

Recruitment Pack

Assistant Chief Fire Officer

June 2026



Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service

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www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

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A message from the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority



**Councillor
Stef Nelson**
Chair, Cheshire Fire
Authority

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in our forthcoming Principal Officer selection process and for taking the first step towards making a difference to the lives of others in Cheshire in 2026 and beyond.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has transformed in recent years to become one of the most respected fire and rescue services in the United Kingdom. This has been previously confirmed by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services and through many accolades, awards and progressive initiatives. Our vision is simple; to make Cheshire a county where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires, and other emergencies.



Alex Waller
Chief Fire Officer
and Chief Executive,
Cheshire Fire and
Rescue Service

Our core strength in achieving this is our people. Attracting the best staff to work for us is fundamental to delivering our strategic aims and maintaining a close connection with our communities. Our people share a strong set of values that reflect the culture in our Service and those of the national core code of ethics.

In today's fast paced world, the need for exceptional principal officers to lead our organisation has never been more important and if successful, you will play a critical role in delivering our vision and ensuring that the organisation remains responsive to the needs of its communities and staff. You will also join a high performing team that values innovation, hard work, the achievement of ambitious programmes of change and one that prides itself

on maintaining a positive working environment and inclusive culture.

To secure this role, you will need to demonstrate a strong track record of visible leadership and delivery of results. You should be wholeheartedly committed to inclusion, diversity and meaningful staff engagement, and have the ability to maximise the performance and potential of our staff and the services we provide. You will also need to demonstrate political acuity, authenticity and outstanding leadership and be able to build and sustain collaborative relationships with elected members, partners and stakeholders to shape and influence wider public service delivery.

When preparing for your interviews and assessment, there are certain themes you may wish to think about. We would expect you to be able to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the national issues pertaining to the Fire and Rescue Service and the strategic and political issues that could impact on the delivery of our Service's strategic goals. Most importantly, you need to be able to demonstrate how you, as an individual, will personally influence and contribute to the delivery of those goals, while leading and inspiring others to do the same.

We make no apology for the fact that we are setting high standards and only the best candidates who are suitably qualified for these roles will be considered. We are particularly keen to hear from female applicants and those from under-represented groups, but notwithstanding this, please be assured that the process will be scrupulously fair and is designed to give everyone a fair opportunity to demonstrate their suitability and readiness to be Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's next Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

If you are an exceptional candidate we would welcome an application from you, and wish you every success in the selection process.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Stef Nelson
Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority

Alex Waller
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive

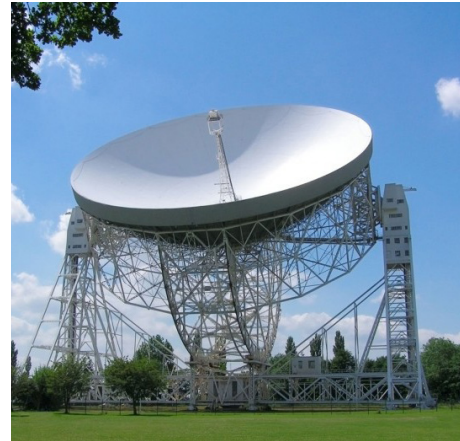
Living and leading in Cheshire

Cheshire is a county of contrasts, making it not only one of the most rewarding and exciting areas to lead a fire and rescue service, but also one of the best places in the country to live.

Operational landscape

Your challenge as Assistant Chief Fire Officer will be to keep everyone who lives, works and spends time in Cheshire safe. The county's rich industrial, agricultural and social heritage brings with it a unique and complex set of response, prevention, protection and resilience demands, including:

- the highest number of Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites in the UK, including major petrochemical, chemical, nuclear and pharmaceutical manufacturing and processing plants
- critical national energy infrastructure, including oil and gas supply lines, the huge oil refinery at Stanlow, gas, coal and waste fired power stations, onshore windfarms and solar installations
- some the country's most important heritage assets, including more than 140 Grade I listed buildings and countless other sites of historic importance
- significant transport and distribution infrastructure, including the M6, M62, M56 and M53 motorways and 877km of urban and rural A roads handling 5.9bn vehicles a year, the West Coast mainline and the approaches to two international airports



- flooding and water rescue risks posed by the rivers Mersey, Dee, Weaver, Dane and Bollin. There is also the Manchester Ship Canal, a wider canal network covering 92 miles and other expanses of inland water
- the expansive Cheshire plain, Dee estuary marshes, forests at Delamere and Macclesfield and parts of the Peak District National Park at increasing risk of fires driven by climate change
- mass visitor attractions such as Chester Zoo, and shopping, leisure and theme parks, as well as major social and sporting events like Creamfields, Car Fest North, Chester Races and the Cheshire Show
- diverse social needs and a prevention plan that recognises an ageing population in the relatively affluent rural parts of the county, at the same time as pockets of high deprivation and disadvantage in industrial and urban areas.

Quality of life

Although the operational landscape might present challenges, living in Cheshire will reward you in lots of different ways. With its vibrant city and bustling towns, stunning natural landscape and wealth of things to do, there is no better place to enjoy your free time.

Cheshire boasts:

- the UK's biggest and most visited zoo at Chester, as well as leisure centres, country parks, museums, the UK's only complete circuit of medieval city walls, National Trust properties and other attractions to keep all the family entertained
- a rich cultural programme with countless festivals and venues in Chester, Warrington, Crewe and Macclesfield staging plays, touring productions and events all year round
- a lively social scene with cafes, bars and restaurants lining high streets and squares and excellent country pubs throughout the county
- miles of walks through breathtaking countryside and forests
- major horse racing and equestrian events, football and rugby league games, golf tournaments and several half and full marathons
- first class shopping at the Cheshire Oaks designer outlet, Chester's unique two-tiered city centre rows and at Warrington
- excellent road and rail links, with Liverpool, Manchester and North Wales on your doorstep and London and the Lake District less than two hours away
- a thriving sub-regional economy and employment opportunities for anyone relocating to Cheshire with you, with leading manufacturers, major distribution hubs, financial institutions and a growing science and research community.

Advertisement

Appointment of Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Based at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 2FQ

Salary: £146,408 per annum + uniform allowance + relocation package
+ car lease scheme

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service is a high performing, innovative and progressive organisation that has high ambitions for the service that it provides to the communities and people of Cheshire.

Due to the impending retirement of the current postholder, the Fire Authority is inviting applications for the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

The successful candidate will possess a detailed understanding of the issues relating to the Fire and Rescue Service at national and local levels, have strong political acuity and be an inspiring and outstanding leader. The Fire Authority will also be looking for an individual who is genuinely committed to staff engagement, diversity and inclusion and who will be able to influence others whilst ensuring the Service has strong leadership to shape and direct service provision and uphold the existing high standards of performance, and the positive culture currently in place. Candidates will also need to demonstrate resilience and excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to execute ambitious programmes of change.

Applications are invited from competent Area Managers and existing Brigade Managers, qualified to Fire Service Incident Command Level 4 and Multi-Agency Gold Incident Command (MAGIC), and are competent to participate in the Principal Officers on-call rota. The selection process will comprise of three stages, the first will entail a psychometric assessment, technical interview and stakeholder panel with members of staff, the second stage will be a command assessment and media assessment, and the third stage will be an interview and presentation with Members of the Fire Authority.

Full details are available in a Recruitment Pack available on the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service website. Initial application will be via the submission of a CV accompanied by a supporting statement of up to 2,000 words outlining suitability for the role against the job description and person specification.

These should be emailed to recruitment@cheshirefire.gov.uk quoting job reference number **07/26/ACFO**.

For an informal discussion about the role please e-mail democratic.services@cheshirefire.gov.uk, in order to arrange a telephone call with Alex Waller, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive.

Closing date: **Monday 25 May at 9am**

Selection Process Overview

The selection of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer will be undertaken by Members of Cheshire Fire Authority's Brigade Managers Pay and Performance Committee. The process will also involve the Chief Fire Officer, members of the Senior Leadership Team, and independent HR and Media Consultants.

To apply candidates are required to submit a CV accompanied by a supporting statement of up to 2,000 words that will demonstrate suitability against the job description and person specification.

Stage One – Thursday 4 June 2026

- Psychometric Assessment
- Technical interview with the Chief Fire Officer and independent HR Consultant
- Stakeholder Panel with members of the Service's Staff Networks

Stage Two – Wednesday 10 June 2026

- Command Assessment
- Media Assessment with the Head of Communications and Engagement and the Communications and Campaigns Manager

Stage Three – Friday 19 June 2026

- Presentation to Members of the Brigade Managers Pay and Performance Committee on a topic given prior to the interview
- Formal Interview with Members of the Brigade Managers Pay and Performance Committee

Reasonable Adjustments and Accommodations

It is important that you consider at an early stage of the process if you would like to request arrangements that will assist you in completing the selection process. For example, in relation to disability; a neurodiverse condition such as dyslexia; pregnancy; religion or belief; or injury etc. Any requests for reasonable adjustments will be treated with the utmost confidence. For support or further information please email: recruitment@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Post Process

The successful candidates will be issued with a conditional offer and will undergo pre-employment checks including medical, Standard DBS check and referencing prior to the issue of a formal offer of appointment. Feedback will be available to both successful and unsuccessful candidates upon request after the process has concluded.

Terms and Conditions

Assistant Chief Fire Officer

The terms and conditions of employment will be in accordance with the provisions set out in the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services and supplemented by the Cheshire Fire Authority's Local Terms and Conditions and associated policies. The main provisions are:

- The salary is £146,408 per annum.
- Pension provisions will be in accordance with the Firefighters' Pension Scheme or New Firefighters' Pension Scheme as amended from time to time.
- Annual, Public Holiday and Long Service Leave will be in accordance with NJC conditions of service. Annual leave entitlement is 37 days granted in each calendar year so far as the exigencies of duty permit.
- The period of notice required to terminate employment is six months.
- Hours of work will be 42 hours per week with extra hours as required by organisational need and as part of the Principal Officer cover rota. This will include time outside of normal office hours.
- The post is located at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 2FQ, although the place of work may be anywhere within the Cheshire Fire Authority area with travel outside of the Cheshire boundary as required.
- Ideally the postholder will provide a base within the Cheshire boundary when on-call. However, the postholder may, subject to conditions and approval, provide a base outside the boundary if they can travel from base to CW7 2UA within 1 hour at normal road speed.
- A relocation package of up to £10,000 is available.
- Annual uniform allowance of £1,202 (uplifted in line with national pay awards).
- Access to Car Lease Scheme (in line with NJC allowances).
- This is a politically restricted post under the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.
- Recruitment to the role will require national security vetting clearance.

Benefits

In return for your hard work, we are pleased to be able to offer the successful candidate a competitive package of benefits.

- A relocation package of up to £10,000, negotiable depending on circumstances.
- Access to Car Lease Scheme.
- Annual uniform allowance.
- Generous family-friendly policies including maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave provision.
- Employer investment in training and development and professional sponsorship.
- Access to a comprehensive Occupational Health Service and dedicated mental health and wellbeing resources.
- Free annual health screening.
- Use of on-site fitness facilities and discounted local authority and private gym membership.
- Membership of the Service's sports, social and welfare section.



Job Description and Person Specification

Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Job Description

Job Title:	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Location:	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire
Post Number:	0003
Grade/Role:	ACFO
Special Allowances:	ACFO uniform allowance
Responsible to:	Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive

Job Purpose

To provide strategic leadership to shape and direct service provision, manage the co-ordination of the activities of the Service and optimise the use of resources. To provide professional advice to the Fire Authority on how to discharge its statutory duties and the expectations outlined in the National Framework.

Principal Responsibilities

1. Support the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer in the provision of overall leadership and management of service provision to ensure that statutory duties are met, continuity of service delivery and operational cover.
2. Contribute to the strategic management and development of CFRS through membership of the Leadership Team and Service Management Team to enable the delivery of high performance, value for money, Fire and Rescue Service for Cheshire.
3. Influence the formulation of key strategies and policies, in consultation with key stakeholders, which guide and improve service delivery and reduce risks to the community in order that the agreed aims and objectives of the Fire Authority can be achieved.
4. Oversee and monitor collaborative arrangements within designated areas of the business to ensure that they remain effective and provide value for the organisation.

5. Represent the Fire Authority at major incidents that present a significant risk to the community, provide strategic leadership and support and liaise with key personnel from other agencies/services to ensure effective support to the management and resolution of the incident. (Provide advice and support to the Fire Authority during and subsequent to the incident in responding to official enquiries).

6. Undertake the role of Fire Gold Commander at major incidents within Cheshire where an incident severity has elevated its management to Gold status. Undertake the role of Multi Agency Gold Commander at local, regional and national emergencies as a strategic member of Local, Regional and National Resilience frameworks to ensure effective support to the Fire Authority and resolution of the incident. Maintenance of the necessary competence and national security requirements are required to undertake both of aforementioned Gold Commander roles.

7. Deputise for the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer in managing all service budgets and resources to support the provision of professional high quality services, information and advice to the Cheshire community.

8. Provide strategic advice and support to elected Members on service and authority wide issues to facilitate effective decision making.

9. Represent the Service and the Authority at local, regional and national events so as to enhance and support the reputation of the Authority as a progressive organisation and to raise civil awareness of the wider role of the CFRS.

10. Lead designated functions and oversee the development, delivery and evaluation of programme management and all corporate projects.

11. Play a lead role for your areas of the business in overseeing activities associated with the Service's engagement with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services, ensuring the Service maintains positive relationships with liaison officers and inspectors and is able to evidence strong performance and the required improvements across all areas of inspection.

12. Support the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive in leading Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services' approach to internal and external communications and consultation to promote and protect the reputation of the Service and encourage effective staff and community engagement.

13. Lead and promote Equality and Diversity Policies and Mental Health Strategies across the Service and to the community to satisfy legislation and improve service performance and delivery.

Core Responsibilities for Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Personnel

Personal Performance	To take responsibility for personal performance (including personal fitness) and the development of personal skills to ensure the required skills, knowledge and competence to fulfil the role.
Personal Accountability	To manage the areas of responsibility attached to the post or commensurate with the role in accordance with the Authority's Scheme of Delegation.
Core Values and Behaviours	To encourage and promote the values of Cheshire Fire Authority and comply with the required standards of conduct and so promote the Authority within the community by acting with integrity and honesty.
Equality and Diversity	To promote, adhere to and implement the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy/Policy and to work consistently to embed equality and diversity within the Service.
Staff Wellbeing and Engagement	To commit to making mental health and staff engagement a corporate priority to maintain a healthy and productive workforce.
Health and Safety	<p>To work in compliance with Service Health and Safety Policy to ensure that hazards are identified and risks assessed and controlled.</p> <p>To be proactive in managing your personal health, safety and wellbeing and that of your colleagues.</p>
Environment	<p>To promote the Service's Environment Policy/Strategy by implementing working practices and procedures that ensure a sustainable approach to the use of resources and that resources are disposed of in an efficient and environmentally friendly way.</p> <p>To work consistently to embed environmental considerations, energy efficiency and compliance with the Environment Management System (EMS) within the Service.</p>

N.B. Notwithstanding the detail in this job description, in accordance with the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's flexibility policy the job holder will undertake such work as may be determined by the Chief Fire Officer/Line Manager from time to time, up to or at a level consistent with the principal responsibilities of the job and in any location within the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Person Specification

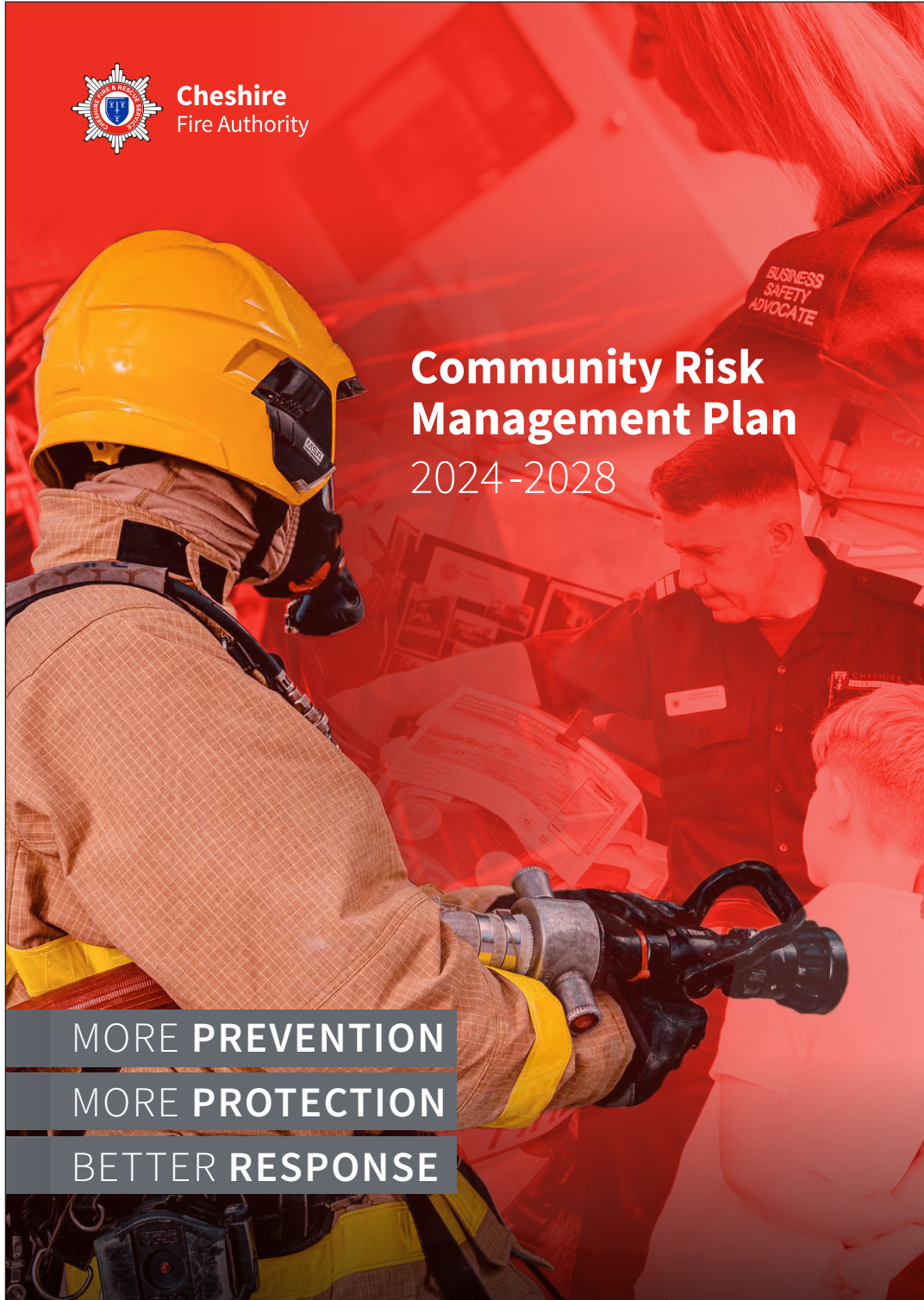
Job Title: Assistant Chief Fire Officer

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications		
Possession of a relevant degree or equivalent professional qualification appropriate to the post.	●	
Successful completion of the Executive Leadership Programme or equivalent		●
Corporate Membership of the Institute of Fire Engineers		●
Strategic Incident Command (Level 4) (within last 3 years)	●	
Multi-Agency Gold Incident Command (MAGIC)	●	
Evidence of Continuous and Professional Development	●	
Experience		
Proven relevant experience to be able to lead a Fire and Rescue Service or organisation of this scale of operation and complexity.	●	
Experience of successfully leading and delivering strategic change and improvement in a large, complex organisation within an industrial relations framework.	●	
Excellent political skills and a proven ability to work effectively with elected members and other politicians in a politically sensitive environment on a range of operational and strategic issues.	●	
Excellent leadership skills with evidence of having taken effective decisions which have resulted in tangible improvements.	●	
Broad experience of building and developing effective collaborative relationships with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, with a proven ability to influence and lead within these groups.	●	
A successful track record of actively promoting diversity and a genuine commitment to equality.	●	
Proven experience in the strategic management of critical incidents.	●	

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<p>Knowledge, Skills and Abilities</p> <p>Substantial knowledge and understanding of fire and rescue operations necessary to undertake the role of strategic commander in critical and ambiguous situations of potentially regional, national and international significance.</p> <p>Substantial knowledge of the national, regional and local political operating climate of the FRS within the context of the Government's Fire Reform Programme.</p> <p>Knowledge of the statutory role, powers and responsibilities of the FRS.</p> <p>Knowledge of corporate governance; financial; strategic planning and programme management principles and practice.</p> <p>Knowledge of Risk Management issues facing the public sector in particular the concept of integrated risk management.</p> <p>Knowledge of the principles and practices of fire and rescue service performance assessment in the context of the Independent Inspection regime (HMICFRS).</p> <p>Knowledge of the current change agenda within the Fire and Rescue Service at local and national level and its strategic implications.</p> <p>Ability to think critically and objectively when considering options for resolving complex problems to minimise risk.</p> <p>Prepared to take responsibility and make decisions on major issues affecting the Service with composure and conviction.</p> <p>Ability to demonstrate inspirational leadership, motivating and developing others to reach their full potential.</p> <p>Ability to demonstrate a willingness to work openly and constructively with the Fire Authority.</p> <p>Ability to create a sense of confidence and trust in others and have credibility with and respect from them.</p> <p>Demonstrates a high level of communication skills focusing on the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in interpersonal relations, industrial relations and with the media, both orally and in writing.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p>	

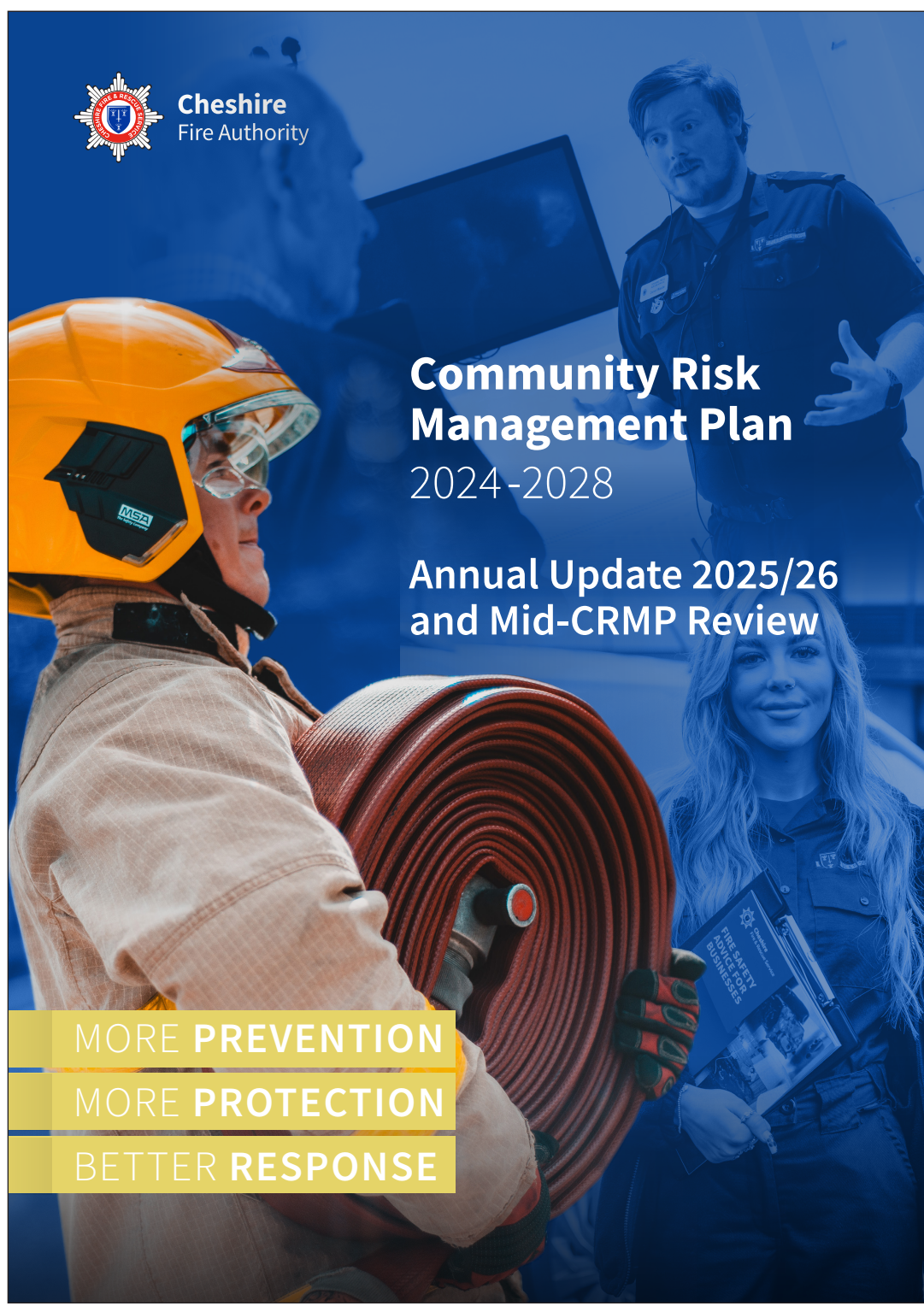
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<p>Ability to analyse complex information.</p> <p>Excellent influencing skills including negotiations and advocacy.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p>	
<p>Personal Attributes</p> <p>Personal and professional credibility to influence others and communicate effectively at all levels.</p> <p>Demonstrates sensitivity to people’s concerns but is prepared to take a firm but fair approach.</p> <p>High levels of self awareness and emotional intelligence.</p> <p>Innovative and creative problem solving abilities with a pro active nature.</p> <p>Demonstrates a high personal standard, visible leadership and integrity.</p> <p>A strong commitment to public service and local democracy.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p>	
<p>Special Requirements/Conditions</p> <p>Willing to travel locally, nationally and internationally as required.</p> <p>A current full driving licence.</p> <p>Willing to provide a base within the Cheshire boundary when on-call, or subject to conditions and approval, able to provide a base outside the boundary of Cheshire if they can travel from base to CW7 2UA within 1 hour at normal road speed.</p>	<p>●</p> <p>●</p> <p>●</p>	

Community Risk Management Plan 2024-2028



[Community Risk Management Plan 2024-2028](#)

Annual Action Plan 2024-2028



[CRMP Annual Update 2025/26](#)

People Strategy 2025-2028



[People Strategy 2025-2028](#)

HMICFRS Inspection Report 2023-2025



Fire & Rescue Service 2023–25

Effectiveness, efficiency and people

An inspection of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service

Statement of Accounts 2024-2025



Cheshire
Fire Authority

Statement of Accounts
Draft 2024-25

.....
www.cheshirefire.gov.uk



[Statement of Accounts 2024 - 2025](#)



Our Vision is a Cheshire where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires and other emergencies.

Our Mission is to help create safer communities, to rescue people and protect economic, environmental and community interests.

We will deliver this through our
Core Values

Being Inclusive

By acting fairly, with integrity, respect and without prejudice.

Doing the Right Thing

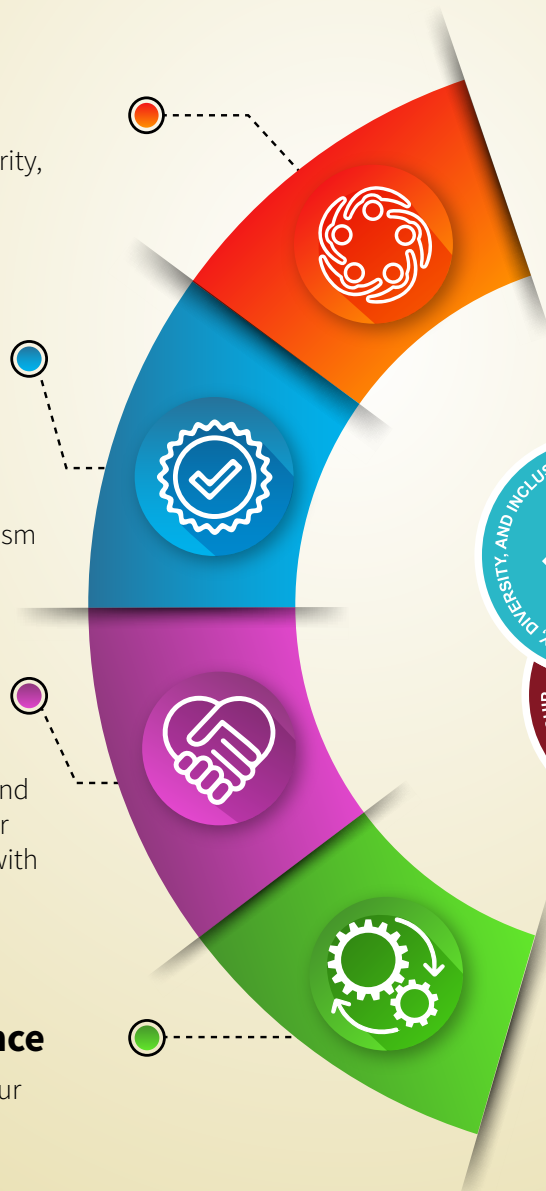
By holding each other to account for ensuring high standards of professionalism in everything we do.

Acting with Compassion

By being understanding and offering help to each other and to our communities with warmth, patience and kindness.

Making a Difference

By making an impact in our organisation and in our communities in whatever ways we can, for as many people as we can.



Recognising the Fire and
Rescue Service's
Code of Ethics



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council