

On-call firefighter information guide

# Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service



Making Cumbria a safer place for all

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## Thank you

Thank you for your interest in becoming an on-call firefighter with Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service.

This Information Guide will give you an insight into the role of an on-call firefighter. You will read accounts from our existing on-call firefighters and learn about the types of activities you can expect to be involved in during your career with us. This guide will outline the recruitment processes and career opportunities if you join our diverse team. It will also provide fitness advice to help pass the physical selection tests.

We hope you find this Information Guide useful and informative. However, if you still have questions please contact our recruitment team on [recruitment@cumbriafire.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@cumbriafire.gov.uk) or visit your local station. We look forward to hearing from you.





**John Beard**  
Chief Fire  
Officer



**Putting our  
communities  
first**



**Dignity and  
respect**



**Equality,  
diversity and  
inclusion**



**Integrity**



**Leadership**

## Foreword by the Chief Fire Officer

Welcome to our guide that contains everything you need to know about the role of an on-call firefighter in Cumbria. I hope you find the document useful and that it highlights just what an incredibly fulfilling and challenging role it is and that it encourages you to apply for a position.

On-call firefighters are the backbone of CFRS and cover the entire county, predominantly in rural areas but we also have on-call sections in some more highly populated towns. They offer a highly professional service in responding to incidents and engaging with their communities to reduce the risk for those most vulnerable.

Please do take to time to read through the guide to fully understand the nature of the role and what it can offer you and I look forward to hopefully working together with you to keep our communities safe.

### Case Study - Alasdair Guthrie

#### Occupation - What do you do?

I am a bricklayer by trade. I also worked in a factory in Wigton for 13 years as a process worker. I am now an On-call Support Crew Manager and look after Alston, Brampton, Lazonby, Longtown, Penrith, Wigton Stations. My job is varied because I support developing firefighters with their training, on-call recruitment at my stations and deliver community safety in schools, local organisations and my neighbourhoods.



#### Background about yourself

I'm 51 years old and have been on-call firefighter for 23 years and a wholetime firefighter for 3 years. I'm very much a family man having three kids myself. I like watching rugby and enjoy walking and paddleboarding in the lakes.

#### Length in Service

I joined the Service in 2000.

#### Roles, Training & Jobs you've been involved in

I help out with the day-to-day running of six on-call stations. I support on-call firefighters with their training and development. I help them look after their community by teaching the crews how to deliver safe and well visits, call push rescue and road awareness training. If they are short of crew members during the day, I will go onto their station to keep the fire engine available so it can turn out to incidents. I also contribute to community safety work in the local areas.

#### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

My family is extremely proud of me being an on-call firefighter by turning up to incidents and looking after my community.

#### Best part of the job

Turning out to incidents on the fire engine and educating my community on how to prevent incidents and keep themselves safe.

#### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

Enjoy the whole experience and bring new skills to your crews and station.

## What are on-call firefighters?

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) on-call firefighters come from all walks of life. Anyone who can give their time to the Service and wants to protect their local community is welcome to apply. They do need to be aged 18 years or over and live or work local or near to their local fire station.

These people have everyday jobs and everyday lives, until their pager goes off - then they become professional firefighters! They bring a diverse set of knowledge and skills to the Service. For example, they include builders, farmers, stay-at-home parents, secretaries, engineers, cooks, factory workers, teachers, post persons, care workers as well being self employed.

CFRS on-call firefighters are not based at a fire station. They are 'on-call' and provide cover during the day, night and weekends. They receive the same training as their wholetime colleagues and there are opportunities to receive additional training during development days and on the wholetime stations to enhance their skills and knowledge.

CFRS on-call firefighters attend various emergency situations where problem solving skills, initiative and team work will be vital to resolving issues quickly and calmly. Incidents vary from tackling fires and rescuing people from burning buildings to dealing with chemical spillages, flooding, animal rescues and Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs).

A sensitive approach is always required when dealing with members of the public, who may be distressed and confused. Today's firefighter also works closely with the community to increase their level of awareness and to help prevent incidents from occurring in the first place.

Being able to communicate and engage effectively with schools, community groups, voluntary organisations and others is important, as is treating people with dignity and respect regardless of their background or culture.

Being an on-call firefighter at CFRS offers an exciting and rewarding career, with many opportunities for development and progression.

CFRS values the diversity of their employees and aim to recruit a workforce that reflects the local communities they work in and welcome enquiries from all, no previous experience is necessary.

The Service recognises that a workforce which represents a cross section of the people they serve is a positive step to ensure that all their messages are appropriate, clear and understood.



## A diverse career

The community is at the heart of everything CFRS does. A firefighter's role is not only responding to incidents but also providing a proactive approach to community safety and safeguarding those most vulnerable in our communities. We reach out to communities offering advice, visiting community groups, giving presentations in schools, fitting smoke alarms, speaking with businesses and homeowners and helping the vulnerable to better protect themselves against the risk of fires and accidents.

As a predominantly rural fire and rescue service we utilise on-call firefighters in a variety of ways to help make the most of our resources:

- ▶ Community safety advice and education and emergency response in their local area.
- ▶ Primary crewing for specialist appliances which our on-call firefighters have been trained to use.
- ▶ On-call firefighters support our ambulance service colleagues with medical emergencies.
- ▶ Should unforeseen staff shortages occur, on-call firefighters can be asked to ride alongside wholetime colleagues maximising the emergency cover in all areas.
- ▶ To ensure we reach as many people as possible with our prevention work, we use the on-call firefighters to support our Community Safety Advisors when demand is high, carrying out a significant number of 'Safe and Well' visits to those most in need.
- ▶ Support to other community-focussed safety initiatives, for example giving input or delivering campaigns such as Road Safety.

### Case Study - Lucie Kamenicka

#### Occupation - What do you do?

Daytime Courier.

#### Length in Service

I have been an on-call firefighter for just over two years and have recently passed my final exams.

#### Being a CFRS on-call firefighter

Every ride out on blues and twos brings an adrenaline rush and feels very rewarding knowing I'm contributing to the community. It can be very challenging keeping up with all the learning, emergencies, my work and family life but at the same time very fulfilling. Being an on-call firefighter is very exciting. Personally I love the fact of not knowing how my day is going to develop.

#### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

It makes my eight year old son very proud and inspired. Every time my pager goes off he knows our plans have changed but he understands the importance of it. He always shouts "Mummy, go, go".

#### Best part of the job

I love being part of the team. It's good to know you're with people who will help and support each other throughout their careers.

#### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

My advice to anybody thinking about joining would be just go for it, there are no limits.



## Map of Cumbria and the diversity of response

CFRS have approximately 650 firefighters and fire service staff. Cumbria is supported by 38 fire stations. We have 8 wholetime stations and 30 on-call fire stations.

Cumbria is the second largest County in England and is the second least densely populated. Cumbria covers the Pennines in the East to the Industrialised West Coast, with a population just under 500,000, 52% of those live in rural areas.

The mountains and lakes attract millions of visitors each year. In 2021, 31 million people visited Cumbria. This significantly increases risk across the county throughout the year and increases our response demand.

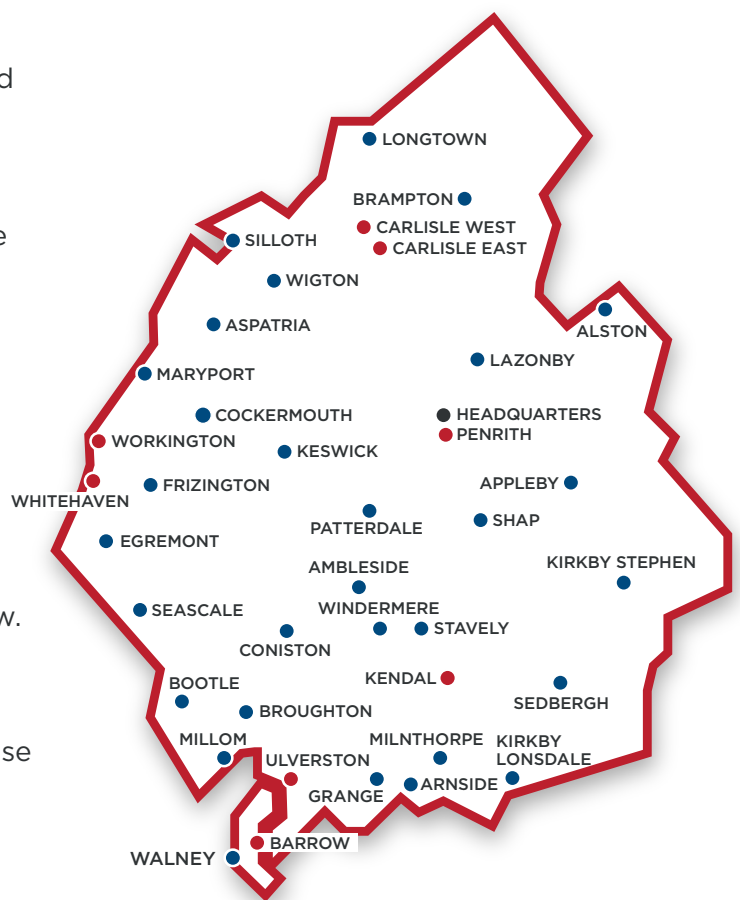
Cumbria has sites of significant national risk, including Sellafield and BAE Systems in Barrow. The county hosts large scale events attracting thousands of visitors such as Appleby Horse Fair and Kendal Calling. CFRS are heavily involved in the strategic safety planning of these sites and annual events.

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 have 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.

CFRS have 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 focus on the most vulnerable to harm.



### Key

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

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 have specialist resources and training to deal with wildfires, water rescue, flooding and firefighters are also trained for large animal rescues and have rescued cows, horses, sheep, dogs as well as wild animals.

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

## Case Study - Annie McInerney

### Occupation - What do you do?

Recruitment & Fitness Coordinator.

### Background about yourself

I worked in the fitness industry for over 25 years, from class instruction, personal training, club management, G.P exercise referral, exercise rehabilitation and sport science lecturing. My proudest moment was attending the British Olympic Training Centre in Austria as academic support at a training camp. I also worked for the NHS working in the community and managed to do a few shifts in A&E. I love travelling, especially around Scotland in my camper van with my husband and two dogs. I'm the happiest when I have a rucksack and a mountain in front of me!

### Length in Service

4 years. It has flown by.

### Roles, Training & Jobs you've been involved in

My role is diverse, not one day is the same which I love. I coordinate the on-call firefighter recruitment campaigns. I'm the person behind the emails, texts, and phone calls. Once you've applied, I will be with you at every stage of the process. You will meet me on the physical and written selection days, and we will be in touch on a regular basis.

When you have joined the Service, you will see me and the fitness team again when we come to deliver your annual fitness tests.

I work with staff from across the Service; from coordinating and delivering the fitness testing to planning and delivering our wholetime and on-call firefighter recruitment campaigns. I am very proud to wear my CFRS uniform!

### What do your family and friends think of you working for CFRS?

They absolutely love it. My family came to visit and the crews at Barrow very kindly showed them around the station. They were extremely grateful and inspired. They still talk about it now!

### Best part of the job

Seeing on-call firefighter candidates become CFRS firefighters and watching them progress. It really makes me feel proud to see on-call firefighter candidates succeed because I've been with them every stage of the recruitment process, from start to finish. I'm also privileged to work with amazing crews, teams and departments who are willing to help you and have got your back. They also make great coffee and have made me breakfast when I needed it the most!

### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

If you are passionate about caring and helping your community, come and join us. Always ensure you have a good work/life balance and the support of your family. You will make the difference to peoples' lives and your community. If you're organised, committed enthusiastic and can maintain good levels of fitness, you can move mountains!



## Who can be an on-call firefighter?

CFRS on-call firefighters need to be a minimum of 18 years old and have a good level of fitness, there is no upper age limit. They need to live or work near to their on-call fire station. They need to be able to stop whatever they are doing the moment their pager alerts them and go straight to the fire station.

Some on-call firefighters have an understanding employer that can release them from their workplace. Others work for themselves or simply have time available in between work and family commitments to help protect their community.

### See below the personal specification for a CFRS on-call firefighter:

- ▶ Good verbal and written communication skills.
- ▶ Understands and respects diversity and adopts a fair and ethical approach to others.
- ▶ High degree of practical / manual ability.
- ▶ Committed and able to develop self and others.
- ▶ A conscientious and proactive approach to work.
- ▶ Open to, and supportive of, change.
- ▶ Able to work at height and in confined spaces.
- ▶ Computer literacy.
- ▶ Aware of the main elements of the firefighter role.
- ▶ Aware of the role of the Fire Service in the community.
- ▶ Full UK driving licence.
- ▶ Desirable: LGV driving licence.
- ▶ Desirable: First Aid qualification.
- ▶ Experience of working effectively with others.
- ▶ Experience of remaining calm under pressure and in highly challenging situations.
- ▶ Experience of community safety work.
- ▶ Teamwork in a disciplined environment.
- ▶ Able to satisfy the medical and fitness requirements to the role, including minimum standards of eyesight, colour vision and hearing.

For more information on the essential role requirements, please refer to the role map.

### They also have to demonstrate our fire service code of ethics:





## What do on-call firefighters get?

**Firefighting is not like any other job! It can be unpredictable, exciting and rewarding.**

It brings enormous job satisfaction and respect that comes with providing a crucial service to your local community. You will learn new skills along the way such as firefighting, road traffic collision procedures and fire safety, and there are other opportunities to learn other skills, such as Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) Driver Training, First Aid and Trauma Care Training, Water Rescue, Animal Rescue, Wildfire, Working at Height and Health and Safety Training.

An on-call firefighter is entitled to four weeks of paid annual leave per calendar year and on completion of the fifth year the entitlement is raised to five weeks.

Role	Full Cover Retainer for providing 120 hours per year	Limited cover Retainer for providing less than 120 hours per year	Hourly rate	Disturbance
<b>From July 2022</b>				
Firefighter Trainee	£2,588	£1,941	£11.82	£4.54
Firefighter Development	£2,696	£2,022	£12.31	£4.54
Firefighter Competent	£3,450	£2,587.50	£15.75	£4.54
<b>From July 2023</b>				
Firefighter Trainee	£2,718	£2,038.50	£12.41	£4.77
Firefighter Development	£2,831	£2,123.25	£12.93	£4.77
Firefighter Competent	£3,623	£2,717.25	£16.54	£4.77

As an on-call firefighter you will receive an annual retainer based on your hours of availability, plus an hourly rate when you attend incidents, drill nights, training courses, and community safety activities or carry out equipment maintenance, as well as paid holiday. Earnings will vary on the hours of coverage you can provide. The pay scales are explained above.

From the start of your employment you will be able to contribute to The Firefighter's Pension Scheme, which CFRS will also contribute to. The contracts of availability range from 60 to 120 hours a week. On-call firefighters are required to attend an evening training session each week (known as a Drill Night). This is held at their local fire station for training and maintenance of the essential skills and equipment.

## Training and development for on-call firefighters

Firefighters need to be highly skilled professionals to work safely and effectively, to carry out rescues and other operational duties. Every on-call firefighter is required to undertake two weeks initial training course covering Core Skills, Breathing Apparatus (BA) and Road Traffic Collision (RTC) training modules. Ongoing training is run mostly at weekends, although weekday courses are available for those employees who are required to work weekends. We encourage on-call firefighters to take training from their holiday entitlement or as unpaid leave from the primary employer, to reduce the impact on their business as much as possible. On-call firefighters will be paid to attend their training courses.

The development is carried out in the following phases:

### Phase 1

- ▶ 2 day pre-BA course covering BA basics and set orientation, 1 day with Learning and Development team and one day on your home station.
- ▶ 12 day BA initial training including tactical ventilation, compartment fire behaviour training and wears in heat and smoke.
- ▶ Core skills in pumps and ladders and basic familiarisation of RTC equipment.

### Phase 2

The firefighters in Phase 2 will undergo development set centrally by the Learning and Development department. This will involve modular training including:

- ▶ RTC
- ▶ Safe working at height
- ▶ BA assessment in heat and smoke
- ▶ Pump operator course
- ▶ Pumps and ladders assessment
- ▶ RTC/Hazmats assessment
- ▶ End Point Assessment .

### Phase 3

- ▶ Station based maintenance of skills during weekly drill nights.

## Completion of core training

Each on-call firefighter must attend 94 hours of core training either at the scheduled drill nights at their employing station or alternative scheduled training event as part of their contractual requirement. (96 hours if less than 5 years continuous service on this duty system).

In addition, the Service will pay a combined 32 hours of self-development to prepare for training activity, courses or assessments which are all paid at the hourly rate.

## Probation and competency

The period of training is very arduous and requires stamina on your part to enable you to cope successfully with the many demanding aspects of initial training and you are advised to prepare yourself mentally and physically in advance. Training is an ongoing process and continues throughout your career to meet the ever changing problems and hazards handled by the Service; for example, lectures and practical demonstrations of, safety procedures and usage of newly developed specialist equipment. There are many specialist skills required in the Fire & Rescue Service and thorough training is always given.

For the specific course dates, please refer to the Recruitment Campaign Key Dates document that is enclosed with your guide.

Initially you will work on learning the skills and acquiring the necessary underlying knowledge to perform the role of firefighter. This is likely to include activity at a number of Service locations.

You must successfully complete a probationary period and demonstrate your suitability for the role to secure a permanent contract. Progression to competent firefighter status depends on you achieving and maintaining competent standards of performance. This can take up to two-years, however, will be individual to each candidate. You will then be expected to undertake ongoing training and learning as per the station training calendar to maintain your competence.

## Case Study - Andy Wills

### Occupation - What do you do?

On-call Support Crew Manager and also an On-call Watch Manager at Kendal Fire Station.

### Background about yourself

I always aspired to be an on-call firefighter but never had the opportunity due my previous jobs involving working away from home. About 10 years ago I became self employed operating and flying drones; this gave me the opportunity to devote part of my time to being an on-call firefighter.

### Length in Service

7 years.

### Roles, Training & Jobs you've been involved in

I started as an on-call firefighter at Kendal Fire Station before progressing to being a Crew Manager and now Watch Manager. There are lots of opportunities for training and development. In my time with Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service I have undertaken various courses and qualified to drive a fire engine (the training also gave me my Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) license) and became a swift water rescue technician. I have also attended working at height courses and training on how to operate various specialist vehicles and equipment. In fact the level of training that I received opened the door to a wholetime job with the fire service.

The jobs/incidents that I have attended are very wide ranging, from house fires, vehicle fires, wild fires, road traffic collisions, water rescues, rescues from height, large animal rescues, assisting other agencies (such as the ambulance service), I've even been to the police station to release a prisoner trapped in handcuffs.

### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

My family are proud of me being a firefighter.

### Best part of the job

The camaraderie with my colleagues and also the satisfaction from helping the public and making a difference at incidents.

### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

Really think about what cover you can give (weekends and weekday daytime cover is the most desirable cover). Always strike a good work/home balance. Speak to any of the On-call Support Crew Managers, who will give you relevant advice on all aspects of the recruitment process and an insight into the demands of the role itself.



## Information for employers

On-call firefighters who are planning to respond to incidents while at their place of work **must** have permission from their employer. It is important that employers understand what this involves so please find some of the benefits outlined below. The On-call Support Team can visit your workplace to discuss some of the benefits outlined and answer any questions that they might have.

Being an on-call firefighter takes commitment and motivation. Staff who are able to fulfil their personal ambitions are usually happier and more productive in the workplace. This can lead to improved staff retention and reduced recruitment costs for your business or employer.

On-call firefighters receive a range of training and gain transferable skills that can benefit their business. They are:

- ▶ Trained to deal with a whole range of situations
- ▶ Trained in First Aid
- ▶ Trained in health and safety and risk assessment
- ▶ Trained in manual handling
- ▶ Receive regular fitness tests, medicals and support for return to work following sickness
- ▶ Trained in leadership and management skills.



### Key skills and attributes of a CFRS firefighter:

- ▶ **Skills** – a firefighter learns many skills that can be useful in the workplace. Firefighters are trained to work well in a team, to think quickly, take responsibility, use their initiative, communicate fast and accurately, and to keep calm in a crisis.
- ▶ **Trauma training** – all firefighters are trained to a high standard under guidance provided by Paramedic Instructors. They receive advanced first aid and trauma training.
- ▶ **Manual Handling training** – all firefighters are trained by a recognised instructor in the correct procedures to be adopted when lifting or moving items. The training involves learning simple techniques that could prevent injuries occurring, thus potentially reducing time lost at work through injury.
- ▶ **Health and Safety training** – risk assessments and hazards are all part of the training for firefighters so they can support health and safety officers to meet their obligations and improve the safety of all your staff.
- ▶ **Motivated staff** – staff that are able to fulfil their ambitions and potential and are usually happier and more productive in the workplace. On-call firefighters are committed to the community they serve, which means that they are more likely to be dedicated and long serving members of staff.
- ▶ **Training to deal with anything** – firefighters must be able to deal with a whole range of situations – they never quite know what they might find when they respond to an emergency, so they are more likely to be able to cope with the ups and downs of life.
- ▶ **Enhancing the reputation of your business** – we run regular articles about on-call firefighters and their supporting primary employers; this can help gain greater publicity for your business. Promoting your organisation as caring about its community and supportive of its staff can be very beneficial.

If you successfully pass each of the above stages, from the above assessments and pre-employment checks, you will be offered a role as an on-call firefighter.

## Frequently Asked Questions for employers

### **If my employee gets called out, will I know how long they will be gone for?**

Each of the fire engines has a mobile phone and your employee is encouraged to use this facility to estimate a return time as soon as they can. For example, in the event of a false alarm call, they may be back within 20 minutes.

### **My business works flexibly with staff occasionally working away at short notice. How would this work?**

As their primary employer you would always get priority.

We are always on hand to offer employers advice and support where we can. We recognise the importance of the support you lend your local crews and communities.

### **What if my employee gets injured whilst at an incident?**

All firefighters are trained to a high standard and so injuries on incidents are rare. We have an Occupational Health Department and employees also have the option to use The Firefighter's Charity rehabilitation centre to support their recovery. The Firefighter's Charity is a national organisation which was formed to help out serving and retired members of the fire service.

### **Commitment to the Employer**

CFRS rely massively on the partnerships we build with local employers allowing their staff to be released during their normal working day.

A business/company will always be the "primary employer" and as such have the priority over the working time of their member of staff.



## Being on-call and self-employed

Many of our existing on-call firefighters are self-employed and they have found that being an on-call firefighter has a positive impact on their business. This is because they have better links with local businesses and their communities and they are well known and trusted by the people in their area. We always welcome the qualities and skills you can bring to CFRS. Some of our self-employed firefighters have been with us for over 20 years. Their local businesses range from trades to IT consultancy, farming, electricians to builders and plumbers.



## Case Study - Simone Allchorne

### Occupation - What do you do?

My occupation is a hotel manager at Alston House Hotel.

### Background about yourself

I'm originally from East Yorkshire and been living in Alston for 15 years now. I enjoy walking in the Lakes and watching films. I used to own a beauty salon and after the pandemic I joined the fire service. I also love travelling and have been to Sri Lanka, Mexico, Thailand and Dubai and South Africa.

### Length in Service

I have now been in Service for 2 years, I recently just complete my 24 months competence assessment in December 2022.

### Roles, Training & Jobs you've been involved in

The training I have been involved in is all different starting from Road Traffic Collision (RTC) - cutting up cars which I love, the equipment we use are amazing they go through the metal like butter. We do Breathing Apparatus (BA) which is very interesting, we use BA in a lot of different ways from going into burning buildings to hazardous materials scenarios, We also do lots of community work by fitting fire alarms in homes, going in to schools teaching children about fire engines and what to do in an emergency.

### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

My family and friends love the fact I am a firefighter, my friends introduced me to the idea of joining so have been very supportive from the start. My parents say, you should never stop learning, and in the fire service you are always learning.

### Best part of the job

Knowing that I'm supporting the local community plus every call out is a different experience, you never know what the call out is going to be when your pager goes off.

### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

The feeling you get when you know that the part you play could be the difference between life and death.



## Case Study - Carly Jade Holland

### Occupation - What do you do?

What do you do? Vessel Fire & Safety Officer/Supervisor at BAE Systems.

### Background about yourself

I'm a mum of 2 beautiful girls. Before the world of fire, I worked in the community for 17 years and wanted to give something back and better myself.

### Length in Service

2 years.

### Balancing family life and being a firefighter

I'm lucky to have a family around to support me in this role. It's taught me many skills to bring back to my family life.

### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

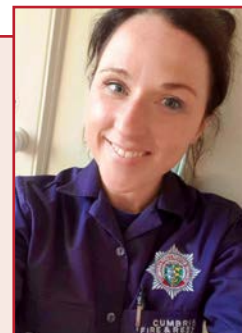
They are very proud to see me become a strong, confident, focused woman. They can see I have such a passion for the Service.

### Best part of the job

Helping others - especially in the smaller, isolated communities and my self-development - becoming more of a person, like I was born to do it!

### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

Do it..... best job in the world. It is fulfilling. You never stop listening and learning.



## Information for your family

Without the support and encouragement of their partners and families, on-call firefighters would struggle to carry out their role. This support does mean that occasionally the lives of partners and families can be affected.

### The main challenges to being on-call are:

- ▶ It is difficult to plan spur of the moment activities
- ▶ You can be called out in the middle of the night
- ▶ On-call firefighters cannot be relied on to be the sole-carer when on-call. Alternative child or dependent care arrangements are needed to make sure you can respond to an emergency quickly.

### However, having an on-call firefighter within the family does have its advantages too, such as:

- ▶ Protecting the community in which you live
- ▶ Being a positive role model within the community
- ▶ Increased confidence and development of new skills
- ▶ Ability to carry out a risk assessment of your home
- ▶ Financial reward.

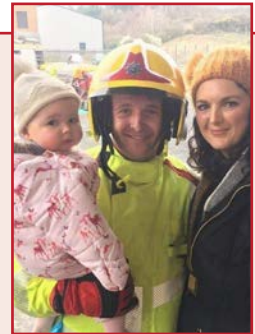
## Case Study - Dan Hayes

### Occupation - What do you do?

Team Leader at BAE Systems in Barrow.

### Background about yourself

I'm 37 years old and lived in Barrow all my life. I've worked at BAE for 15 years. I've been married for 10 years and have a 4 year old girl and a 1 year old boy. I love having family time and I enjoy watching Barrow Raiders with my Dad. Fundraising is my passion. I've ran half marathons, full marathons, sky dived, and even got my chest waxed - which hurt the most! I've walked the Keswick to Barrow 14 times and I'm getting ready for Rob Burrow Marathon at Leeds for Motor Neurone Disease.



### Length in Service

4 years and loved every minute of it!

### Balancing Family Life and being a firefighter

It's hard.... and careful planning is needed. I have a very supportive family who love what I do. BAE is a credit to the Service because they allow me to be a firefighter during my working hours.

### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

My Dad is extremely proud because he was a firefighter at BAE. I wanted to follow in his footsteps.

### Best part of the job

Working with my team and meeting new people. They are my second family. We are making the difference to saving peoples' lives. It's a great sense of achievement.

### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

If you're passionate about helping people, go for it... There will be sacrifices, such as restrictions over your time. If you get a shout, you need to be near or local to your station to respond. This can impact your family and friends plans.

## Quotes from Partner/Children

'I'm exceptionally proud of Dan. He loves being a firefighter but I don't like the pager in the early hours'.

**Fern, Mrs Hayes**

'I like Daddy driving the neee norrs and helping people'.

**Evie aged 4**

'I'm proud of the amazing work mummy does, as I know she's helping others'

**Honey aged 11yrs.**

'I worry when mummy goes, but I know she's safe as she trains and has her friends with her'

**Bliss-Betsy aged 7yrs**





## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We value the diversity of our employees and aim to recruit a workforce which reflects our communities in Cumbria. We welcome applications from everyone and work to promote an inclusive, supportive culture that values and celebrates our differences. We actively encourage applications from all suitably qualified individuals irrespective of peoples age, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, sexual orientation or other personal circumstances. As women and ethnic minority employees are currently under represented in our firefighter roles, we encourage applications from these groups.

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.

### Case Study - Neil Aitken

#### Occupation - What do you do?

On-call Support Crew Manager based at Penrith and also an On-call Watch Manager for Appleby Fire Station.

#### Background about yourself

I have served for 40 years as an on-call firefighter and I am currently a Watch Manager in my on-call role at Appleby. I have had the full-time position as an On-call Support Crew Manager for 2.5 years.

#### Length in Service

40 years On-call at Appleby fire station also for the last 2 ½ years On-call Support crew manager regular.

#### Roles, Training & Jobs you've been involved in

Over the years I have attended a wide range of incidents involving Military aircraft crashes, private aircraft crashes, Flooding, a vast amount of Road Traffic Collisions, large animal rescues, small animal rescues, assisting other agencies (North West Ambulance Service notably) out of county wildfire incidents, house fires, car fires, the list is endless really, probably anything you can think of that involves helping people and animals out of difficult and life threatening situations.

#### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

Both parents are no longer alive, but they were both proud of the job I do and friends appreciate the hard work and commitment that it takes to do the job. No one realises the pride you feel doing the job unless you have served or are a serving firefighter helping everyday people who are faced with adversity and trauma. The job satisfaction is second to none.

#### Best part of the job

Working with and helping people in our community and if needed anywhere in Cumbria.

The camaraderie and professionalism are second to none also being part of a highly professional motivated team which is probably one of the very few or only professions where you can achieve this.

#### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

You will be exposed to difficult and taxing sights and experiences throughout your career in the Service but the training and pride in getting the job done will keep you grounded and focussed. Make sure you have a good work life balance, have some time with your family and friends. Have a good team work ethic... remember there is no 'I' in team. Remember, flexibility and give and take will make your career in the Service so much easier and enjoyable.





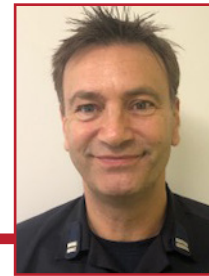
## Meet the On-call Support Team

CFRS have a team of On-call Support Crew Managers who provide help, advice and guidance throughout the recruitment process. They are also involved in supporting on-call firefighters with their training and development of skills. They have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share.



**Neil Aitken**  
07789 35216

**neil.aitken@cumbriafire.gov.uk**  
Covers - Shap, Patterdale, Appleby,  
Kirkby Stephen, Kirkby Lonsdale and  
Sedbergh Stations



**Jonathan Hurst**  
07887 717955

**jonathan.hurst@cumbriafire.gov.uk**  
Covers - Barrow, Walney, Coniston,  
Broughton, Ulverston and Grange Stations



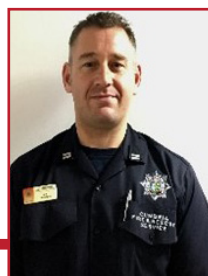
**Alasdair Guthrie**  
07747 269408

**alasdair.guthrie@cumbriafire.gov.uk**  
Covers - Penrith, Lazonby, Alston,  
Brampton, Longtown and Wigton Stations



**Andy Wills**  
07717 356891

**andy.wills@cumbriafire.gov.uk**  
Covers - Kendal, Arnside, Milnthopre,  
Staveley, Windermere, Ambleside Stations



**Carl Pearson**  
07423 793 603

**Carl.pearson@cumbriafire.gov.uk**  
Covers - Whitehaven, Frizington, Egremont,  
Seascale, Bootle, Millom Stations

## Initial Eligibility Check List

- Check whether I can provide a suitable cover for my station?
- Complete the availability form which will form part of my contract.
- Can I access the fire station within a reasonable time?
- Will my employer release me?
- Have the demands of being an On-Call firefighter been explained to me? Discuss overview of my personal circumstances and future aspirations.
- Do I hold a current full UK driving license and check that the address is showing the address from where I am going to respond?
- Do I have a criminal record? This will not stop me from progressing further, but should be declared so that the convictions can be reviewed by the Human Resource Team and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) panel.
- Have I undergone eye laser surgery in the last year, do I wear glasses (I will have to provide further eye assessment details at my own expense).
- Have I got any medical condition that might prevent me from fulfilling the requirements of the role?
- Can I provide 2 valid references?



## The selection process and how to apply

### Stage 1 - Initial contact

- ▶ Register with the National On-call Website via: [www.oncallfire.uk](http://www.oncallfire.uk).
- ▶ Contact your local fire station and attend a drill night to see what it's like to be an on-call firefighter.
- ▶ Contact our team of On-call Support Crew Managers.
- ▶ Discuss availability of hours.

### Stage 2 - Application

- ▶ Complete online application form.
- ▶ Complete 124a form which highlights the provision of hours covered. This is a crucial part of your application.

### Stage 3 - Physical and Written Assessments

- ▶ Participate in physical tests including Bleep test or Chester Treadmill Test, hand grip, ladder lift, ladder climb, equipment assembly, rural equipment carry and confined space tests.
- ▶ Participate in a mental agility test. This is a 15 minute timed test, designed to assess your mental agility, numeracy, literacy and problem solving skills.

### Stage 4 - Interview

- ▶ The purpose of the interview is to assess your general attitude for the role an on-call firefighter.
- ▶ We encourage you to give examples about your own experiences and behaviours that demonstrate our Core Values. You will be marked against our core values and the role map requirements.

### Stage 5 - Medical

- ▶ Invitation to be examined by the Occupational Health Physician.
- ▶ Complete a questionnaire covering your medical history. They may request a copy of your medical records from your GP.
- ▶ An eye test will also be required.
- ▶ The medical will include a physical examination and a range of tests including: hearing test, lung function, blood pressure test.
- ▶ CFRS require candidates to meet the eyesight standards for the Fire Service and DVLA Group 2 licence.
- ▶ For further information [www.fireservice.co.uk/recruitment/eyesight/](http://www.fireservice.co.uk/recruitment/eyesight/)

### Stage 6 - References

- ▶ Need to provide 2 references:
  - Current/previous employer.
  - Personal character.

### Stage 7 - Appointment

- ▶ If you successfully pass each of the above stages, from assessment to pre-employment checks, you will be offered a role as an on-call firefighter.
- ▶ You will receive a contract of employment which details your terms and conditions as an employee of CFRS, including your agreed hours at your local station.
- ▶ Your Availability Form (124a Form) forms part of your contract of employment.

# On-call firefighter information guide

## Availability Form (124a Form)

We are particularly interested in candidates who can provide daytime Monday-Friday and weekend cover. Most on-call stations already have evening cover. However, the demand for availability is different to each and every station depending on our crew numbers. We would like to hear from you if you can provide any cover at all however we would be particularly interested if you can provide 60-120 hours of cover.

This form is a contractual commitment and you will be expected to be available for the hours that you have stated (your Line Manager will monitor this). It is an important part of your application form. So, be realistic about the commitment you can give, bearing in mind the hours needed for your primary employment and that individuals normally welcome time out for family and other interests.

## What does a 124a Form look like?

The 124a Form below highlights the availability of hours you could provide for your station. We have identified a traffic light system of green, amber and red to demonstrate what daytime, weekend and evening hours look like.

- **Green Hours** - Flexible hours of cover we need to see
- **Amber Hours** - Flexible hours of cover we want to see
- **Red hours** - Flexible hours of cover we like to see

When completing this form always remember to add your 2 hour drill night in the evenings. Ask your On-call Support Team to help. They will be happy to help.

### CUMBRIA FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE – ON-CALL EMPLOYEE AVAILABILITY FORM 124a

Name: **A Smith** Station you are applying to: **Appleby**

**RED HOURS 54**  
**AMBER HOURS 54**  
**GREEN HOURS 60**

Are you currently a:  Classified Radiation worker  Licensed Asbestos worker (Please tick box)

#### COMBINATION

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
0:00							
01:00							
02:00							
03:00							
04:00							
05:00							
06:00							
07:00							
08:00							
09:00							
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21:00							
22:00							
23:00							
00:00							

#### RED WEEK DAYS HIGH PRIORITY 60 HOURS

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
0:00							
01:00							
02:00							
03:00							
04:00							
05:00							
06:00							
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Please shade in the boxes to illustrate the pattern of work you can commit to and return with your application form. Use 'Week One' if you have the same availability each week. Use the extra weeks if your availability changes; for example due to changing shift patterns. The information you provide in relation to the pattern of work will be discussed with you if you.

## Case Study - Abbie Pepper

### Occupation - What do you do?

I'm a Corporate Sales Director in the Financial Services, Banking and Capital Market Solutions industry. My 'day job' is a complete contrast to the fire service, working in a corporate, office environment. I also work with North West Ambulance Service as a Community First Responder, attending high priority and threat to life 999 calls in my local area.



### Background about yourself

I've lived in Cumbria for almost all my life, 20+ years and absolutely love everything about Cumbria and The Lake District. I moved away to London for University and to start my career, and after travelling the world for a year, moved back to Cumbria. I love hiking, running, spending time with friends and family, travelling, cooking and the odd gin & tonic.

### Length in Service

I joined the service in January 2021 and have just completed my 24 month assessment, successfully passing the two year probation. Pre-Covid my job meant I travelled abroad a lot, and the on-call role wasn't something I could commit too - however, with the global change to ways of working and virtual/video calls becoming much more popular, it was the perfect time to join the Service.

### Roles, Training & Jobs you've been involved in

My role is a firefighter based at Appleby, which is a strategic on-call station. We're specialist trained in Water First Responding and Wildfire. I've completed my trauma training which allows you to take lead on casualty care ahead of the ambulance service arriving. At Appleby, we get a lot of Road Traffic Collisions given our close proximity to the A66 and busy country roads, we also attend multiple building fires, animal rescues, wildfires, hazardous materials, flooding, water rescue, barn fires, automatic fire alarms and calls to assist the ambulance service with gaining entry or supporting them with bariatric patients. We average 90-100 call outs per year.

### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

My family and friends are very proud of my role in the fire service, they wonder sometimes how I juggle it all, with the training, the on-call hours, community work, paperwork side, but once you find the balance, as long as you are organised, self-motivated and committed to the role, you'll never look back.

### Best part of the job

The best part of the job for me, is the responding under blue lights, getting to a scene and really being able to help make a difference with your crew because of the training and development you've committed to. It's unpredictable, every job is different, but helping the local community is rewarding and it's highly recognised what a crucial role this is within Cumbria which brings huge respect. I've also had the opportunity to be a Community Champion for our station, which means working with local schools, groups and businesses to raise awareness on fire prevention, road safety and first aid/resuscitation - I love this part of the job as you get to meet new people and really make a difference on the prevention and education side.

### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

It's an amazing opportunity to learn new skills, train in specialist areas and constantly learn and develop. You get to work as part of a crew and as well as the response side, there's so many other things you can get involved in. You shouldn't underestimate the level of commitment it takes, there's lots of courses you need to complete, so you need an employer who is supportive, there's a significant amount of online learning, tests and incident/training reports to complete so it's not just the practical side. You also need to make sure you can commit to on-call hours/cover that your station requires. If you're organised, passionate about the role, can maintain a good level of strength and fitness and willing to learn and develop - then the on-call role is an incredible opportunity and one of the best things you can do.

## Preparing for the firefighter physical tests

Firefighters undertake a range of roles across response, prevention and protection, all of which require a level of physical fitness.

Your fitness will be tested as part of the application process to become a firefighter. This section explains why it is important for firefighters to be fit, what physical activity the job involves and gives you advice on activities you can undertake to prepare for the recruitment process.

### Why do firefighters need to be fit?

Being a firefighter involves responding to emergency situations and working closely with the local community to prevent fires happening in the first instance.

The work often involves responding to rapidly changing situations in different environments and weather conditions. This requires a range of skills including good communication, team-work and a level of physical fitness.

Examples of physical activities that can be regularly required by firefighters as part of their role include hose runs, climbing stairs of high-rise buildings, working in a team to lift ladders, using ropes to manoeuvre equipment up tall buildings and rescuing people and animals.

### Improving fitness

Being a firefighter requires cardiovascular fitness, strength and flexibility. You don't necessarily have to join a gym or buy equipment to improve in these areas. Many of the suggested exercises in this guide can be done at home or in your local park.

### Warming up/cooling down

You should warm up before you undertake any physical activity. Warming up prepares your body, helping to improve performance and reducing the risk of injury by increasing blood flow through the body and reducing muscle stiffness.

Common warm up exercises include, walking/jogging, low intensity activities and stretching. Cooling down after you exercise is as important as warming up. Lowering the intensity of your exercise before you stop will gently lower your pulse and prepare your body for recovery.

You should also adapt your training plan every month or so to challenge yourself and make sure you continually improve.

Correct exercise technique is essential to improve your fitness and avoid injury. If you have any doubt about your ability to do any of the exercises, please seek advice from a qualified professional or ask for some help for from our fitness advisors.



## Cardiovascular

Cardiovascular exercise is sustained or prolonged physical activity that raises your heartbeat. It includes most activities you would think of as 'exercise'.



Swimming



Rowing



Cycling



Running



Climbing



Team Sports



Group Exercise



Skipping

## Strength

Strength training works your muscles as they move against resistance, developing your muscular strength and endurance. This will allow you to lift, lower, push and pull heavy objects and produce force during repetitive movements over longer periods of time.

You can use your own body weight as resistance (e.g. press ups) and/or do exercises that use external loads (e.g. dead lift).



Squat



Shoulder Press



Step Ups



Press up



Dead Lift



Lunge



Rotation Twists



Bent over Rows

"I found the selection process to be both challenging and rewarding from start to finish. I believe many people would be surprised at how much fitness plays a part in the role of being a firefighter, so it is important to keep a level of physical fitness all year round. In preparation for the physical assessment day, I was comfortably hitting 10 on the Bleep test every other day for 2 weeks prior, this enabled me to perform on the day with relative ease. I would highly suggest this to those about to take part. I downloaded a free app from the App store and measured out a set distance in the local park."

**Dominic Trees, On-call Firefighter - Walney**



## Flexibility

Activities that lengthen and stretch muscles can help you prevent injuries, back pain and balance problems. Stretching gets blood and oxygen flowing to your muscles so they can more easily achieve their full range of motion.



## Exercise recommendations

- ▶ Perform strength conditioning sessions that work all the major muscles (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms) at least 2 days a week
- ▶ Perform a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity exercise a week
- ▶ Spread exercise evenly over 4-5 days a week, or every day

*Reference: American College of Sports Medicine*

## Warm up exercises (5-8 minutes)

Your warm up should include a pulse raiser and dynamic stretches.

- ▶ Walk 1 minute
- ▶ Light jog 1 minute
- ▶ High knees 30 seconds
- ▶ Heel flicks 30 seconds
- ▶ Side steps 30 seconds
- ▶ Walking windmills 30 seconds
- ▶ Walking Lunges 30 seconds
- ▶ Hip Rotations 30 seconds.



## Cool down exercise (5-8 minutes)

Your cool down should include exercises to lower your heart rate and developmental stretches to increase your flexibility. You should hold each stretch for 30 seconds, especially your hamstrings and hips flexors.

“The selection process was a great experience. The tests were both physically and mentally challenging. It gave a good insight into the qualities needed to be a fire fighter.”

**Gary Taylor, On-call Firefighter - Kendal**



Triceps stretch



Shoulder stretch



Hamstring stretch



Calf stretch



Quadriceps stretch



Hip flexor stretch

## Creating a healthy eating pattern

Here is some advice on how to eat a healthy, balanced diet. It can help with your training and get the right type of fuel for energy.

- 1 - Choose vegetables from different subgroups – dark green, red and orange, legumes (beans and peas), starchy, and other
- 2 - Consume the whole fruit versus fruit juice
- 3 - Half or more of grains should come from whole grains
- 4 - A variety of proteins should be consumed including lean meats and poultry, eggs, seafood, nuts, seeds, soy products and legumes
- 5 - Healthy fats and oils should be substituted for those containing saturated fat and/or trans fat
- 6 - Drink 8-10 glasses of water a day. Being dehydrated affects both your physical and mental performance
- 7 - Research shows that a healthy eating pattern limits saturated fats and trans fats, added sugars, and sodium that can affect both your health, wellbeing and fitness.

Reference: American College of Sports Medicine, 2017

## What are the physical tests?

You will be required to undertake a series of tests which are designed to assess your ability to work in a team as well as your reaction to environments that you will be required to work in.

The fitness element of the firefighter recruitment process differs slightly between fire and rescue services. Wherever you are applying, however, you can expect to be assessed on your level of fitness, strength and manual dexterity, as well as your level of confidence in simulated exercises.

Don't worry if you haven't done these kinds of exercises before. You will be given personal development plans by our fitness advisors, and you will be given clear guidance and instruction on how to use the equipment involved, as well as a demonstration of each individual test. You may be required to wear firefighter Personal Protective Equipment and undertake the following tasks:



**Bleep tests** your cardio endurance. You need to achieve Level 8.8 to pass



**Hand grip tests** measure your hand grip strength and your ability to carry equipment



**Ladder climb tests** your confidence and ability to work at heights



**Ladder lift tests** your upper and lower body strength and co-ordination to lift the ladder

# On-call firefighter information guide



**Enclosed space entry tests** your agility and confidence working in this environment.



**Equipment assembly tests** your manual dexterity and ability to follow instructions to assemble and disassemble a piece of equipment



**Equipment carry tests** your cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance by carrying and running with a hose



**The Chester Treadmill test** provides a method of predicting aerobic capacity from performance, on incremental stages of exercise, walking at 6.2 km/hr on a treadmill over 12-minutes.



“I really enjoyed my assessment day at Carlisle East. I found all the assessors, trainers and crews to be helpful, professional, friendly and reassuring. I found the bleep test particularly daunting but with the encouragement of everyone, it definitely got me through to level 8.8 which I was ecstatic about. I found it extremely insightful, interesting and useful to have a taster day of what is involved.”

**Abbie Pepper, On-call Firefighter - Appleby**

“Physical Fitness is very important within the role of an on-call firefighter. I recommend you train to the standards which are needed to becoming a firefighter. I thought the selection day was very important as it gives you an insight of what sort of skills you need for the role”

**Chloe Shepherd,**  
**On-call Firefighter - Seascale**

“From the initial approach, all instructors were professional and warm welcoming. Throughout the fitness & written tests. Having struggled previously due to an injury, both Annie McInerney & Jonathan Hurst motivated and pushed me into completing the set tests. Having completed my training, I am now an on-call based at Barrow In Furness. Top tip, download the bleep test app - practice with a competitive friend. If you think you can do it, YOU CAN!”

**Ryan Thompson,**  
**On-call Firefighter - Barrow**

## Case Study - Jonathan Hurst

### Occupation - What do you do?

On-call Support Crew Manager.

### Background about yourself

For the majority of my working life I worked for a busy hotel chain managing hotels. I was based in the beautiful Ullswater Valley. Whilst working in the hospitality industry I decided I wanted to join the fire service as an on-call firefighter, I missed the camaraderie from my rugby playing days and could see it as a great environment to learn and be part of a team. I enjoyed it that much I applied to change careers and joined fulltime.

### Length in Service

7 years.

### Roles, Training & Jobs you've been involved in

In my current role I work with several on-call fire stations helping and supporting where I can, whether it be on initial training courses, putting on development days for new recruits, or assisting the management team.

### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

They love it because they know I love it.

### Best part of the job

The variety of training required to fulfil the role and just simply being there to help people and of course the camaraderie amongst crews.

### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

Be prepared for some intense continuous learning and hard work but it will be the most rewarding role you will ever take on.



## Case Study - Carl Pearson

### Occupation - What do you do?

On-call Support Crew Manager and also an On-call Firefighter at Aspatria Fire Station.

### Background about yourself

I left Cumbria and spent 6 years in the RAF Regiment after finishing A Levels, I always wanted to join the fire service so applied in 2002 and started in 2003.

After initial training, I was posted to White Watch, Whitehaven and following a 2-year probation transferred to Red Watch, Carlisle.

Following some time there, I returned to West Cumbria in a temporary role before taking a substantive position back in Carlisle.

For the past 2 years, I have been back in the Copeland area working with the On-call Support team, providing help and advice to the firefighters and managers of those stations.

### Length in Service

19 years in the wholetime and 15 years in the on-call.

### Roles, Training & Jobs you've been involved in

My time has been spent as an operational firefighter responding to 999 calls throughout Cumbria and on occasions cross-border into Scotland.

Notable incidents include: 2015 Floods; Keswick Bus Crash; Newcastleton Flooding; Scalesceugh Hall Fire; Dixon's Chimney Height Rescue.

### What do your family and friends think of you being a firefighter?

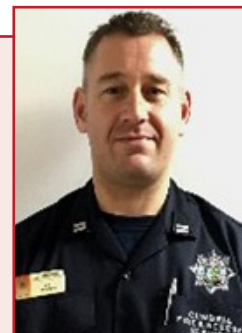
They value the Service we all provide to our communities, my little girl loves telling everyone Daddy is a firefighter!

### Best part of the job

Seeing the difference we make to people's lives, be that during an incident or visiting their homes to ensure they are as safe from fire as possible. The camaraderie between firefighters and their stations.

### Advice to potential on-call firefighters

Visit your local station and speak to the firefighters there, they are the ones who you will be working alongside, start that rapport early. Think about the commitment the role entails and be sure you maintain a level of work/life balance.



# Our Code of Ethics



**Putting our communities first**



**Dignity and respect**



**Equality, diversity and inclusion**



**Integrity**



**Leadership**



@cumbriafire



cumbriafire.gov.uk