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20 February 2026

## **AGENDA**

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

A Meeting of the Community Scrutiny Panel (Fire) will take place on **Thursday 26 February 2026** 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  
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 4 November 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>SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT</b> (i) To receive a report on secondary employment of full-time staff (ii) Panel to feedback from dip sample session	10 minutes
<b>7.</b>	<b>STAFF RESIGNATIONS (inc EXIT INTERVIEWS)</b> (i) To receive a report on staff leaving the organisation (ii) Panel to feedback from dip sample session	10 minutes

8.	<b>CULTURE AND DIVERSITY</b> Focusing on: a) EDI Training Evaluation b) Culture and Values Board – key emerging themes c) Community Engagement Policy and Position Statement	10 minutes
9.	<b>FIRE EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT</b> To receive a report on the Fire Service’s employee establishment and recruitment programme.	10 minutes
10.	<b>HMICFRS</b> To receive a report updating the Panel on the People AFI arising from the HMICFRS inspection, outlining the Service’s approach to address/monitor the AFIs and how the Panel can support this	10 minutes

Following the meeting, the Community Scrutiny Panel will be provided with a Fire Watch Demonstration.



## Agenda Item No 4

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY PANEL

Notes of a meeting of the Community Scrutiny Panel (Fire) held on  
Tuesday 4 November 2025, Conference Room 2, Carleton Hall at 2.00 pm

### **PRESENT**

Shaun Thomson (Chair)  
Meg Masters  
Penny Walker  
Alison Ramsey

### **Also present:**

Chief Fire Officer – Paul Hancock  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Ben Ryder  
Head of Improvement and Performance – Mark Clement  
HR Manager – Helen Clark  
PA to CFO, ACFO - Ann-Marie Sarginson  
SLT Support Officer – Charlotte Kirkwood  
OPFCC Accountability Manager – Stephanie Stables  
OPFCC Accountability Officer – Lisa Hodgson

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Jane Scattergood, Andrew Dodd  
Eloise Abbott, OPFCC Governance Manager Joanne Head and OPFCC Chief  
Executive Gill Shearer.

### **77. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

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

### **78. URGENT BUSINESS**

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

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

The notes of the meeting held on 7 August 2025 previously circulated with the agenda  
were agreed.

**AGREED;** that the notes of the meeting held on 7 August 2025 were agreed.

### **80. ACTION SHEET**



All the actions were updated. CFO Paul Hancock advised the consultation will be in the new year regarding the operational fire cover review, post the spending review settlement.

## 81. 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.

CFRS has been shortlisted twice in UK Fleet Champions award and won the Public Sector Driver Safety Award and highly commended for the Road Safety in the Community Award. The panel noted how pleasing it is to see this as a member of the local community.

With regards to funding, it was noted that the NPCC are lobbying government and it likely to be towards the end of the year that CFRS will be aware of the settlement. The panel shared the concerns raised regarding funding cuts and how this may affect the service.

The Panel had received a written corporate update prior to the meeting from the OPFCC Chief Executive. It has 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.

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

## 82. CFRS WORKFORCE PLAN

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service Workforce Plan, following the outcome of the recent HMICFRS inspection.

The panel were advised that there were a number of areas for improvement recognised following the inspection and work had already begun to implement them and research and development is ongoing to continue to develop the plan

The panel overall feel it is a very comprehensive and sensible plan and offered to continue to provide scrutiny as a panel. One member felt that monthly monitoring was too regular and quarterly may be more appropriate to be able to see change. CFRS advised that this is a 'living breathing document' and whilst this is being embedded, they wish to have close and regular scrutiny.

It was noted that financial savings are required, CFRS must be agile and it is recognised that robust succession planning must be in place. CFRS will strengthen services to ensure staff have access to the right support in terms of training, appraisals



and development plans. Once this is in place it is likely that monitoring will transition to quarterly.

**AGREED:** that, the  
(i) Report be noted; and  
(ii) Panel to receive further updates at the next meeting.

### 83. CFRS HR REPORT

The HR Manager provided an update on employee absences, misconduct and workforce complaints, and the full report was circulated to the panel prior to the meeting.

It was noted that Occupation Health service is currently carried out by Westmorland and Furness Council and CFRS are looking to bring this in house by April 2026.

Further to the summary provided in the report regarding the dip sample session, the panel advised that overall, the procedures were followed well, appropriately and timely. Following the feedback provided to CFRS, the HR team will provide absence support to managers who would benefit from it.

One member noted that mental health was not in the top 5 reason for absences and expected that this would be. The panel were advised that the highest reason for absence tend to be Musculoskeletal injuries.

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

### 84. GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

The HR Manager provided an update regarding the annual gender pay gap report, which was circulated to the panel prior to the meeting.

It was noted that there is no significant change to last year, and the draft wording has been provided to designers to finalise the report.

There was a discussion regarding the gender pay gap, and it was noted it is largely due to the higher proportion of males employed by the organisation and the pay scales are the same. The HR Manager added that family and child friendly policies are encouraged within the organisation, and any information will be published on CFRS website when complete and distributed to the appropriate panels. Further to this, information is provided in weekly updates to staff, and this will also be raised with the communications officer.

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



**85. CFRS CIVIL CLAIMS**

CFO Paul Hancock advised the panel that this is being discussed via PSD and Legal board, for a template to be developed and agreed. Following this it will be brought back to the next panel meeting.

It was noted that CFRS do not get a huge volume of civil claims, they mainly relate to bumps/knocked walls when responding to emergency incidents.

**86. 2026 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME, MEETING & DIP SAMPLE DATES**

The OPFCC Accountability Manager provided the proposed 2026 annual work programme, meeting and dip sample dates to the Panel. The work programme identified the cyclical reports which were to be presented to the Panel and enabled capacity for the Panel to review or dip sample areas of work identified by either the Commissioner, Police or CFRS.

**87. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Before the meeting came to a close a member noted that at the previous meeting there was a relatively new senior team and asked how things were progressing and how change is communicated across all staff.

CFO Paul Hancock advised that they are currently out to advert of station managers, and following this they will be advertising for watch and crew managers. By the middle of next year, most people should be in new permanent positions, this will create stability and reinforce strong culture.

It is recognised how important it is for the senior team to regularly engage with and visit on call fire fighters when they are attending their training nights. The panel agreed that this is hugely important, particularly due to the geographical challenges of Cumbria.

The ACFO noted at a recent major incident the crews were praised significantly regarding how they acted in getting passengers to safety, quickly. Several of those in attendance were on call fire fighters. Senior officers will be attending their next training evening to personally thank them.

**Meeting ended at 15:00 pm**

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

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



# Community Scrutiny Panel

Meeting Date: Thursday 26 February 2025

Agenda Item: 5a

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

#### Bid for Second Wholetime or Day-Crewed Fire Engine at Barrow

3. The service has formally written to the Secretary of State for Defence; the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government; and the Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy) seeking their consideration and support for our bid for a second appliance in Barrow.
4. The introduction of a second wholetime or day-crewed pump at Barrow is seen as an operational imperative. It aligns directly with the continued growth and development of the town and planned increase in production and activity at BAE Systems.

## Operational Cover Review

5. The service has now completed its operational fire cover review and is developing proposals with the Commissioner for the future provision of operational cover for the county. The purpose of the review is to:
  - Analyse the current service profile and create and setup appropriate models of fire cover.
  - Apply the NFCC methodology to dwelling fires, RTCs, and Other Buildings.
  - Use optimisation models to determine the optimal deployment of CFRS appliances at existing and greenfield locations.
  - Use modelling to investigate changes to duty systems, crewing and pump availability scenarios.
  - Create a degradation plan based on various stages of reduced resource levels.
  - Evaluate special appliance locations based on risk and incident demand.
6. This data has now been considered by the Service Leadership Team who have applied their knowledge and experience to come up with several scenarios that will ensure its resources are used in the most effective way to serve the people of Cumbria.
7. The decision on which proposals to proceed with resides with the PFCC, and once that decision is made, they will be subject to full consultation and scrutiny.

## Staff Awards

8. The service recently held its annual awards ceremony at Hundith Hill Hotel near Cockermouth, recognising exceptional dedication, leadership, and teamwork across the organisation. Ten awards were presented to individuals and teams who demonstrated outstanding service to their communities, with additional commendations and certificates of appreciation for exceptional contributions. Chief Fire Officer Paul Hancock emphasised the importance of recognising those who embody the service's values of collaboration, care, and mutual respect, highlighting their commitment to keeping Cumbria safe.

## **National Issues**

### HMICFRS Inspection Programme

9. Since late 2025, services are being assessed under the new Round 4 2025–27 HMICFRS framework. This means that:
- Governance and authority scrutiny is explicitly built into the inspection process.
  - Culture, misconduct and values are core and enduring inspection themes.
  - HMICFRS monitoring portal will track compliance and improvement in real time.

These changes elevate workforce culture, authority oversight and ethical leadership from “improvement areas” to national policy expectations.

### NFCC National Leadership and Policy Alignment

10. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has aligned its 2025–26 and 2026–27 priorities with national reform, focusing on:
- Prevention and protection reform
  - National operational doctrine
  - Digital, data and technology standards
  - Workforce culture and leadership development

The NFCC now is playing a central role in co-designing elements of reform with MHCLG rather than acting solely as a representative body.

### Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) Regulations 2025

12. Although made in July 2025, the implementation phase of this legislation has become active in the last six months. The regulations come into force on 6 April 2026 and require person-centred evacuation planning for vulnerable residents.
13. FRSs have a statutory role in information sharing, enforcement and in operational planning assumptions as the new legal duty comes into force. This will increase the protection workload and tightens expectations around intelligence, inspection and response planning.

### Local Government Reform

14. The introduction of a directly elected mayor through the creation of a Cumbria Combined Authority represents a significant opportunity for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service to benefit from stronger county-wide leadership and closer alignment with wider public service reform. Following the formal consent given by Cumberland

Council and Westmorland and Furness Council in October 2025, the Combined Authority is expected to be established in April 2026, with the first mayoral election scheduled for May 2027.

15. While the initial devolution deal is focused on economic growth, transport, skills and housing, it provides a platform for improved integration between fire and rescue, community safety, resilience, housing standards and infrastructure investment. Over time, this could enhance strategic influence for the Service, strengthen partnership working, and improve access to devolved funding streams.
16. For the Fire and Rescue Service, the emerging mayoral model offers the potential to reinforce its role as a key contributor to place-based safety, prevention and resilience, provided that operational independence and a county-wide approach to risk management are maintained.

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



# Community Scrutiny Panel

## Title: OPFCC Corporate Update

**Date of Meeting: February 2026**

**Agenda Item No: 05b**

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

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

### **1. White Paper**

The White Paper outlines proposals for potential pathfinder mergers to test new policing structures. However, regionalisation presents a risk for smaller, high-performing forces such as Cumbria, as the removal of specialist capabilities can make them harder to access through regional tasking arrangements, ultimately reducing the level of service to local communities.

In Cumbria, our roads policing team provides an essential service, operating across a large rural network with significant seasonal pressures and challenging weather conditions. Their local knowledge and specialist skills are critical to public safety. The same applies to our firearms unit, whose operational decisions rely on an in-depth understanding of the environments in which they work. For these reasons, we do not support a single national model for roads policing or firearms, as it would diminish the local expertise required to manage risk effectively.

The White Paper does include some positive proposals, notably the further centralisation of serious organised crime and counter-terrorism functions.

### **2. Devolution**

On 17 July 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution confirmed that the Devolution Priority Programme had completed public consultations on proposals to establish Mayoral Strategic Authorities.

On 14 October 2025, both Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council gave their final approval to the Government's devolution proposals, marking a significant step toward more locally driven decision-making.

The new Combined Authority will benefit from enhanced powers and funding not available to the existing councils, including access to a £333 million Cumbrian Mayoral Investment Fund over 30 years.

The first meeting of the Combined Authority is scheduled for 18 March. It will comprise two constituent members from each authority, alongside non-constituent and associate elected members appointed to provide professional insight and strengthen stakeholder engagement.

The OPFCC is scheduled to transfer to the Combined Authority following the Mayoral Elections in May 2027, with the transition expected to be delivered through a straightforward 'lift-and-shift' of existing services.

### **3. Budget**

On 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026, the PFCC approved a balanced budget for both policing and fire for 2026/27.

Achieving this has required setting the council tax precept at the maximum permissible level for both policing and fire. The police budget is based upon a Band D council tax precept increase of £14.94 (4.61%) in 2026/27, with a budget gap emerging of £1.7m in 2027/28 rising to £6.8m by 2030/31. The 'Future Programme', led by Deputy Chief Constable, is progressing a number of projects to address this gap, and this will continue to be rigorously scrutinised.

The fire budget is based upon a Band D council tax precept increase of £4.95 (5.04%) in 2026/2027. Significant pressures remain on the expenditure budget, particularly in relation to pay and inflation. Without identifying savings, a budget gap of £1.541m would arise. A savings target of £780,000 has been agreed for 2026/27, with the remaining £761,000 to be drawn from reserves for that year, after which reserves will be rebuilt to prudent levels. To deliver the required savings, a Financial Strategy and Savings Board has been established to review all aspects of the service and identify opportunities. This will continue to be rigorously scrutinised.

# Community Scrutiny Panel



## HR Updates

**Date: 26 February 2026**

**Agenda Item No: 6**

**Originating Officer: AM Ian Seel**

**CC: Jemma Taylor/ Helen Clark**

### **Executive Summary: (max 100 words)**

This report details the following updates:

#### **1. Secondary Employment**

The Secondary Employment policy applies to all wholetime and corporate CFRS employees. Those working the on-call duty system are not required to seek permission for other employment. This does not impact an on-call employee's responsibility to provide an employer consent form when required.

### **Policy**

The Service reviewed the Secondary Employment policy and it was published in January 2025. Following feedback from our most recent HMI, work is being undertaken on the Service's Working Time policy and associated policies and procedures, the Secondary Employment policy and process is currently being reviewed again as part of this. Prior to the inspection CFRS were self-aware that work was required in relation to monitoring of working time and this is one of the Areas for Improvement (AFIs) from our 2025 HMI Inspection.

### **Declaration of Secondary Employment**

To ensure compliance with Scheme of Conditions of Service and the Working Time Regulations, CFRS requires all wholetime operational and corporate employees to complete a Declaration of Secondary Employment form, whether they undertake secondary employment or not, this includes unpaid work such as volunteering.

All staff were asked to complete the secondary employment in June 2023. A Microsoft Forms was used (paper form was also available if required) to gather data from all

respondents and a follow up process was maintained where people did not respond. All staff that fell within the requirement at this time (299 records) returned a form. This data is held in Sharepoint in a confidential folder. Paper forms are held by HR in personnel files.

As part of the new starter pre-employment checks, new recruits are sent a link to complete the Secondary Employment form and this is checked by the Resourcing team to ensure completion.

If an employee's circumstances change at any time in relation to secondary employment, they should complete a new declaration which then goes through the same approval process.

An appeals process is in place for any request that is denied.

### **Data (as of 10 February 2026)**

The following information has been collected as part of electronic returns of the secondary employment declarations. The Service does not currently undertake any formal internal reporting on Secondary Employment.

- Number of wholetime firefighters (headcount) have a registered secondary employment (excluding on-call with CFRS or other FRS): 87
- On-call with another FRS: 5
- Are wholetime and have two other jobs (on-call plus another): 17

### **Current Actions**

The service has an AFI in relation to working time

*"the service should have effective processes to monitor the working arrangements of staff"*

and therefore there is a large piece of work ongoing in relation to the service's Working Time Policy with the assistance of the Health and Safety team. As part of this work the associated policies and monitoring arrangements will be reviewed:

- The Secondary Employment Policy will be reviewed and refreshed as part of the Working Time Review before the next HMI data collection in November 2026:
  - Clear process for requests, authorisation and decision making which will ensure consistency, transparency and accurate record keeping.

- Clear steps on delivering outcomes to employees, including expectations of working hours and maintaining a work life balance as well as required standard of performance.
- Option for on-call staff to provide details of their primary employers (voluntarily) via the HR system
- Confirmation that the secondary employment policy is clearly referenced in induction and recruitment processes to capture any secondary employment of new starters
- Internal guidance for HR team and training session diarised on the process and monitoring. Includes working with recruitment team to ensure all new starters have completed the form.
- Working group set up looking at the technical aspect of monitoring and recording in accordance with and alongside working time directive
- Workforce Development Group monitoring number of requests and any issues arising from conflicts (i.e. appeals of refused requests)
- Annual comms plan to remind employees to complete requests and/or update their details

# Community Scrutiny Panel



## Resourcing, Talent and Wellbeing

**Date: 9 February 2026**

**Agenda Item No: 7 - STAFF RESIGNATIONS (including EXIT INTERVIEWS)**

**Originating Officer: AM Seel**

**CC: Toria Barnes – Resourcing, Talent and Wellbeing Lead**

**Executive Summary: (max 100 words)**

This report details the following updates:

1. CFRS Staff Resignations
2. Exit Interviews

### 1. CFRS Resignations

Below is the most recent resignation data for the service, with age, gender and role included. The data range is 01/07/2025 to 31/01/2026. Total leavers for this period were 29.

End of Fixed Term Contracts, Agreements, and Casual Worker Agreements have not been included in the below data.

Reason for leaving	Total count	Breakdown by role	Breakdown by age		Breakdown by gender
Dismissal - Probation	1	1 Green Book	46-55	1	1 Male
Resignation	15	2 Green Book 13 Grey Book On-Call	18 - 25	1	3 Female 12 Male
			26 - 35	6	
			36 - 45	2	
			46 - 55	4	
			56+	2	
Retirement - Age	11	3 Grey Book On-Call 8 Grey Book Regular	46 - 55	5	10 Male
			56+	5	
Early Retirement	1	1 Grey Book Regular	56+	1	1 Male
Retirement – Ill Health	2	1 Grey Book On-Call 1 Grey Book Regular	56+	2	2 Male

As shared in previous reports to the Panel, individual FRS's do not have access to national fire sector data or averages around retention or resignations, so we cannot confirm if we are in line

with national trends and performance data. However, we have been able to complete a comparison of the resignation data compared to existing year on year data. We have identified the following two observations:

- There has been a slight increase in resignations due to age across all operational roles, and this directly correlates to our own awareness that we have an aging workforce.
- The number of On-Call Firefighter resignations is consistent with our 5-year average leavers profile of 34 per year.

There are no further trends or patterns emerging from the data.

In line with the launch of our 2026 Workforce Plan, improvement activities are being completed by the Workforce Planning Group to develop consistent and visible performance dashboards regarding the employee life cycle. This will advance our approach to gathering, monitoring and reporting on recruitment, employment and leavers data. Work has commenced and workforce dashboards are forecasted for completion in May 2026.

## **2. Exit Interviews**

Following our previous report, work has now been completed to review the Leavers Policy. This policy focuses on support for leavers to ensure fair treatment, allows for consistent and effective data collation to review and reflect in recruitment and retention strategies. The policy supports the overarching aims:

- Any stigma or negative culture around leaving the Service is removed
- The process is more supportive for both the employee and manager
- Wellbeing support is built into the process for all Leavers, but especially for those retiring from Service

This has resulted in improvements specific to:

- Multiple options for leavers interviews are offered to staff, to encourage participation and be accessible for different duty systems, as On-Call currently see our highest turnover and we need detailed data which we previously haven't had access to
- Established data reporting to be implemented by the Workforce Planning Group to include leavers data.
- A 'Leaver's Pack' has been produced as part of the policy review, which includes information on how to request references/contact payroll etc. if you are joining a new employer, plus ongoing wellbeing information.

Previously, the only captured leavers interview information was via a Microsoft teams form, which had historically very low uptake and this has also been consistent with leavers during the above reference period. More encouragingly, we have seen a slight increase in the use of paper forms recently, suggesting some early benefits of offering a flexible approach to capturing leavers data. These will be shared at the dip-sampling session for review and feedback.

Training and expectations for managers on leavers interviews remains to be scheduled as it forms part of the wider role-based planning and development work being phased into the service during 2026. We will initially target the training with a strong On-call focus to enable the service to get a greater understanding of our highest role-based turnover to inform future practice.

# Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service

## Knowing our Communities Feedback



# Overview of The Session

## Aim

To develop a knowledge and understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

## Objectives

- Differentiate between equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Understand the 9 protected characteristics
- Identify the definitions of Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and Victimisation
- Understand privilege and unconscious bias
- Identify behaviours, language, and attitudes that promote equal and inclusive working relationships
- Discuss potential barriers faced in the UK Fire sector
- Understand the benefits of a diverse workforce and positive action
- Overview of the Staff Network groups



# BEFORE completing the session, how would you rate the following?

● Strongly Disagree   ● Disagree   ● Neither Agree or Disagree   ● Agree   ● Strongly Agree

I feel I can describe what Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mean?

I am aware of what the word Equity is within ED&I?

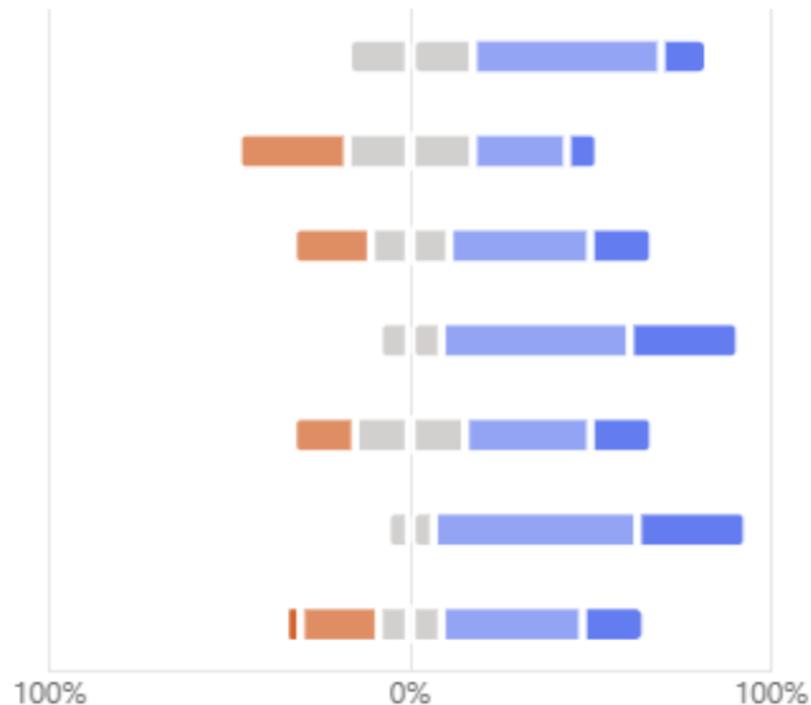
I understand what the 9 protected characteristics are?

I have an understanding of the terms, bullying, victimisation, discrimination and harassment?

I am aware of the differences between rights and privilege's?

I understand the benefits of a diverse workforce and the benefits to our community?

I am aware that CFRS has a number of Staff Networks?



# AFTER completing the session, how would you rate the following?

● Strongly Disagree   ● Disagree   ● Neither Agree or Disagree   ● Agree   ● Strongly Agree

I feel I can describe what Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mean?

I am aware of what the word Equity is within ED&I?

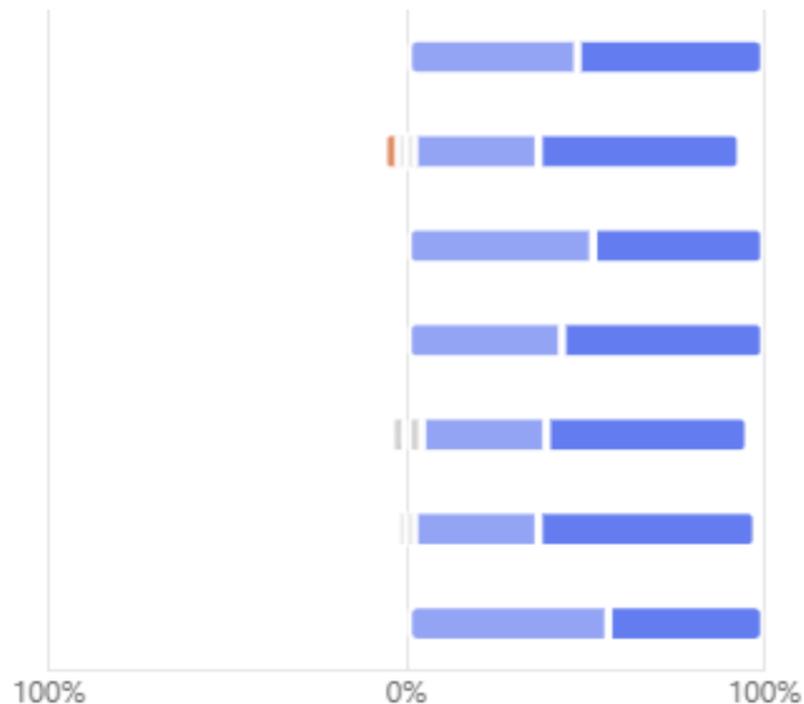
I understand what the 9 protected characteristics are?

I have an understanding of the terms, bullying, victimisation, discrimination and harassment?

I am aware of the differences between rights and privilege's?

I understand the benefits of a diverse workforce and the benefits to our community?

I am aware that CFRS has a number of Staff Networks?



# How would you rate the following for the Instructor (Kelly Drury)?

● Not well at all   ● Not very well   ● Somewhat well   ● Very well   ● Extremely well

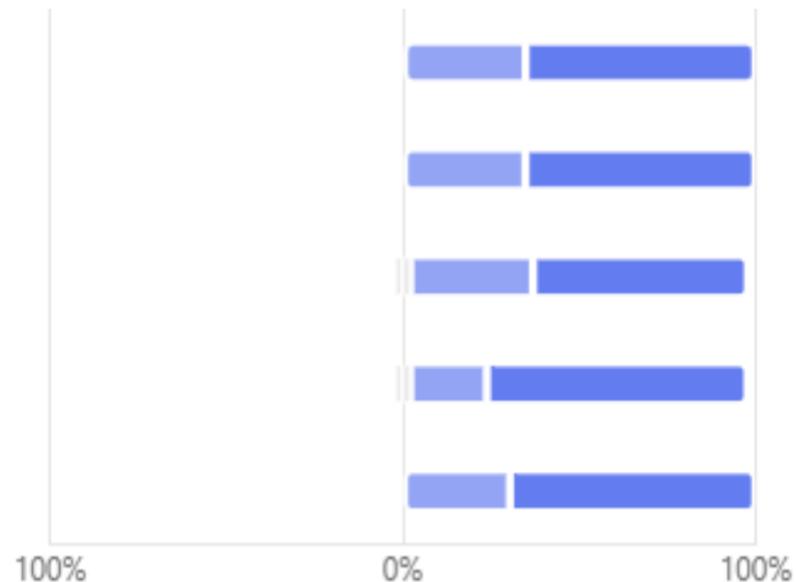
Explained the purpose of the event

Presented concepts in a clear and easy-to-understand way

Maintained my interest throughout the duration of the event

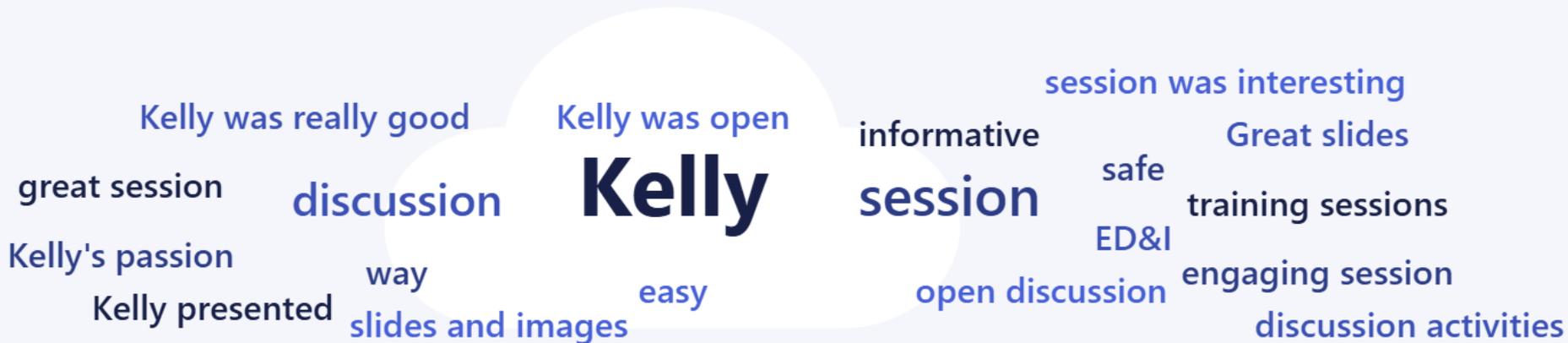
Encouraged attendee participation

Thoroughly answered questions from participants



## What did you like most about the session?

(45%) answered Kelly for this question.



## What did you like most about the session? (Examples)

The fact that it was face to face, more short training sessions should be delivered this way. Kelly was extremely knowledgeable and delivered the subject perfectly.

Kelly's passion for the subject was infectious, and it made for a very engaging session!

I enjoyed the whole session. The examples and explanations were really clear and easy to understand. The discussion activities were really thought provoking and helpful.

The way Kelly presented it with the slides, the way she explained and included those attending. The slides described were excellent and she was enthusiastic but made sure it was a safe place for people to learn and ask questions.

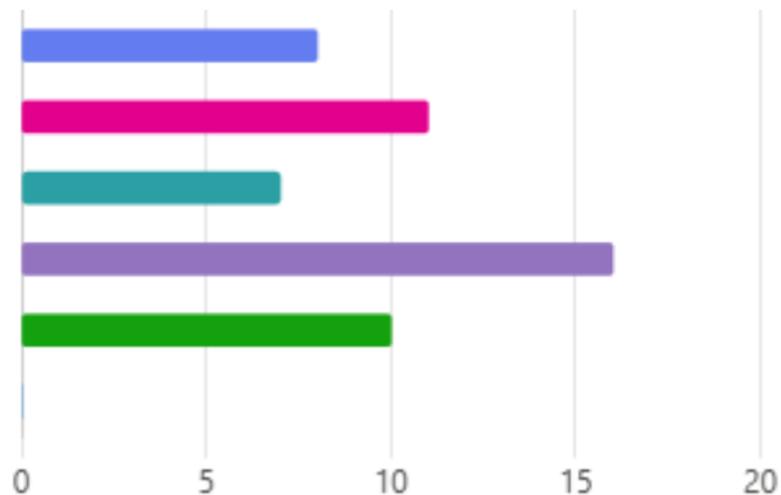
The session was interesting and informative

Been involved and really enjoyed the participation and learning more about EDI.



# What topic would you most like to see covered in the next ED&I Session?

- Inclusive language, Communication and use of Pronouns 8
- Neurodiversity 11
- Religion and Belief 7
- Mental Health 16
- Service policies and support 10
- Other 0





**Community Scrutiny Panel**  
**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Report**  
**2025**

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## Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the progress Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) has made in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) throughout 2025 and early 2026. Following a period without dedicated EDI leadership in 2024, the introduction of an EDI Watch Manager in 2025 has enabled the Service to make improvements across training, policy development, cultural governance, community engagement, and compliance with national expectations.

Key achievements include the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective EDI training to over 500 staff, the development of a new digital Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, strengthened governance through the Culture and Values Board, and a significant increase in engagement with under-represented communities. CFRS has also enhanced its communication approach, expanded staff network activity, and strengthened partnerships across Westmorland and Furness.

While progress has been considerable, the report also highlights areas requiring continued focus, including EIA quality assurance, structured monitoring, and maintaining internal EDI capacity to sustain momentum. Overall, CFRS has taken meaningful steps to address HMICFRS Areas for Improvement and is building a more inclusive, representative and values-driven organisation.

## Introduction

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is committed to fostering a culture where all staff feel valued, respected, and able to thrive, and where the communities we serve experience fairness, professionalism, and inclusion in every interaction. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is central to this commitment and underpins our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty, and national expectations set by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and HMICFRS.

In 2024, CFRS did not have a dedicated EDI lead, and progress in several key areas was limited. In 2025, the appointment of an EDI Watch Manager provided the Service with the capacity and leadership required to drive meaningful cultural improvement. This report outlines the work undertaken over the past year, the impact achieved, and the steps required to continue strengthening EDI across the organisation.

The report is structured around the major areas of work: EDI training, Equality Impact Assessments, cultural governance, community engagement, staff networks, communication, and partnership working. It also reflects on progress against HMICFRS Areas for Improvement and identifies opportunities for further development.

## Section 1: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Training

Over the past year, Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) has delivered a strengthened programme of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training to ensure our workforce is equipped to serve all communities fairly, respectfully and in line with national expectations. This work is essential to maintaining public trust, supporting a positive organisational culture, and meeting our statutory responsibilities.

### Legislative and National Drivers for Mandatory EDI Training

CFRS has clear legal and regulatory duties that require all staff to understand and apply EDI principles in their daily work. Mandatory training ensures compliance with:

#### Equality Act 2010

- Protects individuals from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Requires CFRS to make reasonable adjustments and ensure fair treatment for all staff and service users.

#### Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) – Section 149

Public bodies must demonstrate how they:

- Eliminate discrimination.
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics

Training is a key mechanism for evidencing compliance with the PSED.

#### Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

- Requires employers to provide a safe working environment, including psychological safety and protection from discriminatory behaviours.

#### National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Guidance

- The Core Code of Ethics places integrity, respect, and inclusion at the heart of professional conduct.
- The NFCC People Strategy emphasises inclusive leadership, cultural competence, and workforce capability.

#### HMICFRS Inspection Framework

- Services are assessed on culture, fairness, diversity, and inclusion.
- Inspectors expect to see evidence of meaningful, high-quality EDI training and its impact.

Mandatory EDI training is therefore not optional, it is a legal, ethical, and operational requirement.

## Overview of EDI Training Delivered

### *Red Snapper Training (External Provider)*

#### Course Objectives:

- Understanding EDI principles and their impact on staff, service users, and communities
- Key elements of the Equality Act 2010, CFRS policies and the Core Code of Ethics
- Unconscious bias, micro-aggressions and allyship
- Inclusive behaviours and language
- Challenging discrimination and inappropriate behaviour

#### Cost:

- £9,445 for 165 participants
- £57.20 per person

### *Brathay Trust – Middle Manager Training (External Provider)*

#### Course Objectives:

- Leadership behaviours aligned to the Core Code of Ethics
- Accountability, integrity, and role-modelling inclusive behaviours.
- Challenging poor conduct and supporting a positive culture

#### Cost:

- 10 participants: £2,610 (£261 per person) + expenses
- 20 participants: £4,955 (£247.75 per person) + expenses

### *CFRS Internal Delivery – “Knowing Our Communities” (Watch Manager-Led- Internal)*

#### Course Objectives:

- Understanding equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Equality Act 2010 and the nine protected characteristics
- Privilege and unconscious bias.
- Inclusive behaviours, language, and attitudes
- Benefits of a diverse workforce and positive action
- Awareness of staff networks.

#### Delivery & Reach:

- 30 sessions delivered between 29/11/2024 and 04/06/2025
- Approximately 500 participants
- Average session length: 2 hours

Cost:

- Total cost: £1,240.20
- £2.48 per person
- Delivery, travel, and preparation accounted for less than 4% of working hours.
- Equivalent wage cost: £1,810.40

This represents exceptional value for money, with internal delivery costing 95% less per participant than external providers while achieving significantly wider reach.

### Online Learning – LearnPro EDI, Inclusion & Belonging

- Completion rate currently at 44%
- Provides foundational knowledge but lacks the depth, discussion, and psychological safety of instructor-led sessions.

## Benefits of Instructor-Led EDI Training

Feedback and engagement levels demonstrate that instructor-led training, particularly when delivered internally, provides:

- A safer environment for open discussion
- Real-time challenge, clarification, and myth-busting
- Reduced risk of misinterpretation.
- Stronger empathy and shared understanding
- Higher engagement and accountability
- Tailoring to CFRS culture, operational context, and local community needs

## Value for Money Analysis

Provider	Cost per Person	Participants	Notes
Red Snapper	£57.20	165	External provider delivering core EDI content
Brathay Trust	£247 - £261	10-20	Leadership-focused training; additional expenses not included
CFRS (Internal WM)	£2.48	500	Highest reach, lowest cost; tailored to CFRS culture and community; <4% of working hours

Internal delivery has provided:

- The widest organisational reach
- The lowest cost per participant
- Training aligned directly to CFRS culture and community needs.
- High levels of engagement and positive feedback
- A sustainable model despite budget pressures

## Evidence of Impact

Feedback themes from participants include:

- Increased confidence in understanding the Equality Act and protected characteristics.
- Greater awareness of unconscious bias and its operational impact
- Improved ability to challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Stronger understanding of community diversity
- Requests for further sessions and deeper learning

This demonstrates a clear shift in awareness and behaviour across the organisation.

## Risks if Internal EDI Capacity Is Lost

With the internal EDI role ending in March, CFRS faces several risks:

- Increased reliance on costly external providers
- Reduced organisational capacity to deliver mandatory training.
- Lower compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Potential negative impact on HMICFRS inspection outcomes
- Loss of momentum in cultural improvement
- Reduced ability to respond quickly to emerging issues or incidents requiring EDI expertise.

Maintaining internal capability is the most cost-effective and sustainable way to meet statutory and cultural expectations.

## Section 2: Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a critical tool for ensuring that Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) meets its legal duties, delivers fair and inclusive services, and makes evidence-based decisions that consider the needs of all communities. Over the past year, significant work has taken place to strengthen our EIA processes, improve understanding across the organisation, and respond to the Areas for Improvement (AFIs) identified by HMICFRS.

### Legislative and National Context

CFRS is required to complete EIAs under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) within the Equality Act 2010, which requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination.
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different groups

Completing EIAs, and demonstrating how they influence decisions, is one of the primary ways a fire and rescue service evidence compliance with the PSED.

National expectations also reinforce this requirement:

#### HMICFRS AFI – EDI12

*“The service should make sure it has robust processes in place to carry out equality impact assessments and review any action agreed as a result.”*

#### HMICFRS 3.3 Fairness and Diversity – Key Focus Areas for Next Inspection

Inspectors will specifically look for:

- Evidence of how completing an EIA has changed the outcome.
- Clear actions and decision-making processes following an EIA.
- Learning captured through a glossary or lessons-learned mechanism.
- How EDI considerations influence wellbeing, people, and organisational culture

#### NFCC Guidance

The NFCC provides national training and templates to support consistent, high-quality EIAs. In March 2025, CFRS invested in this by sending a representative to complete the NFCC EIA course (£145 per person). For comparison, Gloucestershire FRS has trained 55 managers, including senior leaders, through the same programme, demonstrating the scale of investment seen in other services.

## Current Position in CFRS

CFRS has made progress in developing its EIA processes, but there remains a significant amount of work to meet national expectations and the HMICFRS AFI.

### Completed EIAs

- 6 fully completed and signed-off EIAs.

### EIAs Under Review

- 30 EIAs reviewed and returned to authors for further development, clarification, or evidence.
  - All reviews and feedback have been completed by Kelly Drury (WM EDI), who has also provided one-to-one guidance to authors.

### Screened-Out EIAs

- 47 policies/strategies screened as 'not requiring an EIA'.
- Based on review, 38 of these should have had a full EIA completed
  - This highlights inconsistent understanding of when an EIA is required and the need for further training and quality assurance.

## Improvements Made in 2025

Despite limited resources, meaningful progress has been made:

### New Digital EIA Form

- A new online EIA form has been created by the EDI WM using Microsoft Forms
- This enables:
  - Easier completion
  - Better consistency
  - Improved tracking and version control
  - Centralised storage and accessibility

### New EIA Guidance Document

- A comprehensive guidance document has been produced to support staff in completing EIAs.
- This includes step-by-step instructions, examples, and prompts to ensure robust analysis.

### Training and Support

- All EIA training, coaching and initial reviews have been delivered by the EDI WM.
- Managers have received tailored support, significantly improving the quality of submissions.

These developments provide a foundation for a more robust and auditable EIA process.

## Gaps and Risks

Currently, CFRS does not have a structured monitoring or review mechanism for EIAs. This presents several risks:

- Inability to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Limited evidence for HMICFRS that EIAs influence decisions
- Missed opportunities to identify and mitigate negative impacts.
- Inconsistent quality and understanding across the organisation.
- Reduced transparency and accountability.

Without dedicated internal EDI capacity, these risks will increase.

### Required Improvements to Meet HMICFRS Expectations

To address the AFI and strengthen organisational compliance, CFRS should implement the following:

#### An EIA Action Tracker

A central tracker should record:

- All mitigation actions
- Action owners
- Deadlines
- Progress updates
- RAG status

This should be reviewed regularly at:

- Culture & Values Board
- Performance & Standardisation Meetings
- Senior Leadership Team

#### Formal Review Dates

Every EIA should include a review schedule, for example:

- 6 months after implementation
- Annually
- Whenever a policy, strategy, or project changes

#### Lessons Learned / Glossary

A central repository for learning from EIAs is still required.

This has been discussed with Danielle Cox (29/01/2026) and further work is planned.

### Strengthened Quality Assurance

CFRS should consider:

- Establishing an EIA Assessor Panel
- External quality assurance or benchmarking with other FRSs
- Requiring EIAs to be attached to all papers going to SLT or programme boards
- Clear communication on the importance of accurate equality data
- Ensuring sensitive data is removed before publishing EIAs to demonstrate transparency.

### Wider Training Rollout

- Training should be extended to all managers and policy authors.

### Value of Internal Expertise

Over the last 12 months all progress to date, including the creation of the digital EIA system, guidance documents, training, and quality assurance, has been delivered by the EDI WM.

This has provided:

- Consistency in approach
- Significant cost savings compared to external training.
- Improved organisational understanding.
- A single point of expertise for managers
- A foundation for meeting HMICFRS expectations

With the internal EDI role ending in March due to budget reductions, CFRS risks losing the only dedicated resource currently supporting EIA compliance.

## Section 3: Culture and Values Board

The Culture and Values (C+V) Board continues to play a central role in shaping a positive, inclusive, and values-driven culture across Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS). Established to provide leadership, oversight and a clear mechanism for staff voice, the Board ensures that the Service's values are embedded in everyday practice and that staff networks are empowered to influence decision-making.

### Purpose and Function of the Board

The Board provides strategic direction and governance for cultural improvement, with a focus on:

- Fostering an inclusive, respectful, and values-led organisational culture.
- Supporting and amplifying the work of staff networks
- Providing a recognised route for staff to raise issues relating to culture, inclusion, and wellbeing
- Ensuring policies, practices and training programmes reflect the Service's values and the needs of its workforce.
- Driving cultural change through collaboration, transparency, and accountability

The Board acts as a focal point for cultural leadership, ensuring that EDI considerations are embedded across all areas of business.

### Membership and Engagement

In 2025, the Board met in April, July, and October, and again in January 2026, with broad representation from across the organisation and partner agencies, including:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Human Resources
- Estates Team
- Staff Networks
- Corporate Staff
- Resourcing, Talent, and Wellbeing
- Cumbria Police
- Operational Crews
- Organisational Development Manager
- Watch Manager (EDI)

This diverse representation ensures that cultural issues are considered from multiple perspectives and that staff networks have direct access to senior decision-makers.

A dedicated SharePoint area has been created to publish agendas and minutes, supporting openness and transparency.

## Strengthening Staff Networks

Staff networks continue to be a vital source of insight, challenge, and support. To enhance visibility and accessibility, a dedicated SharePoint space has been created for each network, including sections for:

- Listen and Learn sessions.
- Useful information
- Support and help.
- Staff stories and lived experience.

### Key Achievements of Staff Networks in 2025

- **Armed Forces Network** – Achieved the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award.
- **Disability Network** – Developed a new Employee Inclusion Passport and introduced a Disability and Neurodiversity Policy.
- **LGBT+ Network** – Represented CFRS at all major PRIDE events across Cumbria.
- **Mental Health Network** – Expanded Mental Health First Aider provision, attended suicide prevention training (Every Life Matters), and launched the CFRS Back Up Buddy App.
- **Gender Network** – Delivered a joint Menopause Café with Cumbria Police.

These achievements demonstrate the growing maturity and influence of staff networks within CFRS.

## Estates Improvements Supporting Inclusion

The Estates Team has undertaken phased work across the Service to ensure facilities reflect modern expectations of dignity, safety, and inclusion. Key improvements include:

- Creation of gender-neutral facilities
- Enhanced sanitary provision.
- Welfare and decontamination improvements

These changes directly support staff wellbeing and align with national expectations around inclusive workplaces.

## Policy and Governance Improvements

The Board has reviewed and influenced a wide range of policies, procedures, and projects, including:

- **Sexual Harassment Policy** – Introduced following changes to UK legislation (October 2024) requiring employers to take reasonable steps to prevent workplace sexual harassment.

- **Terms of Reference** – Developed for the Culture and Values Board, with work underway to create TORs for all staff networks.
- **Inclusion Passport** – A voluntary tool enabling staff and managers to record adjustments and support needs, supported by new guidance for both parties.
- **White Ribbon Accreditation** – Work initiated to support the national campaign to end violence against women and girls.
- **Disability and Neuro-Inclusion Policy** – Newly created to address a gap in provision and aligned with the Inclusion Passport.
- **EIA Process** – Oversight of the move to a digital EIA system and improved guidance.
- **Standards of Dress Policy** – Under Review.
- **Reservists and CFAVs Policy** – Reviewed to ensure fairness and consistency.
- **Gender Pay Gap Summary** – Reviewed to support transparency and action planning.
- **Salary Sacrifice Car Scheme** – Reviewed to ensure equitable access.

This demonstrates the Board’s active role in shaping policy and ensuring alignment with Service values and legal requirements.

## Culture and Values Interview Panels

Culture and Values Panels have been embedded across promotion and recruitment processes to ensure:

- Candidates are assessed not only on competence but also on alignment with Service values.
- Positive culture and inclusive behaviours are prioritised.
- Staff networks have a voice in shaping the future workforce.

This approach strengthens fairness, transparency, and trust in selection processes.

## Impact and Future Priorities

The Culture and Values Board has significantly strengthened CFRS’s cultural governance, improved staff voice, and supported the development of inclusive policies and practices. Key impacts include:

- Greater visibility and influence of staff networks
- Improved transparency through SharePoint publication of minutes and agendas
- Stronger alignment between policy development and EDI principles
- Enhanced cross-departmental collaboration
- Increased focus on wellbeing, inclusion and lived experience.

#### Future priorities include:

- Embedding the Inclusion Passport and Disability & Neuro-Inclusion Policy
- Strengthening the governance and consistency of staff networks
- Continuing estates improvements to support dignity and inclusion
- Ensuring Culture and Values Panels remain integral to recruitment and promotion.
- Strengthening links between the Board, EIA processes and organisational decision-making

## Section 4: Identifying and Overcoming Barriers to Equal Opportunity (EDI 11)

HMICFRS identified an Area for Improvement (EDI 11) requiring CFRS to “*identify and overcome barriers to equal opportunity so its workforce better represents its community.*”

In 2024, CFRS had no dedicated EDI lead, and progress in this area was limited. Since the appointment of an EDI Watch Manager in early 2025, significant work has taken place to strengthen community engagement, improve representation, and build the foundations for a more inclusive workforce.

### Strengthening Community Engagement

In July 2025, CFRS introduced a new Community Engagement Policy, created to provide clear expectations and guidance for all staff representing the Service at community events. This policy supports CFRS’s commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion by ensuring that engagement with the public is respectful, professional, and inclusive.

#### Key areas covered in the policy:

- Representation and conduct
- Uniform and appearance.
- Impartiality and political neutrality
- Staff briefing requirements.
- Use of photography and social media

This policy provides consistency, safeguards professionalism, and ensures that CFRS is represented appropriately across diverse communities.

#### Increased Community Presence and Representation

Data from Form 541: Community Engagement & Activity shows a significant increase in community engagement between 2024 and 2025.

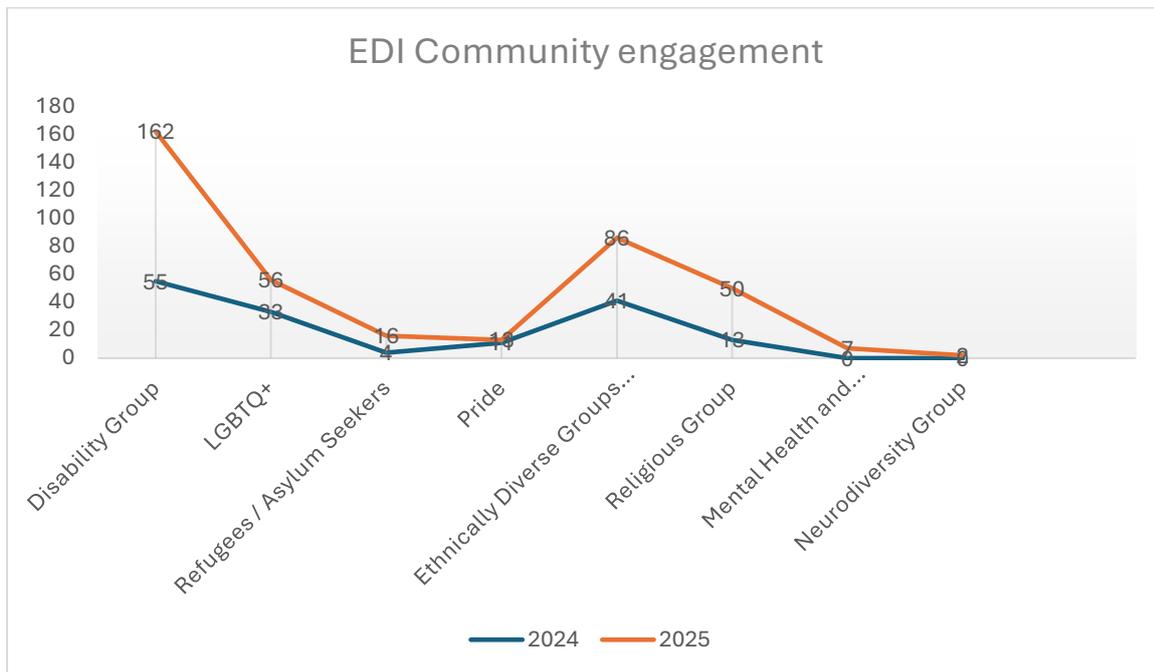
### Total Community Events Attended

- **2024:** 1,312
- **2025:** 2,114
- **Increase:** +802 events (+61%)

This demonstrates a substantial uplift in visibility, outreach, and community connection.

### Engagement with Key EDI Groups

Community Group	2024	2025
Disability Group	55	162
LGBTQ+	33	56
Refugees / Asylum Seekers	4	16
Pride	11	13
Ethnically Diverse Groups (BME, BAME, Culturally Diverse, etc...)	41	86
Religious Group	13	50
Mental Health and Wellbeing	0	7
Neurodiversity Group	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>392</b>



This represents a **150% increase** in engagement with under-represented and minority communities.

These improvements directly support the AFI by:

- Increasing CFRS visibility in communities that are under-represented in the workforce.
- Building trust and relationships that support future recruitment.

- Demonstrating commitment to inclusion and representation
- Improving understanding of community needs and barriers

## Removing Barriers to Equal Opportunity

The work undertaken in 2025 has begun to address several key barriers identified in the AFI:

### Structured community engagement

The new policy and SharePoint resources will help provide clear guidance and consistency.

### Engagement with minority groups

Engagement with EDI-related community groups has more than doubled.

### EDI leadership

The introduction of a dedicated EDI Watch Manager has enabled:

- Policy development
- Data analysis
- Identifying priority community groups
- Staff support
- Training and guidance

### Impact on Workforce Representation

This increased engagement with under-represented communities provides a stronger foundation for:

- Targeted recruitment
- Positive action initiatives
- Improved trust and visibility
- Better understanding of barriers to joining CFRS.

This work is essential to meeting the AFI and ensuring CFRS better reflects the communities it serves.

### Next Steps to Fully Address EDI 11

To continue progress and meet HMICFRS expectations, CFRS should:

- Strengthen links between community engagement and recruitment activity.
- Use community data to inform targeted outreach and positive action.
- Continue building relationships with EDI groups across Cumbria.
- Ensure all departments understand their role in community representation.
- Maintain dedicated EDI leadership to coordinate and drive this work.

## Summary

Since the introduction of a dedicated EDI lead in 2025, CFRS has made significant progress in identifying and overcoming barriers to equal opportunity. Community engagement has increased dramatically, relationships with under-represented groups have strengthened, and new policies and resources have been introduced to support inclusive practice.

This work provides a strong foundation for improving workforce representation and demonstrates clear progress against HMICFRS AFI EDI 11.

## Section 5: Additional Key EDI Work in 2025

Alongside the work already outlined, 2025 saw progress across a range of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) activities. These initiatives have strengthened organisational awareness, improved communication, and enhanced CFRS's ability to meet national expectations around culture, values, and inclusion.

### EDI Plan on a Page

To support clarity and alignment across the organisation, an EDI Plan on a Page was developed in 2025. This provides a concise, accessible overview of CFRS's EDI priorities and how they align with wider strategic documents.

The plan was informed by a comprehensive review of:

- CFRS EDI Strategy (pending publication)
- People Strategy
- Gender Pay Gap Report
- Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)
- PFCC Fire Plan
- Benchmarking with other fire and rescue services
- NFCC Culture Action Plan
- HMICFRS Spotlight Report on Culture and Values
- HMICFRS Report on Misconduct

This ensures CFRS's EDI priorities are grounded in national guidance, local risk, and best practice across the sector.

### Strengthening EDI Communication

Effective communication has been a key driver of cultural improvement throughout 2025. A dedicated EDI section was introduced in the CFRS Weekly Update, ensuring regular visibility of inclusion-related topics.

Since March 2025, 43 EDI articles have been produced, covering themes such as:

- Black History Month
- International Week of Deaf People
- Autism Pride Day
- Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
- Transgender Awareness
- Menopause Awareness
- Workshops, training opportunities, and events

These articles have increased awareness, normalised conversations about inclusion, and provided staff with practical guidance and support.

### Supporting Resources

Alongside the weekly articles, numerous guidance documents, support materials and learning resources have been created and uploaded to the Staff Network SharePoint pages, ensuring staff have easy access to information.

### Lunch and Learn Sessions

To encourage open dialogue and shared learning, a few Lunch and Learn sessions were delivered, including:

- Mental Health Awareness Week (May 2025)
- Autism Pride Day (June 2025)
- World Suicide Prevention Drop-In (September 2025)

These sessions created safe spaces for discussion, increased understanding of key topics, and strengthened staff engagement with EDI.

### EDI Culture Calendar

At the start of 2025, an EDI Culture Calendar was introduced to coordinate communication, events, and awareness activities throughout the year. This ensured a structured, proactive approach to EDI engagement and helped staff anticipate upcoming themes and opportunities.

## Westmorland and Furness Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Partnership Network

In July 2025, CFRS became a member of the Westmorland and Furness Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Partnership Network (WFDEIP), a collaborative group of public services, third-sector organisations and community groups working together to advance equity and inclusion across the region.

CFRS involvement has included:

- Participation in the Tackling Racism Sub-Group (Kelly Drury)
- Representation on the Communications Sub-Group (Liam Waite)
- Attendance at the Anti-Racist Cumbria Summit
- Participation in the EDI Extravaganza Day in Kendal
- Hosting a Home Safety Event for Integrate Cumbria CIC's "Stronger Together" project.

This partnership has strengthened CFRS's community relationships, improved understanding of local needs, and enhanced opportunities for collaborative working.

### Strategic Impact

These additional pieces of work have contributed to:

- A more informed and engaged workforce.
- Stronger community partnerships
- Increased visibility of EDI across the organisation
- Improved alignment with national expectations
- Greater transparency and accessibility of EDI resources
- A more proactive and structured approach to cultural improvement

### Future Priorities

While significant progress has been made throughout 2025, continued improvement in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will require sustained focus, leadership, and investment. To build on the foundations established this year and meet national expectations, CFRS should prioritise the following areas over the next 12–24 months.

#### Strengthen Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Governance

- Embed the new digital EIA process across all departments.
- Introduce a formal EIA action tracker with clear ownership, deadlines, and RAG status.
- Establish an EIA Assessor Panel to improve quality assurance.
- Ensure EIAs are attached to all papers going to SLT, Programme Boards and decision-making forums.
- Develop a lessons-learned repository to support organisational learning.
- Increase EIA training for managers and policy authors.

These steps will ensure CFRS can demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and meet HMICFRS expectations for transparency and accountability.

### Maintain and Strengthen Internal EDI Capacity

- Ensure dedicated EDI leadership remains in place to coordinate training, EIAs, staff networks, community engagement, and policy development.
- Build resilience by developing EDI champions across departments.
- Provide ongoing professional development for those involved in EDI work.

Without internal capacity, progress made in 2025 risks stalling, and the Service may struggle to meet future inspection requirements.

### Improve Workforce Representation

- Use community engagement data to inform targeted recruitment and positive action.
- Strengthen relationships with under-represented groups to build trust and visibility.
- Review recruitment processes to identify and remove barriers.

This will support progress against HMICFRS AFI EDI 11.

### Continue Developing an Inclusive Culture

- Embed the Inclusion Passport and Disability & Neuro-Inclusion Policy
- Strengthen governance and consistency across staff networks.
- Continue estates improvements to support dignity, privacy, and inclusion.
- Increase leadership development focused on inclusive behaviours.

These actions will help ensure CFRS remains aligned with the NFCC Core Code of Ethics and national cultural expectations.

### Enhance Data, Insight and Reporting

- Improve the collection and use of equality data to inform decision-making.
- Increase staff confidence in sharing personal data through clear communication and transparency.
- Develop dashboards or reporting mechanisms to track progress against EDI objectives.
- Use data to identify trends, risks, and opportunities for improvement.

Better data will support more targeted interventions and stronger evidence for inspection.

### Strengthen External Partnerships

- Continue active involvement in the Westmorland and Furness Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Partnership Network
- Build new relationships with community organisations representing under-served groups.
- Explore opportunities for joint training, events, and community initiatives.
- Share learning and best practice with other fire and rescue services.

Partnership working will help CFRS remain outward-facing, informed and connected to the communities it serves.

### Embed a Structured EDI Communication Strategy

- Continue regular EDI articles, awareness campaigns and learning resources.
- Expand Lunch and Learn sessions and staff engagement opportunities.
- Use the EDI Culture Calendar to plan communication and events throughout the year.
- Increase visibility of staff networks and their achievements.

Consistent communication will help maintain momentum and reinforce cultural expectations.

## Conclusion

Over the past year, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service has made significant and measurable progress in strengthening Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. The reintroduction of a dedicated EDI role and support from Senior Leadership has enabled the Service to build strong foundations, improve compliance, enhance cultural governance, and increase engagement with under-represented communities. Staff networks have developed, policies have been modernised, and EDI communication has become a visible and consistent part of organisational life.

The improvements outlined in this report demonstrate clear progress against HMICFRS Areas for Improvement, particularly in relation to EDI training, Equality Impact Assessments, and identifying and overcoming barriers to equal opportunity. However, continued progress will depend on maintaining internal EDI capacity, embedding new processes, and ensuring that cultural improvement remains a shared responsibility across all levels of the organisation.

CFRS is on a positive trajectory. With sustained commitment, strong leadership and continued investment in EDI, the Service is well-positioned to build a more inclusive workforce, strengthen public trust, and ensure that its culture and values are reflected in everything it does.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

### Engaging with Communities Position Statement

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

The service abides by the national Core Code of Ethics developed in partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council, Local Government Association, and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

The code includes the following five ethical principles:

- **Putting our communities first** – we put the interest of the public, the community and service users first
- **Integrity** – we act with integrity, including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do
- **Dignity** and respect – making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias
- **Leadership** – we are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards
- **Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)** – We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI both within the FRSs and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference

Our attendance at a wide variety of community events every year supports our commitment to this code, and allows us to engage with communities which the service may otherwise struggle to reach.

They provide a platform for us to share key safety messages and support recruitment of key team members, from firefighters through to corporate roles, all of whom help save lives.

Employees, casual workers and volunteers attending these events to engage with communities are reminded to remain professional and respectful, comply with the service's values and Core Code of Ethics, be mindful of their role as ambassadors of the service, and avoid engaging in political or controversial discussions while in uniform or branded attire.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England outlines priorities for fire and rescue authorities which include:

Making Cumbria a safer place for all



- collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide;
- be accountable to communities for the service they provide; and
- develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse

We believe that our attendance at community events help us to achieve these goals, particularly in relation to our Prevention and Protection work and recruitment.

Attendance at these events also supports our duty and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and aims to ensure respectful, professional and inclusive engagement with the public. Our engagement with our diverse communities allows us to ensure policies, practices and service delivery do not discriminate. They foster equal opportunity and assist us to identify and remove barriers, as part of our public sector equality duty.

As well as attending community events, Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service also supports a wide range of national and local awareness campaigns and days which support broad engagement with communities which may be hard to reach or require specific guidance, all with the aim of making our communities safer.

Engaging with  
Communities  
Guidance.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Version Control	Changes Made	Author
Version 1 July 2025	Initial Version	Kelly Drury

### Contents

#### 1. Introduction

This policy outlines the expectations and guidance for all staff when representing Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service at community events.

It supports our duty and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and aims to ensure respectful, professional and inclusive engagement with the public.

#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, casual workers and volunteers of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

#### 3. Principles

The following principles underpin this guidance:

- Promoting a culture of inclusion, respect and dignity.
- Celebrating and supporting diverse communities.
- Understanding communities' needs and expectations.
- Ensuring professional conduct and alignment with the service's values.

Making Cumbria a safer place for all



## 4. Representation

Staff attending a community event should:

- Always comply with the service's values and Core Code of Ethics.
- Act in a professional and respectful manner.
- Be mindful of their role as ambassadors of the service.
- Avoid engaging in political or controversial discussions while in uniform or branded attire.

## 5. Uniform and Appearance

### Uniformed Staff

- Should wear full uniform unless otherwise advised.
- Optional additions (e.g. rainbow epaulettes, lanyards, shoelaces) are permitted where appropriate and approved.
- Uniform must be worn neatly and respectfully, in line with the standards of dress policy.

### Corporate Staff

- Should wear supplied service uniform or smart casual attire, as appropriate.
- Optional additions (e.g. rainbow epaulettes, lanyards, shoelaces) are permitted where appropriate and approved.

Staff attending in a non-official capacity should not wear service uniform as highlighted in the standards of dress policy ([Link](#))

## 6. Impartiality and Political Neutrality

- Staff must maintain political neutrality when representing the service at public events.
- Staff attending any events must not carry or display flags, banners, logos or other items linked to external organisations, groups or causes. This is to ensure we remain impartial and do not appear to support any specific political or ideological views.

- The wearing of rainbow regalia at PRIDE events is permitted as long as it is not embossed or linked to external organisations, groups or causes. Similarly, displaying an insignia of any one of our recognised trade unions is permitted in so far as it does not associate or carry any matter outlined above.
- Staff must avoid making public political statements or engaging in political debates during events.
- To avoid staff becoming inadvertently involved in a situation that may bring into question their impartiality on a matter or appear to support a particular political or ideological view, no member of staff other than anyone authorised by a senior officer may speak on behalf of the service.
- It is the responsibility of each member of staff to ensure that they are complying with the above points. Where a member of staff has any doubt about any image, insignia, chant or other such matters, they are encouraged to remove themselves from that immediate situation and away from anything that they feel may breach any of the above points.
- The above ensures the service remains impartial, inclusive and trusted by all members of the community.

## 7. Staff Briefing

Before attending community events it's important to brief your team to ensure respectful, open and thoughtful engagement. Here are some key points to cover:

- **Event Purpose and audience:** What is the purpose of the event, does the event have a mission statement and how can the service contribute to the event?
- **Respect and Open-Mindedness:** Emphasise the importance of approaching all individuals and groups with respect, regardless of background, beliefs or experiences. Encourage active listening and a willingness to learn.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Remind the team that different communities may have customs, communication styles or sensitivities that differ from their own. It's okay not to know everything, what matters is being respectful and asking questions appropriately if unsure.
- **Avoid Assumptions:** Encourage team members not to make assumptions about people's identities, experiences or needs. Instead, let individuals and groups share their own stories and perspectives.
- **Language Matters:** Use inclusive and non-judgmental language. If someone shares a preferred way to be addressed (e.g. pronouns or titles), make an effort to use them correctly.
- **Fire Service Values:** Reinforce that the Core Code of Ethics, especially "putting our communities first", should guide all interactions. This includes being approachable, supportive and community focused.

- **Representation and Listening:** Remind the team that their presence is not just about representing the service, but also about listening and building trust with communities that may not always feel heard.

## 8. Health, safety, and Risk

- A risk assessment must be completed for each event.
- Before attending the event, the mission statement and/or purpose of the event must be identified. This is to ensure that only events that align with the service values and Core Code of Ethics are attended.
- Staff must follow all health and safety procedures and report any incidents or concerns to the event lead and the Flexi duty officer.
- Any accidents or injuries should be reported as an adverse safety event (add link)

## 9. Photographs and Social Media

- As far as can reasonably be achieved, no member of staff should allow themselves to be photographed or videoed in a situation that may bring into question their impartiality or political view.
- Where a member of staff feels they may have inadvertently found themselves in a situation or image where it may contravene this guidance, they should inform the flexi duty officer at their earliest opportunity, setting out the circumstances and matter.
- Before sharing any information or photographs from community events, ensure that it does not breach confidentiality and or data protection, permission has been given by others involved, and that the social media policy is adhered to. (add links).
- If in any doubt about any of the above, seek advice from the service's communication officer and/or the Human Resources department.

## 10. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- Staff are encouraged to provide feedback after events to help improve future engagement.
- Feedback will be reviewed and used to improve engagement at future events.
- All community engagement activities and attendance should be recorded on Form 541
- This policy will be reviewed annually or following significant events or changes in legislation.

# Community Scrutiny Panel



## Resourcing, Talent and Wellbeing

**Date: 9 February 2026**

**Agenda Item No: 9**

**Originating Officer: AM Seel**

**CC: Toria Barnes – Resourcing, Talent and Wellbeing Lead**

### **Executive Summary: (max 100 words)**

This report will provide the Community Scrutiny panel with an update on Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) employee establishment and recruitment program.

This report details the following updates:

1. Employee Establishment
2. Recruitment Programme
  - Policy, procedure and guidance review
  - On- call recruitment
  - Wholetime recruitment
  - Corporate recruitment

### **1. Employee Establishment**

The current CFRS employee establishment is as follows:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Green Book (Corporate)</b>	79
<b>Grey Book On – Call</b>	353
<b>Grey Book Wholetime</b>	223
<b>Associate Trainers and Instructors</b>	44

### **2. Recruitment Programme**

#### **2.1 Policy, procedure and guidance review update**

### Resourcing and Talent Policy

The Resourcing and Talent team have worked on several Policy updates, the most significant has involved the launch of our new Resourcing and Talent policy. This policy is aligned to our core code of ethics and is weighted towards delivering one of our six strategic objectives in our People Strategy; the commitment for CFRS to get the right person in the right role at the right time, to make Cumbria a safer place for all. The overriding principles of this policy are to ensure fair treatment to all employees and applicants, promote equal opportunities, diversity, positive action and comply with legislation.

### Leavers Policy

A new leavers policy was launched in Autumn 2025 which focuses on support for leavers to ensure fair treatment, allow consistent and effective data collation to review and reflect in recruitment and retention strategies. As part of this, a detailed leavers checklist has been created for managers to use with their employees to ensure that all necessary activities are completed and all relevant departments are notified. The policy gives employees the choice of completing one or more of the following: an anonymous leaver form, an exit interview, or a separation questionnaire, which provides flexibility for individual needs.

### Probation and Induction Policy

The Probation and Induction policy was reviewed and published in 2025 to give guidance and an understanding of how inductions and probations should be managed whether the employee is on-call, wholetime or corporate member of staff. This has streamlined our induction and probation processes, ensuring consistency in approach across every role in the service.

### Operational Fitness Policy

The Operational Fitness Policy launched in Spring 2025 and annual testing cycle was brought forward by 3 months to support the introduction of the policy. The changes of this policy will help CFRS align with the requirements of HMI and evidence is showing that our overall number of outstanding fitness tests has now been reduced to only 2% of the operational workforce. The remaining 2% are within a management process in line with the new policy. We have also filled two vacant fitness associate posts to support the Services aim of having a happy, healthy and present workforce.

### Disability and Neuro-inclusion Policy

A Disability and Neuro-inclusion policy is currently out for consultation with our trade union colleagues. This policy is aimed at supporting employees and managers so that we have the right knowledge and tools to correctly support our disabled and neurodiverse people. We believe that efforts to create and maintain a disability and neuro-inclusive organisation will help foster creativity, different viewpoints, richer ideas, and innovation,

which is proven to help improve organisational performance, ultimately protecting and valuing our communities we serve.

### Recruitment e-Learn

With a focus on inclusive recruitment to remove unconscious bias and discrimination wherever possible, a recruitment E Learning is now available via LearnPro/PDRPro. The aim of this is to give employees essential information to deliver fair, safe and ethical recruitment. There is an expectation that those who are involved in recruitment whether that be shortlisting, interviewing or assessing candidates complete the training prior to commencing recruitment activity.

Since the launch of the training, we have had approximately 295 employees complete the training at least once. While this number does not account for everyone in the service this gives us a good coverage of those who have undertaken some part of a recruitment process.

## **2.2 On-call recruitment**

In 2025 we ran two on call recruitment processes which resulted in 30 On-call firefighters joining the Service. Various engagement sessions and station open evenings were held. We have introduced the launch of PRIME which stands for Preparing Recruits for Initial Mandatory Education. It's an innovative approach that bridges the gap between the recruitment process and starting their initial training course. Once the candidate has successfully completed the recruitment process, they will be employed as a developing Firefighter, receive an induction and their uniform and be paid to join their on-call station on their drill nights and begin integrating with their crews.

The feedback on this so far is positive with candidates advising that they feel part of the crew and gives them tangible outputs to work towards. This initiative has been introduced based on employee retention and leavers data, and feedback from existing employees. The Service will review the initiative after 12 months to identify if the benefits have been realised from the new and innovative approach.

There are currently no significant changes planned to the on-call recruitment process. However, consideration is being given to reviewing our application of the mental agility tests and how effective these are locally. These do not form part of the national On-call standard so a consideration of other methods of problem solving may be explored.

## **2.3 Wholetime recruitment**

There were no wholetime Firefighter recruitment undertaken in 2025. No wholetime firefighter recruitment is currently planned for 2026.

### Middle and Senior Leaders

The Service ran several promotion boards which included Area Managers, Group Managers and Station Managers towards the end of 2025, and Watch and Crew Managers in January/February 2026.

In relation to the 2025 Promotion Boards, we had a high number of applicants and very successful assessment days across all levels and this has resulted in several permanent appointments across the organisation. At the end of all processes debriefs are carried out and any lessons learnt or areas for attention are addressed and considered for the next process.

### Supervisory Managers

For the recent Supervisory Promotion Process we received a total of 27 Watch Manager applications and 37 Crew Manager applications. Due to these high volumes of applicants this became a very time-consuming process. Going forward we are exploring opportunities to streamline our Promotion Processes by considering the use of Artificial Intelligence that has proven to reduce administrative workloads and support a more efficient shortlisting and assessment process in other Fire and Rescue Services. At the time of writing this report a formal debrief was yet to be held.

Emphasis on providing feedback to candidates from their interviews and drill assessments featured high on the agenda, as this has been an area we continue to try and improve in every process. Panel members were made aware that feedback needed to be of quality and substance so that candidates go on to receive meaningful and valuable feedback. This will allow us to better support our employees and to identify any areas of growth and talent.

To capture views and opinions from candidates we asked them to complete an online survey to gather their feedback to help shape future processes. The responses to these are yet to be analysed. As part of the feedback process, we also contacted those that were part of the process in anyway (admin, shortlisting, assessments etc) to request feedback.

### Future Promotion Processes

A Station Manager Promotion Board is being considered by the Workforce Planning Group with a view to it taking place in Autumn 2026 based on future service requirements.

## **2.4 Corporate recruitment**

In 2025 we have recruited to 23 green book posts. Roles were more difficult to fill that were only offered on a temporary, fixed term contract. The Service has used a variety of methods to ensure that service needs are met. These have included the cost-effective use of the Additional Responsibility Policy and use of a recruitment agency to fill critical short-term positions.



# Community Scrutiny Panel



## People

**Date: 9 February 2026**

**Agenda Item No: 10**

**Originating Officer: Area Manager Ian Seel**

### Executive Summary: (max 100 words)

This report provides an update to the Community Scrutiny Panel on the People AFI's arising from the HMICFRS inspection, outlining the Service's approach to address/monitor the AFI's and how the Panel can support this.

### 1. People AFI

Following the HMICFRS inspection of the Service in 2025 the following AFI's relating to the People pillar were identified. A red/amber/green and direction of travel assessment is provided as a summary of current progress.

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 1	The Service should make sure there is an effective induction process in place to support new recruits	Green
People 2	The Service should make sure it is transparent and fair when recruiting, developing and promoting staff.	Amber ↑
People 3	The Service should address the high number of staff in temporary promotion positions.	Green
People 4	The Service should develop a system to identify and develop high-potential members of staff.	Amber →
People 5	The Service should make sure its workforce plan takes full account of the skills and capabilities it needs to implement its community risk management plan.	Green
People 6	The Service should assure itself that all staff are appropriately trained for their role.	Amber ↑
People 7	The Service should provide clear and appropriate development for all staff.	Amber ↑
People 8	The Service should have effective processes to monitor the working hours of its staff	Red ↑
People 9	The Service must make sure that all staff in operational roles have a current and valid fitness assessment	Green

## 1.1 High level overview of changes made to improve the People AFI's.

- 1.2 On the 4 January 2026, the Service appointed an Organisational Development Manager to the Service. The Organisational Development Manager will play a pivotal role in shaping and sustaining a positive, inclusive and high-performing culture across the service. This role focuses on leadership and cultural development, strategic workforce planning, succession and high potential development - ensuring the service has the right people, in the right posts, at the right time.
- 1.3 The reporting on the progress of AFI's has been standardised, centrally coordinated by the SLT support role and aligned to the reporting framework overseen by the new Service Improvement Board that meets monthly. This has encouraged a collective responsibility across all SLT members to build long term and sustainable improvements in the areas that need enhancing. This has also reduced duplication of recording and provided an approach that enhances the embedding, evaluation and assurance principles of change management.

## 1.4 The Services approach to address each AFI.

### 1.5 People 1

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 1	The Service should make sure there is an effective induction process in place to support new recruits	

- 1.6 The Probation and Induction policy was reviewed and published in 2025 to give guidance and an understanding of how inductions and probations should be managed whether the employee is on call, wholetime or corporate member of staff. This has streamlined our induction and probation processes, ensuring consistency in approach across every role in the service.
- 1.7 The Service is due to launch a targeted feedback survey at every new employee who has joined the Service in the last 6 months (from 1st sept 2025). This survey focusses on their experiences with their onboarding, induction and probation process. This will allow the service to review how the new probation and induction policy is being applied.
- 1.8 A system to track the induction of new employees, which moves away from the current paper-based solution and over to a digital platform is in the early stages of scoping out. The Service is on track to develop this solution ready for implementation towards the end of 2026. The digital solution will be hosted on PDR Pro (existing competency management software) and will help to provide clarity on roles and responsibilities, monitoring and assurance, and provide management oversight and reporting on the induction process.

## 1.9 People 2

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 2	The Service should make sure it is transparent and fair when recruiting, developing and promoting staff.	↑

- 1.10 This AFI related to the perception of how recruitment, development and promotion processes were applied across the Service.
- 1.11 The Service has launched the CFRS Resourcing and Talent Policy to detail the roles and responsibilities, resources and steps in the process.
- 1.12 The Service has built in a feedback loop and conducts lessons learnt sessions following recruitment process, these are reported back to the Workforce Development Group who address improvement areas.
- 1.13 All recruiting managers, including those involved in campaigns and promotion boards, will complete mandatory resourcing e-learning. 265 staff have completed the e-learn to date.
- 1.14 The Service has reviewed the Promotion Policy to provide further clarity on the roles of both SLT and Workforce Development Group (WDG) when promoting individuals. We have developed a consistent decision log to record and track actions taken within these two meetings.
- 1.15 The role of the WDG has changed. The Terms of Reference is under review, with improvements being made to provide clear accountabilities and roles, with a strengthened focus on communication and engagement with the workplace. From February, all WDG meetings will be recorded to promote high standards of ethical conversations and dialogue, and to promote transparency and openness.
- 1.16 The latest round of promotion boards have deliberately involved trade union representatives as assessors. We hope that this has been a useful exercise to bridge the gap between the perception and reality of workforce planning activities.
- 1.17 The AFI remains amber. The key reason for amber assessment is the length of time that may have to pass in order to change the perception of some staff, and for trust and confidence to improve to a point where the AFI can be confidently changed to a green status.

## 1.18 People 3

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 3	The Service should address the high number of staff in temporary promotion positions.	

- 1.19 Following the last inspection the Service has run a promotion process for every role from Assistant Chief Fire Officer to Crew Manager. Promotion processes for On-call Watch and Crew Managers are currently underway (Feb/march).
- 1.20 A number of promotions have been approved during 2025, and no permanent vacancy between the roles of Chief Fire Officer and Station Manager remains unfilled where eligible employees are available for permanent promotion. The Service has also changed its approach and now promotes employees ahead of the official vacancy arising, for example where outgoing staff have provided an indication that they are leaving the service due to retirement.
- 1.21 A workforce dashboard is under development that will monitor the number of temporary promotions across the Service at anyone time to assist in workforce planning, talent management and reporting. This will help to strike the balance between protracted periods of temporary appointments and managing opportunities for talent progression. This dashboard will be available to the WDG in early summer.

#### 1.22 People 4

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 4	The Service should develop a system to identify and develop high-potential members of staff.	

- 1.23 The Service has deliberately completed a soft launch of the new appraisal policy as the HMIC report was published at the same time as the policy launch in 2025. The Service have committed to improve the appraisal process in 2026 based on the findings of the HMIC report with an aim of linking together appraisals to promotion and development processes to support the identification of high-potential staff.
- 1.24 The Service has provided access to career grade schemes, supported release and recharge arrangements to other services and secondments to national bodies, and additional responsibility payments as part of distributing talent management and providing for individual growth within the organisation.
- 1.25 The Service has not participated in the NFCC's direct entry route, and this aligns to the approach of most Fire and Rescue Services. However, the service has supported staff development through other NFCC products such as middle manager development and the ELDP.
- 1.26 Corporate recruitment campaigns have been advertised for internal staff only where the Service recognises it has the right people displaying the right skills and behaviours to progress internally within the organisation.

#### 1.27 People 5

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 5	The Service should make sure its workforce plan takes full account of the skills and capabilities it needs to implement its community risk management plan.	

1.28 The Service has developed its first workforce plan in consultation with the several stakeholders including the Community Scrutiny Panel. The workforce plan is currently with an external publisher and is on track for the publication target date of April 2026.

1.29 The next phase of the plan is to develop a skills and capability framework for all roles within the Service. This will provide a clear approach to the technical and leadership skills required across all roles and will be aligned to the NFCC Leadership framework. This will be a foundation to resolving a number of interdependent People AFI's.

### 1.30 People 6

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 6	The Service should assure itself that all staff are appropriately trained for their role.	↑

1.31 This AFI related to the mandatory training required for non-operational skills, knowledge and understanding.

1.32 The Service is progressively bringing this AFI into focus now that the foundations of training and development are progressing at pace. This includes the publication of the workforce plan, development of the skills and capabilities framework and embedding of the new employee induction policy.

1.33 The Service is confident that it will have suitable arrangements in place to identify foundation and CPD training requirements for staff, provide access to mandatory training materials, and will have a training record management system in place by Autumn 2026.

1.34 Bi-annual Service leadership days have been re-purposed. The leadership day in late spring 2026 will be the first to have aims and objectives based around a leadership curriculum, which will be driven by the collective needs of the sector, organisation and employee CPD requirements.

1.35 However, a significant number of activities across a number of key departments will be required in order to deliver the outcomes of this improvement work. It is also interdependent on the progress of embedding our disability and neuro-inclusion policy. It is likely that the Service will have the arrangements in place at the time of the next inspection but will still be working to embed any improvements made as standard organisational practice.

### 1.36 People 7

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 7	The Service should provide clear and appropriate development for all staff.	↑

1.37 The Service ran several promotion boards which included Area Managers, Group Managers and Station Managers towards the end of 2025, and Watch and Crew Managers in January/February 2026.

1.38 Internal and external applications for ACFO, AM and SM were consistently high across each process. For the recent supervisory promotion process we received a total of 27 Watch Manager applications and 37 Crew Manager applications. This is the highest number of applicants we have experienced at this level, providing encouraging evidence of CFRS being seen as an employer of choice.

1.39 Emphasis on providing feedback to candidates from their interviews and drill assessments featured high on the agenda, as this has been an area we continue to try and improve in every process. Panel members were made aware that feedback needed to be of quality and substance so that candidates go on to receive meaningful and valuable feedback. For example, following the recent AM and SM process the candidates received bespoke development plans. This will allow us to better support our employees and to identify any areas of growth and talent.

1.40 In 2025 we have recruited to 23 green book posts. The Service has used a variety of methods to ensure that service needs are met. These have included the cost-effective use of the Additional Responsibility Policy.

### 1.41 People 8

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 8	The Service should have effective processes to monitor the working hours of its staff	↑

1.42 The Service conducted a sample audit of 10 members of staff over a 17-week reference period, who were identified as employees with one or more contracts of employment with CFRS. The audit took place in March 2025. These were across different departments, geographical locations, and duty systems. The audit provided a high level of assurance and general compliance, with only one exception that was resolved with a management conversation at a local level.

1.43 Although the Service is reasonably compliant with the requirements of the Working Time Directive there is still a significant amount of improvement activity needed. This ranges

from policy development and alignment, completion of EIA's, Data Protection Impact Assessments, completion of Trade Union engagement, secondary employment reviews, and alignment and reporting of working time data across multiple data systems.

- 1.44 It is likely that the Service will still have residual areas for improvement relating to the Working Time Directive at the point of the next inspection. The Service has intentionally asked MIAA, our external auditor, to focus on the Working Time Directive as part of its 2026 audit programme.
- 1.45 The Service is developing a business case to disaggregate the HR administration service from the Service Level Agreement with Cumberland Council by 31 October 2026. The scope of the change includes the provision of a dedicated and funded resource that will oversee the working time of employees as a primary responsibility. This will provide the organisational capacity needed to move forward at pace against this AFI. The Service has engaged with several other FRS's to understand what good practice looks like in this area, which has most often centred around a dedicated resource or central team to monitor and track working time.

#### 1.46 People 9

People Ref	Requirement	RAG rating and DOT
People 9	The Service must make sure that all staff in operational roles have a current and valid fitness assessment	

- 1.47 The Operational Fitness Policy launched in Spring 2025 and annual testing cycle was brought forward by 3 months to support the introduction of the policy. The changes of this policy will help CFRS align with the requirements of HMICFRS and evidence is showing that our overall number of outstanding fitness tests has now been reduced to only 2% of the operational workforce. The remaining 2% are within a management process in line with the new policy.
- 1.48 The Service has recruited and filled two vacant fitness associate posts to support the Services in delivering the fitness policy. This brings the total number of fitness associates to four with a full-time fitness coordinator overseeing the implementation of the policy.
- 1.49 A workforce dashboard is under development that will monitor the number of in date fitness assessments across the Service at anyone time. This dashboard will be available to the WDG in early summer.

#### 1.50 How the panel can support the Service

- 1.51 The CSP would add value to one or all the following activities during 2026:

- Dip sampling of evidence against AFI People 9 - The Service must make sure that all staff in operational roles have a current and valid fitness assessment.
- Attending a Workforce Development Group as an observer and providing feedback in order to continually develop the arrangements in place.
- Providing feedback on the Services approach to developing one or both of our Workforce dashboards; values and cultures or succession planning.
- To review and feedback at the most opportune point in the development of the Services Role Based Capability Framework.

Area Manager Ian Seel