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**Enquiries to: Mrs J Head  
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**Our reference: JH/CSP**

**Date: 28 October 2025**

## **AGENDA**

**TO: THE MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMUNITY SCRUTINY PANEL**

A Meeting of the Community Scrutiny Panel (Fire) will take place on **Tuesday 7 November 2025** at **2.00 pm** in **The Community Room**, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carleton Avenue, Penrith, CA10 2FA.

**G Shearer  
Chief Executive**

**Note:** Members are advised that allocated car parking for the meeting is available in the Visitors Car Park to the left of the main Police Headquarters building.

### **PANEL MEMBERSHIP**

Jane Scattergood (Chair)  
Eloise Abbott  
Andrew Dodd  
Meg Masters  
Ben Phillips  
Alison Ramsey  
Shaun Thomson  
Penny Walker

# **AGENDA**

## **PART 1– ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

Members are invited to disclose any personal/prejudicial interest which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda. If the personal interest is a prejudicial interest, then the individual member should not participate in a discussion of the matter and must withdraw from the meeting room unless a dispensation has previously been obtained.

**3. URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To consider (i) any urgent items of business and (ii) whether the press and public should be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of any Agenda item where there is likely disclosure of information exempt under s.100A(4) and Part I Schedule A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in not disclosing outweighs any public interest in disclosure.

## **PART 2– ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Allocated Time</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING &amp; ACTION SHEET</b> To confirm the restricted notes of the meeting of the Community Scrutiny Panel held on 07 August 2025 (copy enclosed).	5 minutes
<b>5.</b>	<b>CORPORATE UPDATE</b> To receive a corporate briefing from Fire Lead Paul Hancock and the OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer	10 minutes
<b>6.</b>	<b>CFRS WORKFORCE PLAN</b> To receive a report following the outcome of the recent HMICFRS inspection regarding the business areas covered by the Panel	15 minutes
<b>7.</b>	<b>CFRS HR REPORT</b> (i) To receive an update employee absences, misconduct and workforce complaints. (ii) Panel to feedback from dip sample session	15 minutes

8.	<b>GENDER PAY GAP REPORT</b> To receive the CFRS annual gender pay gap report	10 minutes
9.	<b>CFRS CIVIL CLAIMS</b> To receive a 6 monthly Civil Claims Report	10 minutes
10.	<b>2026 WORK PROGRAMME, MEETING &amp; DIP SAMPLE DATES</b> To receive a report on the proposed 2026 work programme, meeting and dip sample dates	10 minutes



## Agenda Item No 4

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY PANEL

Notes of a meeting of the Community Scrutiny Panel (Fire) held on Thursday 15 May 2025, The Community Room, Fire HQ at 2.00 pm

### **PRESENT**

Jane Scattergood (Chair)  
Andrew Dodd  
Meg Masters  
Shaun Thomson  
Penny Walker

### **Also present:**

Chief Fire Officer – Paul Hancock  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Lauren Woodward  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Ben Ryder  
Head of Improvement and Performance – Mark Clement  
HR Manager – Jemma Taylor  
Resourcing, Talent, and Wellbeing Lead – Orlanda Wright  
OPFCC Governance Manager - Joanne Head

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and ask that everyone introduce themselves.

### **66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Eloise Abbott, Ben Phillips, Alison Ramsey and OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer

### **67. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of personal interest regarding any agenda item.

### **68. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business to be considered by the Panel.

### **69. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on Thursday 15 May 2025 previously circulated with the agenda were agreed.

**AGREED;** that the notes of the meeting held on 15 May 2025 were agreed.



## 70. ACTION SHEET

All the actions were included within the agenda for the meeting.

## 71. CORPORATE UPDATE

The Chief Fire Officer presented the corporate update report which detailed highlights of work carried out by Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service during the previous quarter. Following a senior leadership team review within the service a restructure had seen two Assistant Chief Fire Officers, Lauren and Ben being recently appointed and they provided a brief overview of their new roles. In addition, there had been changes to portfolios for the Head of Improvement and Performance and the Head of Programmes and Risk. These changes would see a saving of £17k which would go towards supporting the 2026/27 savings programme.

A member asked how this was communicated across the wider team, would they understand the changes and difference it would make. A number of corporate messages had been sent out with face-to-face engagement. Over the coming weeks there would be further information and messages, including photographs, of not only the senior leadership team but of other management teams across the service. This would allow further understanding of the different roles and responsibilities, enabling access to all staff.

On 1 April 2025 responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Services within England transferred from the Home Office to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Work was being carried out nationally by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to ensure that funding for the service did not diminish and going forward enabled them to provide public safety. ACFO Ryder advised that he was carrying out work with middle managers to enhance their understanding of the changes and how they could support and benefit from them.

A member asked whether the large number of temporary positions had been addressed to reflect what had happened with the senior leadership team. This had been an area of concern within the service with some the middle management roles were being reviewed and processes carried out to make permanent appointments to roles.

Members noted that tragically two firefighters had lost their lives at a recent incident in Oxfordshire and they wished to send their sincere condolences. The Chief Fire Officer thanked them for their kind wishes and advised that these would be passed on. He also advised that when any learning had been identified from this tragic event it would be shared across the sector via the NFCC's National Operational Learning (NOL) arrangements.

The Panel had received a written corporate update prior to the meeting from the OPFCC Chief Executive. It had recently been announced that Cumbria would become one of the 6 regions to be confirmed by the Government for the Devolution Priority Programme which would see a Mayoral structure implemented in 2027. The OPFCC would then become part of this structure. The outcome of the recent HMICFRS report



had identified positive feedback on CFRS culture and the progress made by the service since the last inspection. A fuller update on the outcome of the inspection would be provided as a separate agenda item.

Following receipt of Government funding a number of initiatives were being implemented such as the Safer Streets Summer Initiative and Operation Enhance for hotspot policing action.

**AGREED;** that, the reports be noted

## 72. HMICFRS REPORT

The Chief Fire Officer guided members through a report and appendix which summarised the outcomes from the recent HMICFRS inspection of the service. The inspection had several positive findings, including its culture and how it responded to fires, emergencies and major incidents; as well as a number of areas for improvement. These included reducing the number of staffing temporary roles, improving the management and oversight of performance, addressing equal opportunity barriers and carrying out effective equality impact assessments.

The Service Improvement Board were developing an improvement plan to address the inspection findings which would involve the development of new strategies and policies. The CFO sought the support and assistance of the Panel members in the development of these. The Chair advised that the Panel were made up of members of the community and did not want to class themselves as experts in particular areas, however they would be able to provide a fresh perspective.

The Panel congratulated CFRS on the improvement made since the previous inspection and a discussion took place on potential areas of work where the Panel could support the service. This included the setting up of themed working groups and utilising dip sample sessions to support the service.

**AGREED:** that, the

- (i) Report be noted; and
- (ii) Panel support CFRS in their development of new strategies and policies where appropriate.

## 73. OPERATIONAL FIRE COVER REVIEW

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report which identified the work to be carried out as part of the Operational Fire Cover Review. The service was committed to carrying out this review as part of the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28. The review had commenced in May 2025 and was being supported by an external company. It was anticipated that the outcome of the review would be provided in mid-August 2025 ahead of a proposed public consultation between September and December 2025. It was agreed that the report would be circulated to the Panel members to enable them to provide any thoughts or views on how the consultation could be carried out.



A discussion took place with the members on potential ways in which to ensure that the consultation was accessible to all communities across Cumbria. Members felt that the service should be very clear in what they were going to consult about. They suggested a variety of ways from contacting parish councils, using social media, placing links in their email signatures, linking in with Cumbria Volunteer Service, integrated care communities. A member raised the issue of digital exclusion through poverty where people may not have the data to complete the survey, therefore alternative methods should be provided. ACFO Woodward advise that they were looking at a variety of ways to communicate both internally and externally; and utilising technology to enable them to view the drop off point within the survey.

A member asked whether the service had considered the next steps following the consultation and how this would be communicated both internally and externally. They felt it was important to acknowledge what people wanted and to provide a reason why if this would not be possible. This would then enable the public to engage and support the service going forward.

**AGREED:** that, the

- (i) Report be noted; and
- (ii) report would be circulated to the Panel members to enable them to provide any thoughts or views on how the consultation could be carried out.

## 74. STAFF RESIGNATIONS

The Resourcing, Talent, and Wellbeing Lead presented a report which highlighted the number of staff resignations from the service since 2020, recognising that during 2025 12 had left the service. A Workforce Development Group were looking into succession planning, particularly in relation to on-call firefighters as this was the highest turn over of staff, mainly due to them being volunteers. Due to the short notice periods staff had to provide, it was essential to understand the motivation to leave the organisation.

Work was being carried out to develop a Leavers Policy to enable the service to develop support for leavers. To support this work, the draft policy was being circulated to the Panel members for comment. CFRS were working on ways in which they could support those resigning or retiring from the service by offering different options in the way they could carry out exit interviews such as face to face or by an anonymous form. A leavers pack was being developed to provide information such as providing contact details, pay information and how references could be provided. The importance of capturing information as to why people remained was also recognised and work was being carried out to improve and enhance the organisation.



ACFO Ryder informed the Panel that the NFCC was a good forum for both regional and national information and that engagement with most similar family groups would enable CFRS to learn and understand what issues others were experiencing. ACFO Woodward advised that they were making enquiries regarding an IT package to enable them to plan the impact of each individual ability, costs, how many incidents they have attended and how much they could earn. Wales had seen a 3% increase in retention since implementing this package.

**AGREED:** that, the  
(i) report be noted; and  
(ii) Leavers Policy be circulated to the Panel members for comment.

## 75. SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT & DBS CHECKS

The CFRS Secondary Employment policy enabled whole time and corporate employees to seek permission to carry out other employment by completing a declaration form and included paid, unpaid or voluntary work.

Prior to the meeting the Panel had carried out a dip sample of completed secondary employment forms by staff, there were no issues found. The current IT system was restrictive in the parameters to which data and information could be retrieved but it was anticipated that the new Firewatch system would assist with this. Secondary employment applications and renewals was now included within the appraisal process for line managers to discuss with staff and monitor compliance.

The HR Manager advised that in early 2026 the service would commence the 3-year renewal process for all staff DBS checks. This work would be carried out throughout the year to minimise the impact of it.

**AGREED;** that the report be noted.

**Meeting ended at 03:40 pm**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Panel Chair

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Community Scrutiny Panel – (Fire) Action Sheet: 07/08/2025

Minute Number / Topic	Action to be taken	Person responsible OPFCC / Force	Report back to Panel	Date action completed	Review Date
<b>DATE OF MEETING: 07 August 2025</b>					
HMICFRS Inspection	Panel to support CFRS in their development of new strategies and policies where appropriate.				
Operational Fire Cover Review	That the report would be circulated to the Panel members to enable them to provide any thoughts or views on how the consultation could be carried out.				
Staff Resignations	Leavers Policy to be circulated to Panel members for comment.	Orlanda Wright		18 August 2025	



# Community Scrutiny Panel

Meeting Date: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025  
Agenda Item: 05  
Report of: Chief Fire Officer Paul Hancock

## Corporate Update

### Purpose of Report

1. This report provides an overview of local and national issues affecting Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

### Recommendation

2. That the Committee:
  - a. Notes the content of the report.

### Local Issues

#### Major Incident

3. CFRS played an active mutual aid role in helping tackle the Langdale Moor wildfire in North Yorkshire (August 2025). The Service sent fire engines and wildfire specialists to assist North Yorkshire crews under national mutual aid arrangements. CFRS has extensive experience with upland and moorland wildfires so their trained wildfire units and specialist kit (e.g., off-road vehicles, portable pumps, and hose-laying gear) were particularly valuable on the rugged terrain.

## Service shortlisted twice in UK Fleet Champions Awards

4. Brake has announced the shortlist for the prestigious UK Fleet Champions Awards 2025 – and Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service has been shortlisted not just once, but twice

The service has been shortlisted for the following awards which recognise the achievements of organisations working to prevent crashes:

- Public Sector Driver Safety Award
- Road Safety in the Community Award

## New Appliances

5. To support the ongoing effort in modernising our fleet, Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service has acquired 10 fire appliances from West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service. Technical Services are currently delivering a project to ensure each appliance is fully operational and equipped, as modifications are required to meet local requirements. The integration of these appliances into our fleet will also allow us to establish five fully-equipped reserve appliances, helping to speed up changeovers and maintain operational cover across the county.

## Staff Learning

6. Lithium Ion batteries are ever present in our lives now, from mobile phones and e-cigarettes to e-scooters, electric vehicles and BESS sites. The technology poses a new threat to firefighters and CFRS is keen to ensure that it benefits from the best knowledge out there. To that end the leading national expert Professor Paul Christensen will be delivering an awareness training session later this month to highlight the latest learning available to our crews.

## **National Issues**

### Funding

7. Fire and rescue services are facing “real and significant cuts” to government grant funding that could undermine their ability to keep communities safe, the National Fire Chiefs Council have warned.. NFCC have also urged the Government to protect fire service funding in real terms and not to rely on council tax rises to plug the resulting gaps in fire and rescue funding, saying that even if all fire and rescue authorities were willing and able to put up their precept by the maximum £5 per year, it would not offset the cuts in full when factoring in the expected rate of inflation and legitimate rises in staff pay

## HMICFRS Inspection programme

8. The HMICFRS inspection programme and framework for 2025–27 has been finalised and will commence in June 2025. This framework, focused on public priorities, followed a consultation process and will guide inspections into areas critical for public safety and fire service performance. Additional areas of emphasis will include

**Governance and Oversight:** Evaluating how fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) influence service performance, culture, and workforce well-being.

**Leadership at All Levels:** Ensuring leadership effectiveness, succession, and staff engagement.

**Community Resilience:** How FRSs contribute to building resilience via Local Resilience Forums and related activities.

## Climate Change

9. Climate change is reshaping the role of fire and rescue services in England:
- The number of flooding incidents fire and rescue services respond to has increased from a 5-year rolling average of 13,854 between 2012 and 2019, to a 16,412 rolling average between 2019 and 2024 (an 18% rise).
  - Fire and rescue services have responded to 225 wildfires so far this year (as of 27 May 2025). That is over 100 more than for the same period in 2022 (106), which went on to be a record year for wildfires. It is also almost 562% more than the number responded to in the same period last year (34).

In Cumbria we are investing in equipment and training of staff to ensure we are prepared to meet the changing demands placed on the Service

**Paul Hancock OBE QFSM**  
**Chief Fire Officer**



# Community Scrutiny Panel

## Title: OPFCC Corporate Update

**Date of Meeting: October 2025**

**Agenda Item No: 05b**

**Originating Officers: Gill Shearer, OPFCC Chief Executive**

This update provides the Community Scrutiny Panel with a headline summary of his update provides the Community Scrutiny Panel with a headline summary of recent developments within the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

### **1. Devolution**

On 17 July 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution announced that the Devolution Priority Programme who was taking forward proposals to create Mayoral Strategic Authorities had completed public consultations in each area being considered.

The Government has agreed to align inaugural mayoral elections with the vast majority of local elections in May 2027, simplifying the elections for voters and saving taxpayers' money.

Mayoral elections held in 2026 will take place under the First Past The Post (FPTP) voting system, as is currently the law. The recently tabled English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill would move future Mayoral (and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections) to the Supplementary Vote (SV) system, which was in place prior to 2023. Subject to parliamentary approval, this would be relevant for the proposed 2027 Mayoral elections onwards.

At meetings on 14 October 2025, both Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Councils gave their final consent to the Government's devolution proposals, paving the way for a new era of locally based decision making and opportunity.

The new authority will have a range of powers and funding not available to the two existing councils, including access to a Cumbrian Mayoral Investment Fund of £333 million over the next 30 years.

Agreement to devolution also means that Cumbria will have a voice alongside other areas at the Council of Regions and Nations and the Great North Mayors' group, bodies that will shape debates on energy, transport, rural growth and defence.

Cumbria Combined Authority (CCA) will be established in early 2026, operating for a year without a Mayor, before Cumbria's first Mayoral election in May 2027.



# Community Scrutiny Panel

Meeting Date: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025  
Agenda Item: 06  
Report of: Chief Fire Officer Paul Hancock

## Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service Workforce Plan

### Introduction from the SLT

To achieve our priorities and aims we need to manage, plan and develop our workforce effectively. Under our 'People' strategic objectives, we are clear that we should plan for all workforce issues. This workforce plan forms part of our approach in doing so.

We recognise our responsibility for keeping communities in Cumbria safe and keeping our firefighters safe. This workforce plan is supported and underpinned by local plans that are developed with local line managers and driven by Heads of Service in their respective areas. We continue to develop our vision of ***"a community focused, professional and trusted Fire and Rescue Service that makes Cumbria a safer place for all"***.

Our People Strategy 2024-2028 ([click here to access](#)) is clear on our priorities, i.e. 'what we want to achieve'. These priorities are that through everything we do, we want to inspire community trust and confidence and prevent the loss of life, injuries and the resulting impact on communities.

Our strategic aims are:

1. We will ensure that we have the right people in the right posts at the right time in order to deliver our services to the community.
2. We will maximise the health and wellbeing of our staff.
3. We will ensure all of our employees are equipped with the right skills, tools and guidance to enable them to perform their roles to a high standard in a way which promotes compassion, accountability, support and trust.
4. We will promote a positive inclusive culture where all employees display our values and behaviours and contribute to making CFRS a great place to work.
5. We will continue to review the employee offer, ensuring that our employees feel supported and valued.

6. We will ensure that the service is an inclusive organisation where all employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to opportunity.

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-2028 ([click here to access](#)) identifies how our analysis informs our workforce planning and decision making to help us determine how we allocate and develop our resources across Cumbria.

## What is workforce planning?

Workforce planning ensures an organisation has the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, at the right time and cost to achieve its objectives. It involves analysing the current workforce, forecasting future workforce needs, identifying gaps, and taking the necessary action.

For CFRS, the Workforce Plan supports business continuity, resilience, and effective leadership, ensuring capacity and capability to deliver the Service's CRMP. It addresses short- and medium-term workforce needs while aligning with long-term cultural and behavioural change.

The plan is guided by the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), updated annually, and evolves through the annual planning cycle. As a live, agile document, it is owned by the Workforce Planning Group, ensuring collaboration and shared accountability across the Service.



## Our Workforce – Key Information

With the change in Governance in 2023, over 70 members of corporate staff now provide a wide range of support that facilitate the delivery of the CFRS vision. This includes areas such as Governance, Data Security, Programme Management, Finance, Fleet and People Management. In addition to this support, a number of services are delivered by dedicated

CFRS support staff that contribute towards the delivery of the CRMP. These include the delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits and Fire Protection inspections.

The Service also has 38 Fire Stations with over 200 wholetime firefighters, including managers and anything up to 450 On-call fire fighters available at different times of the day and night.

19% of the workforce are female (13% in operational roles) and 1.8% are from ethnic minority backgrounds (1.2% in operational roles).

A more detailed breakdown of the workforce is provided in **Appendix 1**

## Operational Skillsets and Competencies

Our CRMP 2024-28 identifies the resources needed to meet the risk in each area of the Service across our 38 fire stations. Using data from the CRMP allows us to identify the staffing requirements, associated competencies and skill sets required. The Service currently use PDR Pro to monitor the operational skill requirements. PDR Pro along with our annual Training Needs Analysis and staff appraisals process, feed into both the *Learning and Development Plan* for operational based training and the *Organisational Development Plan* for people focussed training.

## Core Code of Ethics, NFCC Leadership Framework and Fire Standards

As a Service, we work hard to ensure that all of our policies, procedures and frameworks are influenced by the national Core Code of Ethics, NFCC Leadership Framework and relevant Fire Standards. This includes putting our communities at the heart of everything we do and improving our understanding of diverse communities both within the workforce and with service users.

## Operating Context

This workforce plan is shaped by a range of external and internal factors (risks and opportunities) that influence how the Service develops and sustains its people.

### External factors include:

- Ongoing pension reforms.
- Legislative and regulatory changes, such as the Working Time Directive or changes to driving laws e.g., Section 19 of the Road Traffic Act
- Changes to Cumbria's risk profile, including the growing impact of climate change.
- National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) initiatives.
- Changes to governance and funding models.
- Recruitment challenges in a competitive job market, with specific vulnerabilities in key professions such as Occupational Health, Finance, Fleet Services, Driver Training, Legal, and Fire Protection.
- The ongoing impact of 2023 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

### Internal factors include:

- An ageing workforce, uncertainty around retirement patterns and ongoing fitness for role.

- Challenges in attracting diverse representation across all roles.
- The loss of skilled and experienced staff.
- Risks linked to single points of failure or dependency.
- The ongoing cultural and values-based change journey.
- Recruitment and retention of the on-call workforce.

# Workforce Planning Objectives

## Objective number 1.

***We will ensure that we have the right people in the right posts at the right time in order to deliver our services to the community.***

To achieve this, we will focus on the following key workstreams:

### **Workforce forecasting and succession planning**

We will develop and implement a workforce forecasting and succession planning tool to identify current skills gaps, predict future workforce needs, and inform targeted recruitment and retention campaigns. Succession plans will be created for both corporate, Wholetime and On-call firefighter roles, ensuring coverage in rural and remote areas. We will also reduce reliance on temporary roles and promotions, and single points of failure by sharing critical skills across teams.

### **Recruitment and retention**

We will launch the new On-Call recruitment approach, *PRIME*, supported by a new Probation Policy and bespoke operational toolkits. Recruitment strategies will target both operational and support roles, including specialist areas such as technical staff, fire prevention officers, and community engagement roles. We will explore innovative methods to attract and retain staff, alongside tailored programmes for On-call firefighters and career grade schemes. We will maximise the use of the apprenticeship levy to offer tailored development programmes for new and existing staff.

### **Employee experience and retention insight**

We will review and re-launch the Leavers Policy, providing accessible tools for On-Call stations and firefighters. Data gathered will be reported to the Workforce Planning Group to inform future improvements in retention.

### **Operational and demographic considerations**

We will review operational workforce requirements in light of population growth, demographic changes, fire risk areas, and technological advancements such as fire safety technologies and data systems. Workforce demand will also be forecasted against retirement patterns, turnover rates, and changes in policy or legislation, such as local government reform or pension regulations.

### **Pensions and accountability**

We will hold four Pension Board meetings each year, ensuring stakeholders remain fully informed of emerging issues on the workforce planning assumptions.

### **Emerging risks**

We will assess and plan for the workforce impact of emerging risks, such as climate change, industrial action, urbanisation, ensuring we remain resilient and adaptable.

**We will measure this using the following Workplace indicators:**

- Improvement in staff retention rates – all roles year on year.
- Stability and improvement in Appliance availability.
- Forecast accuracy rate (planned vs. actual workforce numbers).
- Time-to-fill for key vacancies (reduced year-on-year).

## Objective number 2.

### ***We will maximise the health and wellbeing of our staff.***

To achieve this, we will focus on the following key workstreams:

#### **Wellbeing programmes and training**

We will deliver a wellbeing programme that includes mental health and wellbeing training, mental health first aid, and regular wellbeing surveys to monitor staff needs and uptake of support services. A designated strategic lead officer will oversee mental health, wellbeing, and critical incident debriefing.

#### **Occupational health and compliance**

We will deliver the Occupational Health Disaggregation programme, establishing an in-house provision from April 2026.

#### **Working time directive**

Robust arrangements will be put in place to collect, analyse, and monitor compliance with the Working Time Directive, ensuring staff welfare is safeguarded.

#### **Absence management**

We will apply appropriate oversight and scrutiny to absence management, with the aim of keeping employee absence rates to no more than 6%. This will support the loss of valuable staff, minimising the reliance on temporary contracts and distributed work pressure amongst teams.

#### **Support and partnerships**

We will strengthen partnerships with organisations such as the Firefighters Charity to provide additional support services for staff wellbeing.

#### **We will measure this using the following Workplace indicators:**

- Annual staff wellbeing survey participation rate (>70%) and satisfaction score (upward trend).
- Sickness absence rate maintained or improved (6%).
- Compliance with the WTD – all staff, all roles.
- 100% of operational staff who are on the run with an in-date annual fitness test.

## Objective Number 3.

***We will ensure all of our employees are equipped with the right skills, tools and guidance to enable them to perform their roles to a high standard in a way which promotes compassion, accountability, support and trust.***

To achieve this, we will focus on the following key workstreams:

### **Learning and Development Plan**

We will roll out a mandatory training and development framework, supported by regular assessments of workforce competencies, qualifications, and certifications, including operational skills, advanced firefighting techniques, and maintenance of skills programme. These requirements are captured in the *Learning and Development Plan* which can be found here (insert link).

### **Organisational Development Plan**

We will first deliver the 2025 HR Training Plan to equip leaders and managers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence in the short term to operate effectively in their roles. Ownership of this plan will transition to the Organisational Development Manager ahead of April 2026 where an *Organisational Development Plan* (link here when completed) will be developed to address the non-operational development needs of the Service.

### **Addressing skills gaps**

We will identify and address gaps in both technical skills (e.g., use of advanced firefighting equipment, data analysis) and people skills (e.g., leadership, communication, resilience), ensuring staff are equipped with the skills necessary to deliver a modern Fire and Rescue Service for Cumbria.

### **Continuous professional development**

We will provide ongoing CPD opportunities for all staff. We will ensure operational staff remain up to date with new techniques and equipment.

### **Collaboration and cross-functional training**

We will strengthen cross-functional training and develop workforce skills for collaboration, enabling staff to work effectively alongside police, ambulance, and other partners.

### **We will measure this using the following Workplace indicators:**

- % of staff completing mandatory operational training on time (target: 95%).
- % of staff completing mandatory development programmes on time (target 95%).
- Training satisfaction rating (measured via post-training surveys).

## Objective Number 4.

***We will promote a positive inclusive culture where all employees display our values and behaviours and contribute to making CFRS a great place to work.***

To achieve this, we will focus on the following key workstreams:

### **Governance and accountability**

A dedicated Professional Standards function will be maintained to review HR casework and ensure consistency. The Service will report on the progress of this Workforce Plan to the PFCC's Community Scrutiny Panel, Public Accountability Conference and Joint Audit Committee.

### **Culture and values leadership**

Our Culture and Values Board will meet quarterly, working with staff networks to strengthen inclusivity and embed our values across the organisation. We will align a strategic leader to each of the staff networks. We will make sure there is an effective induction process for all new starters.

### **Awareness and prevention**

We will launch a sexual harassment policy and awareness campaign to reinforce a safe, respectful, and supportive workplace for all staff.

### **We will measure this using the following Workplace indicators:**

- Staff survey results on organisational culture and confidence to speak-up (target: year-on-year improvement in "good" and "very good" scores).
- Improvement in the retention rate of staff (especially early-career employees).

## Objective Number 5.

***We will continue to review the employee offer, ensuring that our employees feel supported and valued.***

To achieve this, we will focus on the following key workstreams:

### **Review and benchmarking**

We will conduct an annual review of the employee offer to ensure it remains competitive and aligned with workforce needs.

### **Recognition and celebration**

We will celebrate staff achievements through initiatives such as the annual awards ceremony and wider employee recognition programmes that highlight positive contributions across the Service.

### **Family-friendly and flexible policies**

We will maintain our employee offer by providing 45 weeks of full pay for qualifying staff on family leave. We will also promote work-life balance by increasing flexible working options, particularly for corporate staff.

### **Pensions and financial wellbeing**

We will work closely with our pension administrators and payroll provider to ensure members and pensioners receive accurate, timely, and helpful information to support their financial decisions. Pension information will be published on our website for easy access, alongside regular and informative employee pension information sessions and responsive support to pension member queries.

### **Additional benefits**

We will continue to promote our new Car Lease Scheme and Cycle to Work Scheme as part of our effort to broaden the range of benefits available to staff.

### **We will measure this using the following Workplace indicators:**

- Staff survey results on feeling valued (target: year-on-year improvement in “good” and “very good” scores).
- Improvement in the retention rate of staff (especially early-career employees).
- Increase in the number of staff applying for development opportunities.

## Objective Number 6.

***We will ensure that the service is an inclusive organisation where all employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to opportunity.***

To achieve this, we will focus on the following key workstreams:

### **Diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) action plan**

We will establish a DEI action plan with measurable targets, focusing on recruitment, progression, and retention. Recruitment efforts will target underrepresented groups to build a workforce that better reflects the communities we serve. We will continue to work with all employees to improve the quality and completion of workforce equality data to help inform our progress in this area.

### **Inclusive recruitment and resourcing**

All recruiting managers, including those involved in campaigns and promotion boards, will complete mandatory resourcing e-learning. We will deliver Recruitment Skills Workshops for marginalised communities and launch the CFRS Resourcing and Talent Policy.

### **Policies and charters**

We will ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are completed and periodically reviewed for all policies in Service.

We will launch a Disability Charter in partnership with the Culture and Values Board, the Disability Staff Network, and the Government's Disability Confident Employer scheme. We will also publish a Neurodiversity Policy with clear guidance on reasonable adjustments. In addition, CFRS will join the Care Leavers Covenant and work to achieve Level 2 of the Disability Confident Employer Scheme. We will maintain Gold Status in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

### **Talent development and progression**

Every member of staff will have an annual appraisal with regular reviews to support development and progression. We will develop a system to identify and develop high potential members of staff.

### **We will measure this using the following Workplace indicators:**

- Representation levels of underrepresented groups across workforce and leadership (benchmark vs. target) and backdrop of fire sector.
- Completion of annual appraisals (95%)
- Number of people accessing talent management schemes increasing year on year.

## Roles and Responsibilities:

### **Service Leadership (Chief Fire Officer, Senior Leadership Team):**

- Lead the workforce planning strategy in alignment with the service's strategic objectives.
- Ensure workforce needs are met in line with the MTFP and service performance expectations.
- Champion diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing across all levels of the workforce. Each Senior Leader with champion a staff network.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

- Provide appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that the service operates fairly and transparently.
- Provide the Services Professional Standards arrangements.

### **Resourcing, Talent & Wellbeing**

- Develop recruitment and retention strategies in line with the service's workforce needs.
- Ensure fairness and transparency when recruiting, developing and promoting staff.

### **Occupational Health**

- To develop an in-house Occupational Health service from April 2026 that will provide timely, tailored support that helps staff maintain fitness for duty and ensures long-term health and wellbeing within our workplace.

### **Learning & Development:**

- Implement and monitor the Learning and Development Plan for the service.
- Ensure the service is able to meet its core training provision within budget.

### **Organisational Development:**

- Manage and oversee leadership development aligning with the NFCC Leadership Framework
- Lead cultural change assessments, programmes and interventions.
- Develop and embed a coaching and mentoring culture.
- Provide regular updates on workforce demographics, training outcomes, and development initiatives.
- Work with operational teams to ensure alignment of workforce plans with current and future forecasted operational requirements.
- Support and develop ED&I policies and procedures.

### **Operational Managers and Supervisors:**

- Ensure team members are adequately trained, equipped, and supported to carry out their roles effectively.
- Identify gaps in workforce skills or competencies and collaborate with L&D to address them.
- Promote professional development and leadership opportunities within their teams.

## **Employees:**

- Engage with training and development opportunities to improve personal and team performance.
- Participate in career development and feedback initiatives.
- Adhere to health and safety regulations and ensure mental and physical fitness for service with a current and valid fitness assessment in place.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation.**

The Workforce Planning Group will monitor this plan on a monthly basis.

The Chair of the WPG will report progress to the Senior Leadership Team at the quarterly Service Improvement Board.

The WPG will review and update this workforce plan annually to ensure it remains aligned with the service's strategic objectives, MTFP and operational needs.

### **Evaluation**

The WPG will work with stakeholders to develop phase one of a 'Workforce' dashboard and 'Culture' dashboard on Power Bi from April 2026 supported by the NFCC Toolkit.

The Service will measure success through the indicators identified within the plan such as staff retention rates, recruitment success, employee satisfaction, and service delivery outcomes (e.g., appliance availability).

The Service will regularly assess employee engagement, morale, and wellbeing through surveys and feedback mechanisms in order to inform future workforce strategies based on feedback and changing needs.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – Workforce demographics with link to culture and workforce Power Bi dashboards.

**Appendix 2** – Plan on a page 2024-5 for HR, Resources, Talent and Fitness & Pension Team.

**Appendix 3** – Annual Workforce Planning cycle



# Community Scrutiny Panel

**Date: 4 November 2025**

**Agenda Item No: 07**

**Originating Officer: AM Ian Seel**

**CC: Jemma Taylor/ Helen Clark**

## CFRS HR Updates

### Executive Summary:

This report details the following updates:

1. Employee Absences
2. Misconduct & Workplace Complaints

#### 1. Employee Absences

Top 5 absence reasons over the past 4 months:

Absence reason
1. Musculoskeletal – Lower Limb
2. Infection & Virus
3. Musculoskeletal – Upper Limb
4. Abdomen e.g. D&V/ Stomach/ Liver/ Bowel/ Kidney
5. Musculoskeletal – Neck/ Back/ Hip

CSP last looked at absence data in May 2025 therefore for the purposes of this report, only absences from May – August have been used.

Our Occupational Health Service is currently a hosted arrangement (led by Westmorland and Furness Council), the service have recently reviewed provision and this service will be provided in-house with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.

The Community Scrutiny Panel carried out a dip sample of our absence cases in mid-October 2025. Key points of feedback were captured as follows:

- Our absence procedure is well followed.
- There were a few instances at a specific area of the County where managers would benefit from some targeted support from the HR team in regards to early stage absence management and writing outcome letters.
- On the whole, letters are well set out and include key updates since the last meeting and offer support to employees who are absent.
- There were examples of Managers writing very good absence outcome letters that went above and beyond what is required legally/ policy wise. These managers showed a genuine interest in the welfare of the people who were absent and included personalised messages and showed compassion and empathy.
- One case included a very detailed Workplace Wellness Plan, it was clear that a lot of consideration had gone into the completion of this plan between the manager and employee and was highlighted as an area of good practice.

Action to take following feedback:

- HR team to provide some support to the managers who would benefit from absence support. The team are already delivering absence training to all managers however the specific area will receive some detailed, thorough support

Other points to note:

- Regular absence case clinics are held chaired by ACFO with HR and line manager attending to provide updates on the case
- Current target for absence is 6% which is being maintained
- We have committed to offering absence training to all managers throughout 2025/26
- The way our absence information is currently recorded within iTrent does not enable us to readily interrogate the data into age or gender in relation to absence data. Our new HR system is launching in November 2025 and our absence reporting will be reviewed as absence data starts to be recorded there
- The service does not currently contribute to the national fire data sickness collection (known as the Cleveland Absence Report) however the new Firewatch system enables us to collect data that is consistent with the requirements of this report and therefore the service will be able to contribute to this report in the future and will therefore be able to draw comparisons against other services.
- The service are in the process of launching a mental health app as part of its welfare offer

## **2. Misconduct & Workplace Complaints**

3 members of the Community Scrutiny Panel have dip sampled 13 cases and have provided feedback.

## Summary of the sampled cases:

Case	Case Type	Rank	Length of Service	Outcome	Appeal?	Appeal outcome
1	Conduct	Ret FF	10 years	No action following preliminary enquiries	No	
2	Conduct	Crew Manager/ Associate Instructor	6 years	Ongoing	No	
3	Conduct	Firefighter	16 years	No Action following preliminary enquiries	No	
4	Conduct	Crew Manager/ Associate Instructor	5 years	No Action following preliminary enquiries	No	
5	Conduct	Ret Firefighter	11 years	No Action following preliminary enquiries	No	
6	Conduct	Ret Firefighter	7 years	No Action following preliminary enquiries	No	
7	Conduct	Station Manager	24 years	No Action following preliminary enquiries	No	
8	Conduct	Community Safety Advisor	24 years	Ongoing	No	
9	Conduct	Ret Firefighter	1 year	Ongoing	No	
10	WPC	Community Safety Coordinator	Less than one year	Ongoing	No	
11	Conduct	Ret Firefighter	2 years	No Action following preliminary enquiries	No	
12	WPC	Watch Manager/ Associate Trainer	19 years	Ongoing	No	
13	WPC	Firefighter	5 years	Not Upheld	On hold for medical reasons	

## EDI Data on the 16 cases

Case N°	Sex Identity	Age	Ethnic Origin	Disability	Sexual Orientation
1	Blank	30 - 40	Blank	Blank	Blank
2	Blank	30 - 40	White – British	Blank	Heterosexual/ Straight
3	Blank	50 - 60	White – British	No	Heterosexual/ Straight
4	Male	30 - 40	White – British	No	Heterosexual/ Straight
5	Blank	30 - 40	Blank	Blank	Blank
6	Blank	20 - 30	Blank	Blank	Blank
7	Male	40 - 50	White – British	No	Heterosexual/ Straight
8	Female	40 - 50	White – British	No	Heterosexual/ Straight
9	Blank	20 - 30	White - British	Blank	Heterosexual/ Straight
10	Blank	20 - 30	Blank	Blank	Blank
11	Blank	30 - 40	Blank	Blank	Blank
12	Blank	40 - 50	White – British	No	Prefer not to answer
13	Male	30 - 40	White – British	Yes	Heterosexual/ Straight

### EDI Analysis

- Completion of the EDI data on our current HR system iTrent is not high and a large proportion of staff have not completed the sex identity field. Of the cases sampled by CSP, 69% had not completed the sex identity field. The service have an 'Area For Improvement' identified following the 2025 HMI inspection with regard to the way we collect equality data and therefore this is an area that the service are working to improve in future.
- 6 of the 13 cases are people in the 30 – 40 age bracket. This roughly mirrors the age profile of our workforce, with 33% of our staff in the age 30 – 40 age bracket.
- Of the people who have completed the ethnic origin field, all were White – British, however the field was only completed by 61% of cases.
- One of the workplace complaint cases had self-disclosed a disability.
- Of the cases that had completed the sexual orientation field, 7 had selected heterosexual/straight. All others had either not completed the field or chosen 'prefer not to say'.
- The small sample of cases and incomplete data make it difficult to infer any specific meaning however the data complete does not suggest any specific issues that need to be addressed.

### Summary of reasons for conduct cases

- Repeated failures to attend annual medical (3 cases)
- Conduct outside of work
- Inappropriate contact with a Cadet
- Speeding offence
- Training delivery
- Using service vehicle for personal use
- Use of illegal substance (outside of work)
- Involvement in crime not previously disclosed to the service
- 

### Summary of reasons for Workplace complaints

- Complaint about conduct of line manager
- Speaking to a colleague in an inappropriate manner
- Being moved to a different watch

### Summary of Panel Feedback:

- Policies are being consistently and appropriately followed
- Outcome letters are thorough and detailed
- Cases are being dealt with in a timely manner
- Panel would like an update at the next meeting regarding one case that is currently still open

### Future Actions:

- Further feedback will be provided on the case that panel would like update on at the next meeting



# Community Scrutiny Panel

**Date: 4 November 2025**

**Agenda Item No: 08**

**Originating Officer: People & Talent**

## Gender Pay Gap Report 2025

### Introduction

Employers in the UK with more than 250 employees are required to produce an annual report of their Gender Pay Gap. The requirements of the mandate within the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 are to publish information relating to pay for six specific measures, as detailed below:

- Quartile Pay Bands
- Mean Gender Pay Gap
- Median Gender Pay Gap
- Bonus Proportions
- Mean Bonus Gap
- Median Bonus Gap

The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average earnings for men and women within the service based on a snapshot date of 31<sup>st</sup> March each year. A gender pay gap does not necessarily mean that men are paid more than women however it usually means that men are in higher paid roles. This gender pay gap report is a snapshot as of **31 March 2025**.

The intention of pay gap reporting is to focus organisational attention on taking action to reduce inequalities, remove barriers to equal opportunity, and bring to life our commitments from the Core Code of ethics and the People Strategy, ensuring that we are an inclusive organisation which focuses on maximising the wellbeing of our staff and our employee offer makes us an employer of choice.

Equal Pay legislation requires employers to pay 'equal pay for work of equal value' and this means that men and women will earn the same pay for doing equivalent

roles. Having a gender pay gap does not mean that the employer is breaching equal pay legislation.

In CFRS we use agreed pay and grading frameworks to ensure that our pay and grading is fair and consistent.

Following the transition of our Governance to the PFCC in April 2023 we are now in our second reporting year as Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority.

For the purposes of this report, we are using electronic staff record data taken from our HR System to undertake this analysis, and therefore we are dependent on staff reporting their protected characteristics on the HR system. As of 31 March 2025 Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority employed a total of 648 employees. Comprising 82% male and 18% female, with no other genders reported.

## **What we report**

There is specific guidance governing what data we use to prepare the report and when to prepare and report it. The gender pay gap reporting is based on the government's methodology for calculating difference in pay between female and male employees.

'Equal pay' means being paid equally for the same/similar work.

'Pay gap' is the difference in the average pay between two groups.

As an inclusive employer, we at CFRS recognise that the gender spectrum is wider than male or female and we are keen to promote diversity and inclusivity. For the purposes of this report we are required to report on the gap between the pay of men and women therefore the data used only includes that of people who have identified as male or female.

## **Our Gender Pay Gap Data**

### Quartile Pay Bands

Pay Quartiles are produced by splitting all employees into 4 even groups 'quartiles' from lowest to highest paid with Quartile 1 being the lowest paid and Quartile 4 being the highest paid. Looking at the proportion of women across the quartiles indicates women's representation across the pay scales of the service.

At the moment we still employ significantly more men than women (121 females and 527 males).

In 2025 Quartile 1 has the largest proportion of female employees but Quartiles 3 and 4 have the second largest portion of female employees. Although only 18% of all CFRS

staff are female, the representation of women across quartiles 1, 3 and 4 is not significantly different which means that our overall gender pay gap remains low.

In 2024 Quartile 1 also had the largest proportion of females, however the second highest proportion was in Quartile 4. The spread of females across our pay quartiles has remained relatively stable over the previous 12 months.

We are committed to narrowing this margin between the number of males and females that we employ and achieving equal gender representation. One key area is through both our operational and corporate recruitment policies, guidance, and processes, where we implement positive action where appropriate, and offer adjustments, flexible working opportunities, anonymised applications and shortlisting, and focus on removing barriers for women joining into the service. In 2025 we published our updated Resourcing and Talent Policy, Guidance, and updated process. We are also launching a mandatory e-learning. The focus of this work is on inclusive recruitment, Positive Action, removing barriers, and looking at more flexible and supportive ways of working, all which benefit female candidates. Also, within the last 12 months we have published a Menopause Policy, held a Menopause Event, and updated our Family Leave Policy to support more women once joining the service.

### Mean Gender Pay Gap

The mean figure is calculated by adding the total male pay and dividing that by the number of males and comparing that to the total female pay divided by the number of females.

The mean figure then shows the 'average' pay for a male and a female.

Our mean gender pay gap is 1.93% in favour of men. Although this means that men are paid a higher hourly rate than women on average, the gap is very small (men earn on average £18.42 per hour versus £18.06 for women)

Our mean gender pay gap in 2024 was 0.86% meaning that although our gender pay gap is still low, it has increased 1.07% over the previous 12 months.

### Median Gender Pay Gap

The median figure is the 'middle value' from a list of highest to lowest paid. The median male's pay is compared to the median female's pay in order to calculate the median pay gap.

Our median male is in Quartile 3 and our median female is in Quartile 2. The median male's pay was £17.48 per hour and our median female's pay was £17.21 per hour. Our median pay gap in 2025 is therefore 1.57%

In 2024 both of our median employees were in Q2 and our median pay gap was 1.62%

On the snapshot date in 2025 (31<sup>st</sup> March) we employed the same number of people that we did on the snapshot date in 2024. This does not necessarily mean that the people are the same in 2025 as 2024 or that the gender balance and pay are the same, however our relatively low turnover rate leads to our median figure being only 0.05% lower than last year.

### Bonus Proportions

CFRS do not operate a bonus scheme, however for the purposes of this calculation, bonus pay includes CPD pay, responsibility pay and honoraria. 24.56% of females received bonus pay in 2024/2025 compared to 29.96% of men. All of these bonuses were Continuous Professional Development payments for operational staff. CPD is only paid to employees who have been competent in role for 12 months or longer therefore staff do not become eligible for CPD pay until this point.

Our mean bonus pay gap is 10.07% in favour of men. Although this is a significant difference to the 2024 figure, this is due to the fact that the 2024 figure was affected by an honorarium payment which was of high value whereas the majority of bonus payments are CPD related which is of low value. Most of our operational staff are eligible for CPD pay and due to the fact that the service employs more men than women, more CPD pay is paid to men.

Our median bonus gap is 0%.

### **What are we doing to improve?**

We aim to reduce our gender pay gap year on year. Effective policies for closing the gender pay gap seek to address factors and barriers common to all women (such as the number in lower-grade jobs with lower pay) as well as target inequalities faced by women belonging to specific groups, based on characteristics such as ethnicity, age and profession.

We have implemented a number of actions over the last 12 months:

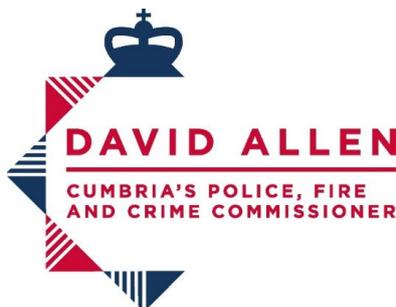
- Launched the new Resourcing and Talent Policy, Guidance, E-learning, and toolkit, focusing on inclusive recruitment and removing barriers to opportunity, through actions such as anonymous applications, a mix of assessment methods, and flexibility around assessments being held outside working or care-giving hours.
- Continued to improve on our inclusive approach to recruitment and talent management by implementing targeted engagement sessions during recruitment campaigns.
- Continued to use targeted advertising on jobs boards accessed by disadvantaged groups and continuing to include our statement on recruitment

advertisements that the employer welcomes applications from the target group(s).

- Where possible, offering internal opportunities to both operational and corporate staff, to open prospects for all staff
- Invested in family friendly policies and practices, underlining our commitment to being an inclusive employer and are drive to make CFRS a family friendly place to work. In 2025 we increased our Family Leave provisions so that qualifying employees on maternity, shared parental or adoption leave are entitled to 45 weeks full pay.
- Published a Menopause policy and held a menopause event
- Invested in our staff networks
- Invested capital funding to enhance our existing welfare facilities within our estate
- Launched a Culture & Values board to work with employee representatives across the service to improve our culture
- Encouraged flexible working, ensuring requests for flexible working are considered by the Workforce Development Group and allowing for employees to work flexibly where possible
- Ensuring salaries are transparent. Our operational roles are paid on the agreed NJC T&Cs. Our corporate roles are all evaluated against an agreed job evaluation framework based on NJC T&Cs. All staff are recruited onto a lower pay point and then progressed onto a higher pay point after passing their probationary period. The pay rates are transparent and advertised on the CFRS website. We produce a Pay Policy statement annually in relation to the remuneration of our staff, which is available on the CFRS website.

We also propose to take the following actions in the forthcoming year:

- Offering targeted or bespoke training and support to remove barriers for underrepresented groups in recruitment and promotion processes.
- Identifying areas of our workforce with underrepresentation from women and providing opportunities exclusively to them (and other groups) to learn more about particular types of work opportunities with us, such as open days.
- Launching a mandatory recruitment e-learning for our managers involved in the recruitment process.



# Community Scrutiny Panel

## Title: 2026 Work Programme & Meeting Dates

**Date: 28 October**

**Agenda Item No: 10**

**Originating Officer: Joanne Head, Governance Manager**

**CC:**

### **Executive Summary:**

The Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer all wish to ensure high standards of integrity and ethical working within their respective organizations. In order to achieve that objective and provide openness and accountability to the public they have established the Community Scrutiny Panel.

### **Recommendation:**

That, the Panel considers and finalises the proposed work programme and meeting dates for 2025

### **1. Introduction & Background**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Community Scrutiny Panel is to achieve a cohesive regime of community scrutiny. The Panel meets on a quarterly basis throughout the year and an annual work programme is agreed to enable it to fulfil its terms of reference and scrutiny role. The programme is managed to ensure wherever possible meetings are balanced in terms of volume of work and annual reviews are incorporated.
- 1.2 Meeting dates are set up to correspond with the reporting cycle of the Constabulary and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that reports contain the most up to date information possible.
- 1.3 Following each Panel meeting, the Commissioner's Executive Board meetings are updated on the Panel's oversight and scrutiny.

### **2. 2026 Work Programme**

- 2.1 The Community Scrutiny Panel provides a forum that challenges, encourages and supports the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable of Cumbria Constabulary and the Chief Fire Officer of Cumbria Fire and Rescue

Service in monitoring and dealing with integrity and ethical issues within these organisations and their public interactions.

- 2.3 Detailed within the attached work programme are the cyclical elements for the Panel and some proposals for Thematic Sessions based on current and future work; HMICFRS and IOPC inspection outcomes. The work programme and dip sample dates provide flexibility for any arising issues to be added and reviewed by the Panel. Any additional thematic sessions would be scheduled using existing dates or additional dates agreed throughout the year.
- 2.4 The Panel Members, Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, and the OPFCC are invited to comment and make any suggestions for areas of business to review.
- 2.5 How such thematic sessions and reviews are undertaken would need to be agreed, ensuring that the panels work did not interfere with any ongoing or appeal processes; nor conflict or duplicate work already undertaken by the police or fire. The findings of the panel would be reported to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.6 At the end of each calendar year, Panel provide an annual report to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on the work they have carried out during the year against their annual work programme. It identifies any issues or concerns they have found, and where learning has been recognized and implemented.

### **3. 2026 Meeting Dates**

- 3.1 When considering the meeting dates for 2026 thought has also been given to the dip sample sessions that the Panel members carry out in relation to police and fire areas of business. These are held approximately 1 – 2 weeks prior to the relevant Panel Meeting.
- 3.2 The proposed meeting dates for 2026 are:
  - ❖ Thursday 26 February 2026
  - ❖ May meeting date – to be confirmed
  - ❖ Thursday 6 August 2026
  - ❖ Thursday 5 November 2026
- 3.3 Due to some members being unavailable for the proposed meeting date in May 2026 work is being carried out to identify an alternative. Once this is known members and officers will be notified.
- 3.4 The meetings for Cumbria Constabulary and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service will be held separately but on the same day. This will enable the Community Scrutiny Panel members to manage their diaries and reduce the number of days they need to attend, taking into account the additional dip sample dates. The meetings will be held at both Cumbria Constabulary HQ and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service meeting rooms.

- 3.4 Agenda setting meetings are held approximately 2 weeks following a meeting to discuss the agenda items for the next meeting and any actions identified. Appended to the report is a copy of the draft work programme and corresponding dip sample dates (Appendix 1)

**4. Appendices**

App 1 - 2026 Annual Work Programme and dip sample sessions

## Community Scrutiny Panel Annual Work Programme 2026

## Agenda Item 10, Appendix 1

Meeting Date:	Thursday 26 February 2026		To be confirmed		Thursday 06 August 2026		Thursday 05 November 2026	
	Conference Room 2 - Police @ 10.30 am Community Meeting Room, Fire @ 2.00 pm		Conference Room 2 - Police @ 10.30 am Community Meeting Room, Fire @ 2.00 pm		Conference Room 2 - Police @ 10.30 am Community Meeting Room, Fire @ 2.00 pm		Conference Room 1 - Police @ 10.30 am Conference Room 1, Fire @ 2.00 pm	
	Cumbria Constabulary	Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service	Cumbria Constabulary	Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service	Cumbria Constabulary	Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service	Cumbria Constabulary	Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service
<b>Dip Sample Sessions</b>	Use of Force, Stop & Search Custody Detention Scrutiny - UoF & Custody Records Vetting Decisions	* Secondary Employment * Exit Interviews * HMICFRS Review - HR recommendations	* Public Complaint & Complaint Reviews (inc repeat officers) * Misconduct – officer & staff discipline (inc gross misconduct and accelerated hearings) * Grievances * Use of Force, Stop & Search * Custody Detention Scrutiny - UoF & Custody Records	Misconduct Workforce Complaints Employee Absences	Use of Force, Stop & Search Custody Detention Scrutiny Vetting Decisions Employee Absences	* DBS Checks * Secondary Employment * Exit Interviews * HMICFRS Review - HR recommendations	Public Complaint & Complaint Review files Misconduct – officer & staff discipline Grievances Use of Force, Stop & Search Custody Detention Scrutiny	Misconduct Workforce Complaints
<b>Thematic Sessions</b>								
<b>Regular Reports</b>								
<b>Corporate</b>	<b>CORPORATE UPDATE</b> To receive a briefing from DCC Martland and OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer	<b>CORPORATE UPDATE</b> To receive a briefing from CFO and OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer	<b>CORPORATE UPDATE</b> To receive a briefing from DCC Martland and OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer	<b>CORPORATE UPDATE</b> To receive a briefing from CFO and OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer	<b>CORPORATE UPDATE</b> To receive a briefing from DCC Martland and OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer	<b>CORPORATE UPDATE</b> To receive a briefing from CFO and OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer	<b>CORPORATE UPDATE</b> To receive a briefing from DCC Martland and OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer	<b>CORPORATE UPDATE</b> To receive a briefing from CFO and OPFCC Chief Executive Gill Shearer
<b>Integrity</b>	<b>INTEGRITY</b> PSD report on - * Public complaints performance; * Officer and Staff Misconduct; and ACU activities: * Files which are 12 months or over & every 6 months thereafter * Vetting	<b>CULTURE AND DIVERSITY</b> Equality, Diversity & Inclusion training - gain Panel feedback; Equality Impact Assessments; Culture and Values Board	<b>INTEGRITY</b> PSD report on - * Public complaints performance; * Officer and Staff Misconduct; and ACU activities: * Files which are 12 months or over & every 6 months thereafter * Vetting  Dip Sample Feedback	<b>MISCONDUCT, WORKFORCE COMPLAINTS REPORT</b> Including information regarding grievances, bullying, harassment and Employment Tribunal information.  <b>CODE OF ETHICS/CONDUCT</b> How this is being implemented and monitored through the organisation (NFCC)	<b>INTEGRITY</b> PSD report on - * Public complaints performance; * Officer and Staff Misconduct; and ACU activities: * Files which are 12 months or over & every 6 months thereafter * Vetting	<b>SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT</b> To receive a report on secondary employment of full time staff and feedback from the dip sample.	<b>INTEGRITY</b> PSD report on - * Public complaints performance; * Officer and Staff Misconduct; and ACU activities: * Files which are 12 months or over & every 6 months thereafter * Vetting  Dip Sample Feedback	<b>MISCONDUCT, WORKFORCE COMPLAINTS REPORT</b> Including information regarding grievances, bullying, harassment and Employment Tribunal information.  <b>CODE OF ETHICS/CONDUCT</b> How this is being implemented and monitored through the organisation (NFCC)
	<b>Stop &amp; Search, Use of Force and Custody Detention</b> Constabulary performance data re Stop and Search, Use of Force and Custody Detention	<b>EMPLOYEE ABSENCES</b> Update and performance report for CFRS employee sickness and wellbeing.	<b>Stop &amp; Search, Use of Force and Custody Detention</b> Constabulary performance data re Stop and Search, Use of Force and Custody Detention	<b>RECRUITMENT</b> Report from the Head of People and Talent on current recruitment process for on-call and whole time fire fighters.	<b>Stop &amp; Search, Use of Force and Custody Detention</b> Constabulary performance data re Stop and Search, Use of Force and Custody Detention	<b>DBS Checks</b> To receive an update report on the Fire Service's progress on continual DBS vetting for all personnel.	<b>Stop &amp; Search, Use of Force and Custody Detention</b> Constabulary performance data re Stop and Search, Use of Force and Custody Detention	<b>RECRUITMENT</b> Report from the Head of People and Talent on recruitment process for on-call and whole time fire fighters.
	<b>Criminal Justice Decision Making - Race &amp; Youth Disparity</b> Constabulary performance data re its decision making and identified race or youth disparity.	<b>FIRE EMPLOYEES:</b> To receive a report on the Fire Service's employee establishment and recruitment programme.	<b>CIVIL CLAIMS:</b> To receive a report on Civil Claims to monitor any trends/issues and how learning/training has been implemented.	<b>CIVIL CLAIMS</b> To receive a report on Civil Claims to monitor any trends/issues and how learning/training has been implemented.	<b>ANNUAL STOP &amp; SEARCH, USE OF FORCE REPORT and CUSTODY DETENTION SCRUTINY:</b> Annual Report	<b>HMICFRS REPORT</b> To receive a report on progress with the HMICFRS HR Recommendations	<b>CIVIL CLAIMS:</b> To receive a report on Civil Claims to monitor any trends/issues and how learning/training has been implemented.	<b>CIVIL CLAIMS</b> To receive a report on Civil Claims to monitor any trends/issues and how learning/training has been implemented.
	<b>DIP SAMPLE FEEDBACK:</b> Use of Force, Stop & Search Custody Detention Scrutiny Vetting Decisions	<b>DBS Checks</b> To receive an update report on the Fire Service's progress on continual DBS vetting for all personnel. (Next report will be 2026)	<b>GRIEVANCES:</b> To receive a report on Grievances against the Constabulary identifying any trends or issues. Dip Sample Feedback	<b>EMPLOYEE ABSENCES:</b> Report on CFRS employee absence Feedback from dip sample session	<b>DIP SAMPLE FEEDBACK:</b> Use of Force, Stop & Search Custody Detention Scrutiny Vetting Decisions		<b>CONSTABULARY PROPERTY STORE REVIEW</b> An update be provided on the work being carried out within the force	<b>EMPLOYEE ABSENCE</b> Report on CFRS employee absence
			<b>POLICE OFFICER &amp; STAFF UPDATE</b> To receive a report on establishment, sickness and retention.				<b>GRIEVANCES:</b> To receive a report on Grievances against the Constabulary identifying any trends or issues. Dip Sample Feedback	<b>HMICFRS REPORT</b> update following the outcome of the HMICFRS inspection report and action plan for areas of business covered by the Panel.
			<b>CONSTABULARY PROPERTY STORE REVIEW</b> An update be provided on the work being carried out within the force				<b>POLICE OFFICER &amp; STAFF UPDATE</b> To receive a report on establishment, sickness and retention.	
			<b>DIP SAMPLE FEEDBACK:</b> Use of Force Stop & Search Custody Detention Scrutiny Vetting Decisions				<b>DIP SAMPLE FEEDBACK:</b> Use of Force Stop & Search Custody Detention Scrutiny Vetting Decisions	
							<b>CODE OF ETHICS/CONDUCT – Constabulary</b> compliance to be included in the Integrity report	
<b>OPFCC Reports</b>								
	<b>OPFCC COMPLAINTS, REVIEWS &amp; QSPI:</b> Report on complaints and quality of service issues received by the OPFCC.				<b>OPFCC COMPLAINTS, REVIEWS &amp; QSPI:</b> Report on complaints and quality of service issues received by the OPFCC.			<b>ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME:</b> Annual work programme for 2026 and meeting dates
<b>Annual Report</b>	<b>PANEL ANNUAL REPORT:</b> To consider the annual report to be provided to the Commissioner on the work carried out by the Panel.	<b>PANEL ANNUAL REPORT:</b> To consider the annual report to be provided to the Commissioner on the work carried out by the Panel.						

## Community Scrutiny Panel - 2026 Meeting and Dip Sample Dates

Work carried out by the Panel enables the PFCC to hold Chief Officers to account @ Exec Board (Police) (Fire) to account and avoid duplication. This Panel will support the PFCC in his role.

Date & Time of Panel Meeting	Cumbria Constabulary							Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service		
	Complaints & Misconduct	Grievances	Stop & Search Use of Force	Custody Detention Scrutiny	Vetting Decisions	Thematic Session	Panel Members Attending			Panel Members Attending
February - Thursday 26th (Conf Room 2) Police @ 10.30 am Fire @ 2:00 pm			18.02.2026 (Conf Room 3 Conf Room 2)	18.02.2026 (Conf Room 3 Conf Room 2)	18.02.2026 (OPFCC Mtg Rm)	19.02.2026 CC Sickness Absence & Exit Interviews (OPFCC Mtg Rm)		HMICFRS Review - HR recommendations	Secondary Employment Exit Interviews	
May - Thursday 13th May (Conf Room 2) Police @ 10.30am Fire @ 1.30 pm	06.05.2026 @ 9.00am & @ 2.00 pm (PSD Offices)	06.05.2026 @ 3.00 pm (OPFCC Mtg Rm)	29.04.2026 @10.00 am (Conf Room 3 OPFCC Mtg Rm)	29.04.2026 @10.00 am (Conf Room 3 OPFCC Mtg Rm)				Misconduct & Workforce Complaints	Employee Absences	
August - Thursday 6th (Conf Room 2) Police @ 10.30 am Fire @ 1.30 pm			29.07.2025 (Conf Room 3 OPFCC Mtg Rm)	29.07.2025 (Conf Room 3 OPFCC Mtg Rm)	29.07.2025 (Conf Room 3 OPFCC Mtg Rm)	28.07.2026 CC Sickness Absence & Exit Interviews (OPFCC Mtg Rm)		HMICFRS Review - HR recommendations	Secondary Employment DBS Checks Exit Interviews	
November - Wednesday 5th (Conf Room 2) Police @ 10.30 am Fire @ 1.30 pm	22.10.2026 @ 9.00 am & @ 2.00 pm (PSD Offices)	22.10.2026 @ 4.00 pm (OPFCC Mtg Rm)	27.10.2026 (Conf Room 3 OPFCC Mtg Rm)	27.10.2026 (Conf Room 3 OPFCC Mtg Rm)				Conduct and Workforce Complaints	Employee Absences	