



Chief Fire Officer for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK (2026/27)

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Message from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner – David Allen



Thank you for your interest in our recent announcement that we are seeking to recruit a new Chief Fire Officer for Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS).

As Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, it is my responsibility to appoint a Senior Leader who will focus on making Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service an outstanding service for the public of Cumbria. I am looking for an exceptional individual with resilience who can lead the CFRS and continue to build and motivate a mixed workforce whilst providing a safe and legal service to the

communities across Cumbria.

As the Chief Fire Officer, you must be able to lead, manage and inspire all employees of the Service, ensuring their wellbeing, acting with integrity and transparency whilst fostering a culture based on trust, both internally within the organisation and with the public. Ensuring public confidence in the Fire and Rescue Service within Cumbria is a key objective. This role will require you to operate at a strategic level to deliver the Statutory Requirement placed upon all fire and rescue services to drive forward the service providing strategic oversight and vision.

To succeed in this role, you will need to be an ambitious, dynamic and visionary leader. I seek an individual who can take the opportunity to develop a strategic plan with me which effectively addresses current challenges and aspires to make CFRS an outstanding service; and to continually develop Blue Light Collaboration across the county.

If you believe you can offer this to Cumbria and are ready for this challenging, yet incredibly rewarding, role then I would welcome your application.

David Allen

**Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria
(Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority)**

Chief Fire Officer

Responsible to: Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (CCFRA)

Based at Penrith Fire Headquarters, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 2FA

Salary: £134,291k, plus a 10% Operational Allowance for operational staff

Hours of Work: Full Time

Are you an inspiring, flexible and resilient leader who is passionate about driving cultural change and innovation across blue light services and can operate at a strategic level?

The Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner is looking for someone who is focussed on developing and leading a trusted and professional service. Applicants should have 'Grey Book' (operational) experience.

With approximately 594 operational firefighters, front facing delivery teams, corporate services, and support staff, delivering services across the county from 38 Fire Stations, the Commissioner will expect you to be a resilient, visionary leader. At a time of ongoing reform of public services and a challenging financial environment, the Chief Fire Officer will champion the transformation of CFRS, engaging, inspiring, and empowering others, building on our existing open and inclusive culture to seek continual improvement in performance across the Service and the wider strategic footprint of the county.

The right candidate will display determination and a collaborative approach to secure a positive future for emergency services activity across the county. You should be committed to protecting and supporting the most vulnerable in our communities, working closely with partners to achieve exceptional outcomes, and support the devolution transition to the Cumbria Strategic Authority in May 27.

The service is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and leaders who will promote and drive forward key EDI strategies across our communities and throughout our teams, leading by personal example, open commitment, and clear action.

We value the diversity of our employees and aim to recruit a workforce which reflects our communities in Cumbria. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified individuals and are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, regardless of protected characteristics or personal circumstances. As women and ethnic minority employees are currently underrepresented in our leadership 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.

Working with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner you will develop not only the Fire and Rescue Service but seek to collaborate with other Blue Light services and partnership agencies across Cumbria and further afield.

Role and Purpose

The primary purpose of the role is to lead and develop a highly trusted, community-focused, professional fire and rescue service. This will require a leader who is focused on transforming the organisation to better meet the needs of the people and communities that we serve, in line with strategic responsibilities. The role will be accountable to the Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority.

Principal Responsibilities:

- To fulfil the statutory role of Chief Fire Officer and the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act for the service.
- Work with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to provide fire and rescue services across Cumbria.
- Lead and deliver long term transformation of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, with Cumbrian residents and stakeholders, to achieve measurable improved outcomes for the communities.
- Create a positive, inclusive, productive and supportive culture where employees are encouraged to thrive; with a strong focus on wellbeing and encouraging talent.
- Provide overall strategic leadership, advice and guidance to the Strategic Leadership Team and all staff within the service and across the partnership landscape in Cumbria.
- Work collaboratively with CCFRA, their office and SLT colleagues to lead, develop and implement leading edge strategies to ensure the services vision, priorities and values are actively promoted and delivered.
- Build and develop Blue Light Collaboration with services both within and out with of Cumbria.
- Create an environment of effective employee engagement where two-way communication, challenge, change and improvement is positively encouraged and innovation is fostered.
- Ensure all relevant statutory and regulatory obligations are complied with.
- Fulfil the role of a Strategic Gold Commander.
- Build the reputation of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service with Cumbrian residents and stakeholders by actively listening, shaping, and improving the quality of service provided to ensure it delivers for our communities.
- Take the strategic lead in developing partnerships, networks and relationships with stakeholders across Cumbria, the region and nationally, to deliver the best possible services to our communities.
- *Ensure the effective management and provision of strategic advice and support to resolve operational incidents.
- *Provide strategic leadership to ensure effective service delivery and integrated management of the Fire and Rescue Service.
- *Ensure effective operational working relationships with adjacent Fire & Rescue Services and regional/national cooperation in accordance with government guidance.
- *To make arrangements, in liaison with other organisations and agencies, for the joint planning, training and exercising of personnel in preparation for major disaster incidents.
- Effectively manage the service budgets, ensuring delivery within allocated resources and financial risks are identified and mitigated.
- Promote equal opportunities with our communities and our staff through personal example, open commitment and clear action.

. Please note: any accountabilities or essential criteria with an asterisk* next to them are for Operational Chief Fire Officers. A development programme can be put in place for candidates who do not possess fire sector qualifications and/or who are applying from a non-operational background.

- Undertake such other duties as may be determined within the general scope and commensurate with the grade of the post.
- Fulfil the statutory role as Head of Paid Service.
- Fulfil the responsibilities of the role as set out in the corporate Health and Safety Policy.

Approximate number of employees: 550

Approximate service budget: £32.1 m

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	An appropriate degree, relevant management qualification or demonstrable experience in a senior leadership role.	
	*Strategic Incident Command Level 4 or equivalent experience	Multi Agency Incident Command Course (M.A.G.I.C)
Experience	* Substantial leadership experience at Chief Fire Officer or Director level, in a relevant or public sector organisation, with an emphasis on transformation and delivery of measurable outcomes for communities.	
	Significant evidence of developing and delivering a performance culture and achieving significant change management programmes.	
	Significant evidence of direct involvement in leading the development of policy & programmes	
	Significant evidence of ensuring good governance – responsive to the present and future needs of the organisation, exercising prudence in policy setting and decision making and takes into account the best interests of all stakeholders.	
	A significant successful track record in developing effective working alliances between managers and staff, together with a proven ability to network with partners and politicians.	
	Significant experience of cross sector and partnership working, developing relations with other organisations and stakeholders to deliver key strategies and programmes.	

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Knowledge	Significant knowledge of public sector strategies and initiatives relating to the Fire and Rescue Service and partnerships.	
	A broad and deep knowledge of the significant national challenges and future direction of the fire and rescue service in a political context.	
	Demonstratable abilities in strategic thinking and planning solutions, showing an understanding of and responsiveness to the needs of communities.	
	Proven ability to lead, motivate, inspire and empower others, by example.	
	Demonstrable ability as a forward thinker with an innovative approach, able to conceive, develop and implement new initiatives and manage change.	
	Excellent communication skills and interpersonal skills: a strong networker able to build relationships with mutual confidence, honest and respect.	
	Ability to make decisions and take responsibility for actions.	
Other	The role will require travel across Cumbria and nationally.	

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Selection Process Overview

The selection of Chief Fire Officer will be undertaken by the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and will also involve key stakeholders and members of the service.

Date	Activity
Tuesday 1 September 2026	Advertisement of position goes live
Wednesday 30 September 2026	Advert closing date – close at 12.00 pm (noon)
Tuesday 6 October 2026	Shortlisting process
Wednesday 7 October 2026	Candidates invited to interview
Friday 9 October 2026	Familiarisation/Information Day for shortlisted candidates (Further information to be provided within the candidate invite)
Friday 16 October 2026	Assessment and Interview Panel
Medical Screening	Arrangements will be made for an occupational health check to be carried out.
Friday 6 November 2026	Police, Fire and Crime Panel Confirmatory Hearing (TBC)

Familiarisation/Information Day

This is an opportunity for candidates invited for interview to meet the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, key people and speak with staff to find out more about Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

Further information will be provided to those candidates selected for interview.

commissioner@cumbria-ppc.gov.uk

Reasonable Adjustments and Accommodations

Please let us know at the earliest stage of the process if you would like to discuss or request arrangements that will assist you in completing the selection process. Any requests for reasonable adjustments will be treated with the utmost confidence.

For support or further information please email:

commissioner@cumbria-ppc.gov.uk

How to Apply:

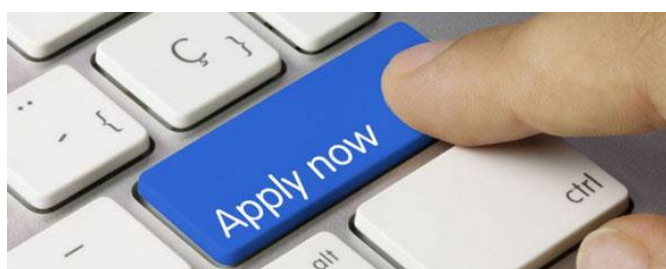
To apply, candidates must:

- Demonstrate how you meet the four levels of leadership, cross referencing this with the job profile (Personal Impact / Outstanding Leadership / Service Delivery / Organisational Effectiveness)
This should be limited to 4 sides of A4 (Arial 12 font) with a maximum of 1 side of A4 per element. The [NFCC Leadership Framework](#) may assist you
- Please also provide an up-to-date CV; and
- A 1-minute video of yourself sharing what your vision for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service would be as the new Chief Fire Officer.

Please email your completed application documents and video to –
katharine.simmons@cumbria.police.uk by the closing date of Wednesday 30th September @ 12 noon. Your email should contain a URL link to your video on **Google Drive**.

All Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service posts are required to have a DBS check, and for this role the required level of check is 'Standard DBS Check'. The successful applicant will be subject to a new DBS check, reg, unless they are part of the DBS Update Service. For any queries, please contact Recruitment@cumbriafire.gov.uk. Prior to carrying checks as part of the update service, consent will be required from the successful applicant.

Closing date for applications is: 12.00 pm (noon) on Wednesday 30th September 2026



Summary of Terms and Conditions

A package of benefits is available to the Chief Fire Officer in accordance with the 'Gold Book'. Detailed below are some of the benefits, a wider benefits package can be provided upon request.

Salary

Chief Fire Officer salaries are set nationally. The Chief Fire Officer salary for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is **£134,291k, plus a 10% Operational Allowance** per annum for operational staff only.

Location

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service's headquarters are located in Penrith, Cumbria. However, the nature of the post will also require travel throughout the region and nationally. This may, on occasions, include periods of time spent working at other locations.

Conditions of Appointment

Following selection as the preferred candidate the process will commence to contact two nominated referees and a DBS check will be undertaken. Arrangements will be made for an occupational health check to be carried out. All of these pre-employment checks will need to be completed before final confirmation of appointment.

Confirmation Hearing

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel will be advised of the preferred candidate by the Commissioner. A confirmation hearing will then be arranged within 3 weeks of this notification.

Benefits

A number of benefits are available for the successful candidate, including:

- The Commissioner will provide reimbursement of reasonable business expenses.
- For operational staff only a suitable car and fuel card will be provided for when on duty / on-call.

Continuous Professional Development and Personal Development Review (PDR)

The Commissioner is keen to support the Continued Professional Development of the post holder and would look to align this with the annual performance review process.

About Cumbria and the Fire and Rescue Service

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is a large rural service covering the picturesque Lake District to the Pennines in the east and from the industrialised West Cumbria coast to the estuaries in the south of the county. Cumbria is the second largest County in England and is the second least densely populated, with a population of 505,063, 52% of which live in rural areas.

CFRS have approximately 594 firefighters and fire service staff. Cumbria is supported by 38 fire stations where we have 8 wholetime stations and 30 on-call fire stations.

The mountains and lakes attract millions of visitors each year. Each year around 47 million people visit Cumbria. This significantly increased risks across the county throughout the year and increases our response demand.

Cumbria has sites of significant national risk, including Sellafield in West Cumbria and BAE Systems in Barrow-in-Furness. 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 has a diverse fleet of vehicles to meet our challenging geography.

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



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 focuses on the most vulnerable from harm.

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.

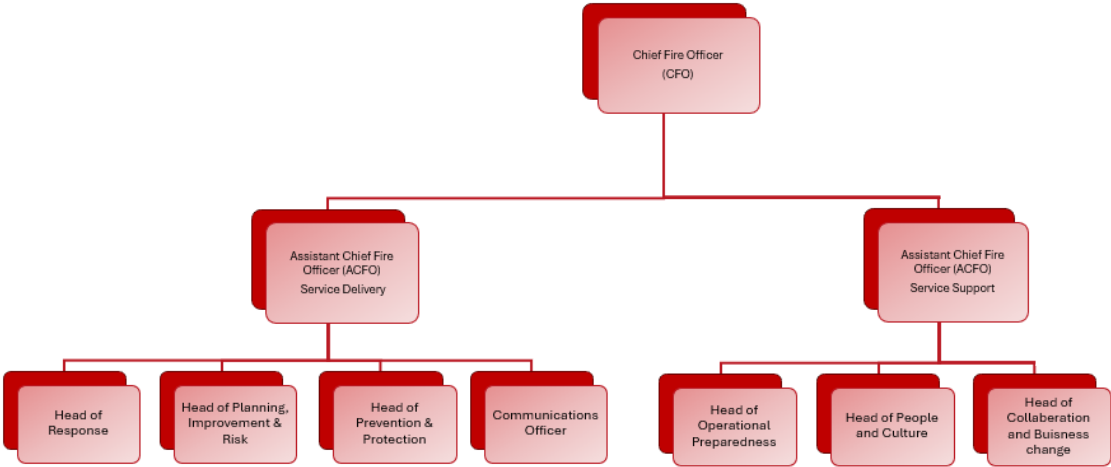
CFRS focus on Prevention, Protection and Response to keep communities and visitors safe every day of every year.



Organisation Structure Chart

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service

Service Structure



CFRS Vision and Values

CFRS Vision

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

CFRS Values

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

➤ **Putting our communities first**

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

➤ **Dignity and respect**

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

➤ **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

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

➤ **Integrity**

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

➤ **Leadership**

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



Working & Living in Cumbria

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

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

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

If you are considering relocating here, there are a few things you might want to know:

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

There are excellent rail and road links to and from Cumbria.

All of this is only a glimpse of what Cumbria is all about and what it is like to live and work in the county. A relocation package may be available to the successful candidate. To get a real taste of this beautiful and exciting county, you'll have to come and experience it for yourself.

For more information please visit:

- Cumbria Tourism - www.cumbriatourism.org
- Information and statistic about Cumbria - www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk
- Visit Cumbria - www.visitcumbria.com
- The Lake District - www.visitlakedistrict.com

Key Documents:

Detailed below are some documents to assist you in your application,

Police, Fire and Crime Plan - Click [here](#) to view the plan

PFCC Annual Report 2025-2026 – Click [here](#) to view the report.

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

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

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

Click to view [HMICFRS reports](#)

CFRS Community Risk Management Plan – 2024-2028

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2024-28 was published in February 2024 and ensures that decisions about services are informed by up to date and accurate information.

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

Useful Links

Community Scrutiny Panel Annual report - [Community Scrutiny Panel - Cumbria PFCC](#)

Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Website: cumbria-pfcc.gov.uk

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Website: www.cumbriafire.gov.uk

Data Protection



As part of the recruitment process you will provide us with personal and special categories data. This information will only be used as part of the recruitment, and where appropriate, appointment process. If you are unsuccessful at the shortlisting or interview stage your data will only be retained for 12 months following the date of decision. This is in line with our Retention Policy, which can be found on our website: <https://cumbria-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Retention-Schedule-2018-Final.pdf?x96409>

The Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is provided with Resourcing Support and Financial Services support by Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. If you are appointed your data will be shared with them to enable DBS checks to be carried out and progress your application through to appointment.

Further information on how the OPFCC deals with information can be found on our website: <https://cumbria-pcc.gov.uk/website-policies/privacy-policy/>

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/cumbriapcc

X: [www.Twitter/X@cumbriapcc](https://twitter.com/cumbriapcc)