



Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service

People Strategy



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Purpose

This strategy sets out how we will support and value our workforce as we continue on our transformational journey.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) recognise that our workforce is our most valuable asset and are crucial to providing our communities with high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services. The skills, knowledge, experience and diversity of our workforce has a direct impact on the success and quality of the service we can deliver to the communities across Cumbria.



Foreword

The People Strategy is a statement of our intent to support and develop every member of our workforce throughout their employment with CFRS. We are fully committed to making CFRS a great place to work. We want to help our workforce to become more resilient and diverse, develop their skills and maximise their wellbeing at work.

We also recognise that the way we lead, manage and behave is fundamental to how people view the Service, so we want to reiterate our commitments to all our staff throughout this strategy. I see this as being essential to demonstrate our commitment to fairness, equality, respect and continuous improvement.

Launching the People Strategy now is especially important as the Service continues to adapt to changing circumstances, which we know can be worrying for some staff when the changes impact upon them. The period of change across the Service is likely to be ongoing as we progress into the future. Therefore, it is important to continually support and develop our teams to enable all of us to deliver the best possible service to our communities.

We will be guided by the key principles, commitments and targets set out in the following pages.

Steve Healey
Chief Fire Officer

Cumbria County Council Workforce Plan 2018-2022

The Cumbria County Council Workforce Plan sets out how the Council in its entirety will engage, empower, support and develop the workforce now and in the future to deliver the best possible services within a challenging financial context. The Workforce Plan is supported by the Council Plan Delivery Plan, both should be read in conjunction with, the Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) People Strategy as information within those documents is also applicable to CFRS. Delivery of the CFRS People Strategy will complement the Council in the delivery of the overall Workforce Plan.

The Cumbria County Council Workforce Plan vision is:

“To have a healthy and committed workforce that is customer focused, innovative and skilled, who work as ‘one team’ to deliver the best possible services to the people of Cumbria”

To support this vision, the Cumbria County Council Workforce Plan will concentrate on 3 main themes which will provide a focus over the next 4 years.

These include:

- To improve employee engagement;
- Build on skills and behaviours; and
- Promote employee wellbeing.

Further detail on the above 3 main themes and the associated strands of redesigning services, performance development, resourcing, equipping the workforce with appropriate tools and training, policies and procedures, embracing national regulation and creating a culture of engagement and wellbeing are available in the Cumbria County Council Workforce Plan.

CFRS Strategic Aim

CFRS recognises the role of the fire and rescue service is changing having achieved substantial reductions in the number and impact of fires through our high quality firefighting and prevention services. We also recognise our increasing need to collaborate with partners to have a more cohesive multi-disciplined approach. To help us move forward, we want to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills and training to carry out the right job, at the right time. We also want to have a workforce that represents our communities.

Our strategic aim is to ensure we develop and maintain a well-skilled, diverse workforce able to deliver sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue, prevention and support services, both as a Service and with our partners in the community. Ultimately, we want to enable our workforce to make even more of a difference every day and save even more lives.

The approach CFRS takes in the development of its workforce will be governed by a set of guiding principles. These principles will permeate all aspects of decision making, helping to add focus and direction to our strategic aim of developing and maintaining a well-skilled, workforce.

CFRS People Strategy and Action Plan

CFRS will continue to become increasingly flexible in the design of duty systems and contract types but also how we work together on day to day activity. Working with a variety of partners, as we move into the future it is important we are providing a wider offer to our customers and this additional offer has implications for staff as they will require continuous professional development. This will be difficult to achieve without leadership at all levels of the Service.

If we are to build on our success we need to develop new management and leadership skills and attract and retain a diversity of thinking and skills.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In delivering against this Strategy, the Service recognises the importance of Equality and Diversity and will continue strive to embed this in everything we do. CFRS have a standalone Equality Strategy that outlines the service approach and how this will be taken forward.

Drivers for Change and the Impact on People

The Council's vision above provides a context for how we will support shaping the Service and support our people. However this cannot be done without recognising the significant change in the Service delivery model. Attached at (Appendix A), is an analysis carried out by the NFCC that demonstrates this change and the impact on people. Changes in the model are summarised below.

Service Delivery Model

As part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and associated process, we review the Service Risk Based Evidence Profile (RBEP) which considers key areas of risk and demand across the County. This process enables the Service to be clear about the levels of risk that exist, influencing our prevention, protection and response arrangements. Allowing us to identify opportunities to change and match our resources in the most efficient and effective way.

In 2007 the Service Delivery Model could be expressed as:

- Fire
- Road Traffic Collision (RTC)
- Flooding
- Emergency Rescue
- Community Safety activity – including partnership working
- Education programmes in schools
- Interaction with business through Technical Fire Safety with a focus on enforcement
- Limited Co-responding in some areas
- The beginnings of work on Local Resilience Forums

In 2018 the Service Delivery Model has changed and diversified –

- Fires - We are going to fewer fires and there are more complex building materials in use and many differences in construction.
- Road Traffic Collision - activity continues, albeit with an increased complexity of extrication because of new vehicle technology. There is increased emphasis through joint working on reduction of Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI). Prevention activity is increasing as is a more joined up approach at incidents.
- Specialist Rescues - Everything from water rescue, mud, animals, and people trapped in various ways - there are a myriad of situations that require our assistance.
- National terrorist threat - and increased emphasis on National Resilience (NR) given the level of threat – introduction of Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) and new and developing mechanisms for NR.
- Duty to collaborate with emergency services and other organisations - Working with partners to provide targeted work on falls prevention, frailty identification, Safeguarding, Safe and Well visits, winter warmth advice etc.



- Joint working with Police - on activity ranging from Counter Terrorism, Civil Defence, anti-social behaviour, looking for missing people (often people with Dementia), RTC prevention, crime prevention etc.
- Flooding activity - has increased and more forecasted through environmental factors – increased emphasis on helping communities build resilience and working together through LRF.
- Community Safety activity - is more targeted now on vulnerable groups – dementia, mental health, joined up crime and fire prevention, social deprivation. Stronger links with Community Safety Partnerships have been forged and we are seeing in some areas, the growth of joint community safety teams which include Fire.

Delivery of the Strategy

In developing the People Strategy, we have considered how we can contribute both to the delivery of the Council's overall strategy, the NFCC People Strategy, the inspection process from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and most importantly the continual support and development of our staff to ensure we deliver a first class professional Service to the communities across Cumbria.

To help us define and plan improvements we have agreed six key commitment areas.

These six areas complement the objectives outlined within the National People Strategy, produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), to which the Service has had regard to in the development of its own People Strategy.

Workforce planning is best when it supports what an organisation is trying to achieve. Therefore this strategy offers a response to the significant changes in service provision by re-framing what we need from our people over the next few years and what we need to do to support them.

Commitment areas listed below:

Commitment 1	Continue to review and develop cultural values and behaviours which make CFRS a great place to work
Commitment 2	Strengthen our ability to provide good service by diversifying our staff and ensuring a fair and equal place to work
Commitment 3	Strengthen Leadership and Line Management to support organisational change and delivery for customers
Commitment 4	Provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public
Commitment 5	Maximise the wellbeing of our people
Commitment 6	Ways of working that respond to Service model needs

Our Commitments

Our People Strategy creates a framework for further development; it is a living document that will change and adapt as we move forward in delivering on our commitments. The six key commitments identified will help to ensure the strategy delivers its aim of developing and maintaining a well-skilled, diverse workforce able to deliver sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue, prevention and support services.

Each commitment has a summary statement of intent followed by a number of targets.

Commitment 1 - Culture, Values & Behaviour

Continue to review and develop cultural values and behaviours which make CFRS a great place to work

CFRS is committed to promoting a culture that values and encourages the contribution of everyone in the organisation. This is supported by a determination to be recognised as an employer of choice, as an organisation that welcomes diversity, and with a working environment that encourages innovation and does not tolerate inappropriate behaviour.

We recognise that transforming how we work is crucial to ensuring we have an adaptable and flexible Service that can respond to changes in circumstances, including the resources available and the skills needed. To support this, our overall aim is to have the right people, with the right skills and training to carry out the right job, at the right time so that our workforce can make a positive difference every day.

We know the best organisations are those that work together, encourage contributions and constructive challenges from everyone in the organisation, share responsibility for successes and learn together from mistakes. The People Strategy will build on this by developing an open and transparent learning culture that promotes fairness and trust, appreciating that different people bring different perspectives, ideas and knowledge, and which together adds strength and resilience to the Service.

We Will

- Ensure our policies and practices are open and transparent
- Develop a 'learning culture' that promotes fairness and trust
- Recognise difference and diversity as a strength to be developed
- Encourage feedback, challenge, innovation and problem solving across all levels of the organisation
- Encourage individuality and challenge inappropriate behaviour

Our Outcomes

- To implement practical ways of capturing and acting on feedback and good ideas from all members of staff
- Recruitment campaigns to actively promote CFRS as an employer of choice that offers flexibility and fair conditions of service
- To identify actions to remove perceived barriers to entry and ensure our workforce represents the diversity of our communities



Commitment 2 - Equality and Diversity

Strengthen our ability to provide good service by diversifying our staff and ensuring a fair and equal place to work

The aim of developing an open and transparent learning culture that promotes fairness and trust is supported by our commitment to promoting equality and diversity in our workforce and in the services we deliver to the community. In terms of leadership and organisational development, this means encouraging a culture that supports equal treatment, equal opportunity, inclusion and transparency at all levels. It also means ensuring we have a workforce that represents the diversity of the community.



To make sure all members of our workforce are treated fairly and respectfully, we will ensure we have a culture that recognises the rights of individuals at work to be supported regardless of their particular traits including their gender, sexuality, mental health state and beliefs. This includes developing a working environment where staff can be confident in declaring disability or sexuality without the fear of discrimination or prejudice. Instances of unfairness, bullying and other discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated and will be investigated and dealt with quickly and effectively.

Learning and Development provision will continue to emphasise the importance of demonstrating equality and diversity in all our activities, and will include training that helps members of staff in identifying and understanding the diversity of needs and differences within our communities.

We will

- Ensure our staff are treated fairly and equally
- Promote CFRS as an employer of choice offering a rewarding professional career in a supportive working environment
- Not tolerate bullying or other unfairness in the workplace and will support staff who report bullying and investigate cases quickly and fairly

Our Outcomes

- To provide ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance managerial and leadership capabilities; for example the tailored Executive Leadership Programme for senior managers and other appropriate manager and leadership programmes.
- To embed a Learning and Development Framework which supports the whole workforce
- To establish a succession planning programme to help mitigate issues arising from the retirement profile over the coming years

Commitment 3 - Leadership and Management

Strengthen Leadership and Line Management to support organisational change and delivery for customers

CFRS recognises that the changing nature and scope of the modern fire and rescue service requires transformational leadership with a flexible blend of skills and experience to drive continuous improvement in standards and performance. It needs outstanding managers and leaders who have the ability to manage and motivate effectively in uncertain times and unpredictable situations.

For example, new risks and responsibilities, a growing emphasis on accountability and good governance, and more diverse communities with increasing expectations all present new and varied challenges. Managing this continually changing environment will require leaders who can demonstrate an ethical, honest and compassionate approach that can engender and maintain staff and public support and trust at all times.

To ensure the Service attracts and develops the best people who can maximise their contribution and potential now and in the future, this strategy will support all aspects of leadership and management development from recruitment, through continuous improvement to succession planning. Embedding this approach at all levels in the organisation will also result in a working culture where people feel motivated, are equipped to perform highly, and have shared aspirations for the Service.



We will

- Encourage and promote effective leadership and management at all levels
- Ensure leaders and managers are equipped with the professional skills to be able to perform across all areas including strategic, political and operational roles and in effective collaboration/partnership with others
- Develop visible and accessible leaders who can promote compassion and accountability, engender support and trust, and focus on improved community outcomes
- Ensure leaders and managers communicate effectively across the Service and with partners and local communities
- Ensure leaders and managers are able to demonstrate resilience in responding to high pressure and complex situations

Our Outcomes

- To develop policies and standards aligned with national fire and rescue leadership and management models
- To embed a Learning and Development Framework which supports the whole workforce
- To establish a succession planning programme to help mitigate issues arising from the retirement profile over the coming year

Commitment 4 - Training and Education

Provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public

The training and education of our staff will be fundamental in meeting the future challenges of the fire and rescue sector. This is why we are committed to providing high quality learning outcomes for all of our staff, in both operational and support departments. For our operational staff, this will mean training to meet the risks that are reasonably foreseeable for their roles and ensuring this training uses national best practice and standards. For our support staff, this will be providing training in the skills we need now and in the future, particularly to meet the challenge of transformational change in the fire and rescue sector.



We know that to facilitate training effectively, there cannot be a single method of delivery. We will provide training and education for our staff in multiple formats that allow the best experience and outcome for the individual or team. We understand that removing staff from the workplace is not always the best method of providing training, so we will aim to use multiple tools to provide local training including peripatetic instructors and e-learning packages. This way, when we do need to take staff out of their workplace for centralised training, it will be worthwhile and provide the maximum benefit.

Our operational training will be focussed on assuring and improving the safety of our firefighting staff. We will not stop seeking to learn from local and national incidents to improve the skills which keep our staff as safe as possible while they respond to the needs of our communities.

By seeking to provide first class operational training, we will develop our staff to excel in all areas of operations to ensure they can provide the best possible service when they respond.

We will

- Deliver training that contributes to firefighter safety
- Provide training that supports organisational transformation
- Facilitate effective learning across the organisation

Our Outcomes

- To provide a Training Delivery Framework which supports the whole workforce
- To maximise and improve training and education across the Service by working with our partners

Commitment 5 - Maximise the wellbeing of our people

Maximising the Health, Wellbeing & Fitness of our staff

CFRS recognises that people are its most valuable asset, and is committed to not only supporting their professional development but also their physical and mental health and wellbeing. This strategy will support the creation of health, wellbeing and fitness programmes that suit all needs at all times. It will include ensuring firefighter safety is maintained through continually learning from operational incidents to help reduce accidents and physical injury and reported stress, including work-related post-traumatic stress disorder. Fitness programmes will promote healthy lifestyles and help to reduce the incidence of muscular skeletal and cardiac-related issues.

As the Service continues to go through change, we recognise that this can be a stressful process for the staff involved and for their physical and mental wellbeing. Therefore we will continue to provide managers with training on how to identify and reduce stress in the workplace, including training to support people through change. We will also maintain our full commitment to encouraging more open conversation about mental health issues.

We also recognise that all members of the workforce have lives outside the Service and we are committed to ensuring there is a fair work/life balance. This is important to overall health and wellbeing for the whole workforce and the Service will continue to look at ways of promoting this; for example by supporting family friendly processes, flexible work patterns and education on healthy lifestyle choices.

We will

- Promote physical and mental health and wellbeing for all staff
- Ensure everyone understands their role in maintaining a healthy and safe working environment to help protect themselves, their colleagues and the public we serve
- Upskill all staff in recognising early signs of stress and post trauma as well as initiating early and appropriate interventions.
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and increase access to fitness programmes to help support mental and physical wellbeing

Our Outcomes

- To reduce the number of accidents and injuries in the workplace, and learn from all incidents
- To reduce the number of days lost through sickness absence and support effective return to work
- Lower rates of staff turnover



Commitment 6 - Innovative ways of working

Ways of working that respond to Service model needs

CFRS recognises that providing a high quality fire and rescue service in the current time of changing needs and demands, and in the light of future uncertainties, requires an ability to adapt to change. It requires ways of working that are more responsive, flexible and adaptable to the changing needs and demands, and a workforce with the skills, capabilities and commitment to deliver our high quality services. How we deliver our services, treat our employees and interact with our partners and communities has a strong bearing on our reputation and how we are perceived as an employer.

We want to be seen as an employer of choice. The People Strategy will support this by seeking to attract the best people through continuous improvement in recruitment and selection. It will seek to reward and recognise high performance and will support people to achieve their potential.

It will create more flexible and adaptive working practices to make it more family friendly and to help attract job applications from those currently under-represented in our workforce. We will also ensure transparency and clarity in areas such as pay and conditions of service at all levels of the organisation.

We will

- Attract, recruit and retain committed people who are proud to work in an organisation that values its people
- Be passionate about celebrating high performance and maintaining our great reputation
- Ensure our workforce has the skills and abilities to respond effectively to changing needs and demands
- Set clear objectives and accountabilities to help focus on priorities
- Work with representative bodies to ensure any changes are introduced effectively
- Continue to learn from our experiences

Our Outcomes

- Develop and publish transparent policies and procedures accessible to all staff
- Monitor data and survey results to inform future Service activities
- Respond to ideas and suggestions in developing policies, procedures and working practice

