff have access.
SharePoint	My Fire Station pages – all resources in one place.
Noticeboards	All stations have noticeboards on stations, printed documents are displayed.

## Frequency of communications

Frequency	Communication	Channel
Weekly	CFRS Weekly Update	Email, print, SharePoint homepage, LearnPro, Yammer
Monthly	Message from CFO/DCFO/ACFO	Email, print, SharePoint homepage, LearnPro, Yammer
Monthly	Press Releases	Social media
Monthly	All CFRS Manager's Meeting	Via Microsoft Teams or face to face
Bi-monthly	Ask SLT Sessions	Via Microsoft Teams as and when required

## External

**Our objective is to have: enhance trust and confidence in CFRS and understanding of our objectives through clearly identifying our target stakeholders and the means to reach them efficiently and effectively, and with maximum impact.**

## How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Have a clear and consistent narrative articulating CFRS' role, purpose and objectives
- Maximise our activity through a multichannel approach
- Target our communications activity to best meet the needs of our various audiences
- Have a strong and consistent identity and reputation which builds trust with stakeholders
- Equip and empower all staff to deliver consistent CFRS messages to our communities
- Create the right culture, values and behaviours to make CFRS a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all

Members of the public
Partner agencies
National Fire Chiefs Council
HMICFRS
Local authorities

## Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service External Communications Framework- Communication channels for staff and distribution methods

Channel	Distribution method
Statement	<p>A statement, like a press release, should be written in line with the Service's style guide. It should be accurate and informative.</p> <p>A statement can but does not necessarily appear in the form of a quote, or it can include a quote. It is not written to the same structure of a press release.</p>
Press release	<p>A press release is an article that tells a positive or informative story about the service.</p> <p>Press releases are written and issued by the Corporate Communications Team and should not be done by any other member of staff.</p>
Gov Delivery	<p>The service uses Gov Delivery at its email delivery system for both internal and external audiences. The channel allows members of the public to subscribe to alerts relating to the topics they have shown an interest in.</p>
CCC/CFRS Website	<p>The website serves as both a public facing tool and a method of demonstrating compliance with the Service's legal obligations.</p> <p>The site is a point of contact between the organisation and the public. It holds a host of up-to-date information on the Service, such as its stations and other facilities, incidents, Safe and Well visits, campaigns, vacancies and policies.</p>
Social Media	<p>The Service currently has a corporate Twitter, Facebook and Instagram account. These are accessed by the Communications Team.</p> <p>Individual stations also have a social media account if they have a designated social media champion and can provide evidence that they will utilise the account appropriately and regularly. These accounts are monitored and reviewed by the Communications Team</p>

## Messaging strategy - four core priorities:

All communications and engagement activity will be underpinned by the Service's four core priorities:

**People:** We will have a motivated and committed workforce that is innovative, supported, skilled and customer focused.

**Prevention:** We will prevent fires and other emergencies by prioritising the most vulnerable.

**Protection:** We will protect people, property and the environment by working with partners to ensure compliance with legislation.

**Response:** We will plan for and respond effectively to emergencies when they arise.

The following principles will be used when developing messages to ensure there is a consistent and compelling narrative aligned to the priorities:

- Messages will be appropriately aligned to individual stakeholders
- Better articulate the broader role of today's Fire and Rescue Service
- Continue to maximise the strong public image held by our front line colleagues
- Better demonstrate the outcome of the work the Service does rather than the technical delivery
- Use more relevant supporting imagery.

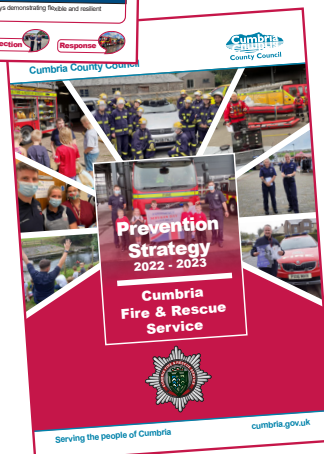


## Brand and Identity

Having a strong brand is essential in helping to secure an excellent reputation for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and is key to helping the Service improve its identity and overall visibility.

CFRS's brand is made up of a range of elements - everything colleagues in the Service do and say has a direct effect on the brand and reputation of CFRS.

Brand guidelines can be checked with the Communications team.



## Evaluation and measurement

To ensure that this strategy remains on track to deliver its objectives, all internal and external communication activity will be monitored throughout implementation.

All communications campaigns and initiatives will be accompanied by a specific plan and set of objectives. These plans will also detail how the success if each objective can be evaluated and measured.

How we measure success:

- Monitoring open rates
- Social media analytics
- Media coverage sentiment
- Mystery shopper calls to staff – ‘when did you last read the weekly update?’
- Staff surveys
- KPI's

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