



Chief Fire Officer

Recruitment Pack

Foreword

Thank you for your interest in the Chief Fire Officer role.

Northumberland is a land of great opportunities – rich in heritage, diverse in communities, and ambitious for the future. Our Fire and Rescue Service plays a vital role in keeping people safe and supporting resilience across the region. We are now looking for a Chief Fire Officer who will not only lead the service operationally but also help shape its culture and values for years to come.

As part of our Senior Leadership Team, you will work collaboratively to deliver the Council's wider corporate objectives, ensuring that the Fire and Rescue Service is fully aligned with our vision for Northumberland: a place where people feel safe, supported, and proud to live and work.

Northumberland County Council is on an extensive change journey and as a key member of the Senior Leadership Team, this is an opportunity to be a part of something special that will not only improve outcomes for our residents but also enhance the experience for customers and staff.

We are proud to call ourselves the place for prosperity and innovation and we are a county that boasts international leaders in industry, investment-ready locations, welcoming communities, a rich history and proud heritage, and globally significant tourist attractions, culture and landscapes.

This is a pivotal moment for Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. We have faced cultural challenges, and we are committed to creating an environment built on trust, respect, and accountability. We need a leader who can inspire confidence, champion inclusion, and drive positive change – someone who understands that leadership is about people as much as performance.

If you share our ambition and values, and you have the vision and resilience to lead through transformation, we would love to hear from you.

This pack should provide you with the relevant information you need to make an application; however if you require further information or wish to discuss any aspect of the advertised role, please contact me for an informal professional discussion using the following details:



Dr Helen Paterson

Chief Executive
Northumberland County Council

01670 623958

About the role of Chief Fire Officer

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service

Salary: £153,143 (Senior officer salaries are appointed to a specific spot point within the salary band)

Northumberland County Council is seeking to appoint to the key leadership post of **Chief Fire Officer** within Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. This is an exciting opportunity to shape the future of a service that goes **"beyond emergencies"**, delivering strategic and operational support to address inequalities, drive strategic change, and support levelling-up priorities across the county.

About the Role

As Chief Fire Officer, you will:

- Lead the delivery of a revitalised approach to inspection and regulation, ensuring the highest standards of service for the County of Northumberland.
- Operate and influence at a strategic level, working collaboratively with public and private partners.
- Manage risk across a diverse and unique landscape, demonstrating innovation and attention to detail.
- Drive a positive and inclusive organisational culture through genuine staff engagement.
- Focus on delivering an ambitious improvement programme, which will be further informed by our next HMICFRS inspection programme (to start February 2026)
- Lead the Principal Officer team of four and ensure the service remains ambitious, sustainable, and of the highest quality.
- You will also join the NFRS Principal Officer rota and must provide a permanent base within Northumberland.

About You

We are looking for a candidate with:

- Extensive senior leadership experience in a Fire and Rescue service.
- A proven track record of strategic influence and operational excellence.
- High-level interpersonal, innovative, and risk management skills.
- Ideally, an operationally sector competent, experienced Deputy or Assistant Chief Fire Officer seeking to progress your career.



A Land of Great Opportunities

Choose Northumberland

Northumberland is a land of great opportunities. It boasts stunning landscapes, spectacular castles, picturesque market towns and a beautiful coastline.

We are proud to call ourselves the place for prosperity and innovation and we are a county that boasts international leaders in industry, investment-ready locations, welcoming communities, a rich history and proud heritage, and globally significant tourist attractions, culture and landscapes.

Our communities are vibrant and welcoming with distinctive characteristics, culture and heritage, and together we are working towards a cleaner, greener, sustainable environment. Whether you enjoy surfing at the coast, eating at top-rated restaurants or experiencing vibrant nightlife, we believe there's no better place to live and work.



Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service - Who we are

Supporting Northumberland County Council's (NCC) vision of 'Northumberland: Land of Great Opportunities', we have a mission of 'Making Northumberland Safer'. This is underpinned by the following aims to:

- Reduce the number of fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies occurring in Northumberland.
- Reduce the number of deaths and injuries and mitigate the commercial, economic, and social cost of emergency incidents.
- Safeguard the environment and heritage sites (both built and natural).
- Provide value for money through the provision of a lean, efficient and resilient service.

As detailed in Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2023-26. Northumberland is England's northernmost county. With an area of 5,013 km² and a population of 327,055 (as of 2023), Northumberland is the sixth most sparsely populated county in England. 97% of Northumberland is classified as rural, with an average of 64 people per km². Over half of the population lives in only 3% of the land area, with the southeast of the county most densely populated.

Considering the challenges experienced throughout Northumberland, and the fire and rescue related-risks identified across the county, NFRS delivers a range of services to communities from its headquarters and from its Community Fire Stations situated across the county as captured in the map.



Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service at a glance

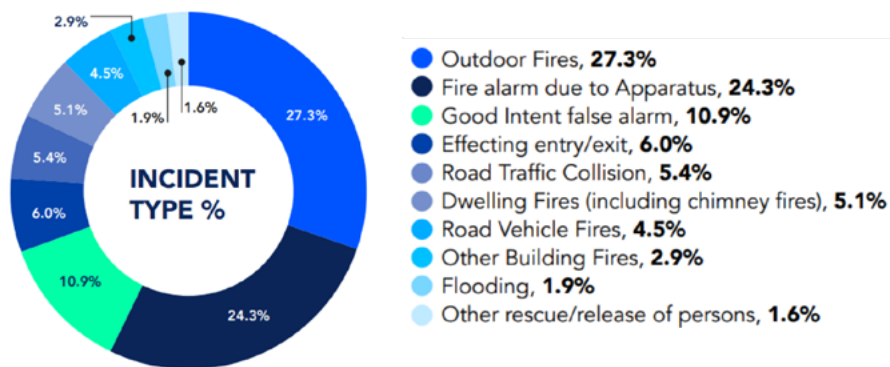
Our People

Wholetime Firefighters (includes FF / CM / WM / SM / GM / AM / DCFO / CFO)	147
On-call Firefighters	179
Fire Control	20
Corporate	35

Our Service

Community Fire Stations	15
Fire Engines and Specialist Vehicles	43
Annual Incidents Attended	3,596

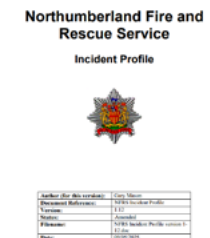
Incident type by %



Full reports on Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service can be found below.



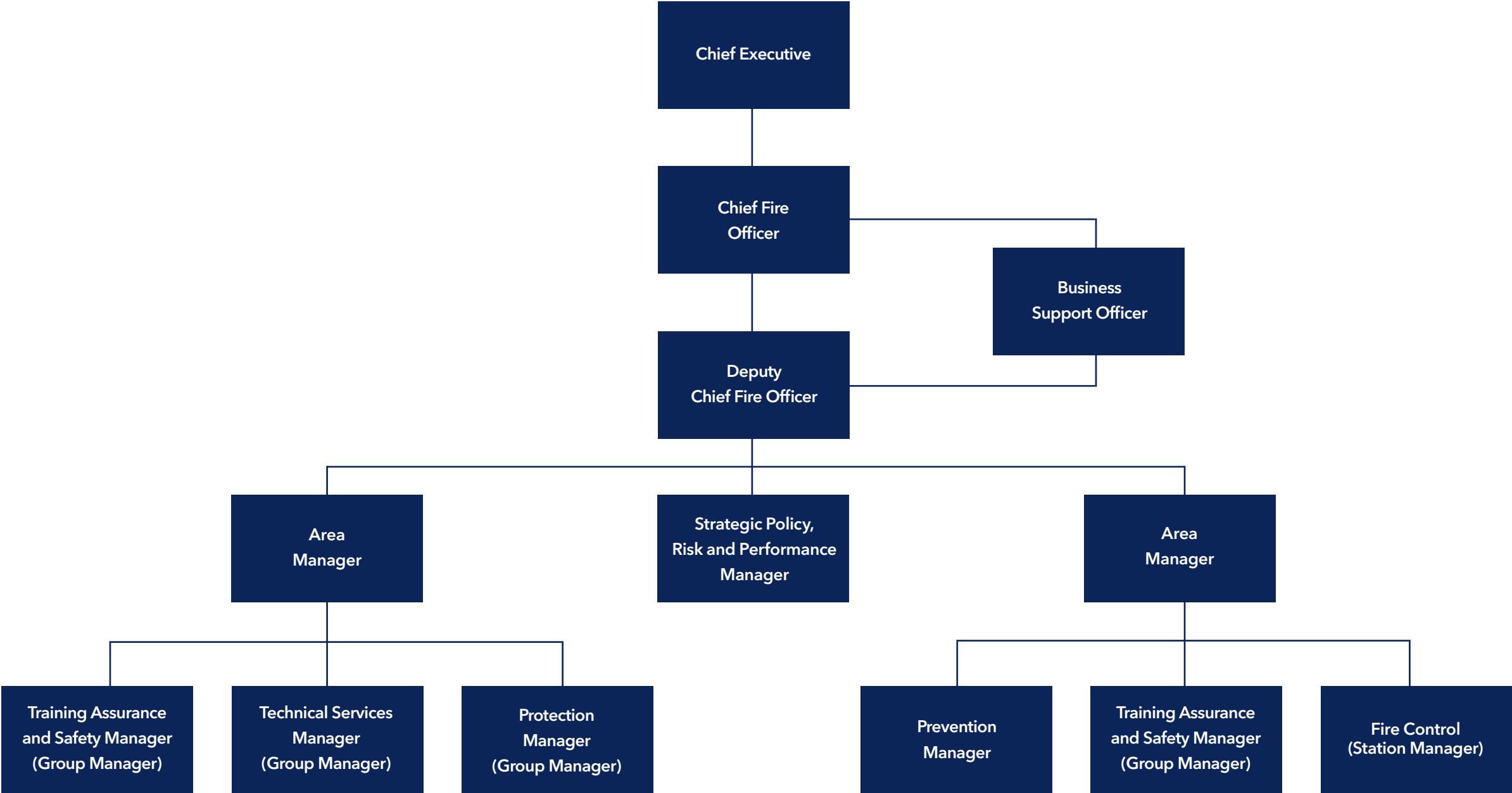
[Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Annual Performance Report 2025/26](#)



[Northumberland Fire and Rescue Incident Profile](#)



Northumberland Fire and Rescue Structure Chart (Interim Structure)



Our Senior Management Core Competencies

Working with Partners

- Work collaboratively across services and departments to deliver corporate excellence
- Work collaboratively with external partners to deliver excellent service
- Seek opportunities for partnership working at a local, regional, national and European level
- Clarify expectations, objectives and working arrangements of partnerships
- Contribute effectively to multi-partner projects

Serving Our Communities

- Promote the community plan
- Seek and act on feedback from the community
- Influence service and corporate plans to reflect community needs
- Develop, deliver and improve access to services based on an awareness and understanding of the diverse community
- Promote equality of opportunity in service delivery

Working within the Political Arena

- Understand and actively support the role of councillors
- Understand and actively support the democratic process within Northumberland County Council
- Recognise the impact of government and legislation on council strategy and services
- Consult, support and keep councillors informed

Delivering Excellence

- Understand how corporate performance is measured
- Monitor and evaluate services in relation to objectives and performance indicators
- Establish a culture that embraces the agreed vision and values
- Be positive ambassadors for the organisation
- Contribute to strengthening corporate leadership capacity
- Identify opportunities where organisational performance could be improved

Our Senior Management Core Competencies

Focusing on the Future

- Scan the external environment, look ahead, assess strategic options and develop the Council in the medium and long term
- Lead the development and implementation of corporate policy at strategic level
- Challenge what we do and how we do it
- Influence relevant national and regional organisations and partners
- Connect plans, policies, strategies and services to provide consistent service delivery
- Generate innovative ideas
- Translate strategy into action
- Consider the implications of decisions across the council and act in the overall interests of Council performance

Building Shared Visions and Values

- Scan the internal environment and engage with employees in compelling visions of the future
- Create an environment in which a culture embracing our Vision and Values can thrive
- Involve all stakeholders in building a vision for the future
- Have a clear picture the direction of the organisation is taking and communicate it with insight, energy and vision
- Translate the Council vision into practical and achievable plans

Strengthening Corporate Leadership Capacity

- Continuously develop the political leadership and managerial interface
- Operate with others as a cohesive managerial team
- Create time with staff and other managers for discussion about their development rather than fire-fighting
- Coach and mentor staff and other managers
- Lead, delegate and empower others at a strategic level
- Identify and develop potential senior managerial successors

Promoting and Facilitating Change

- Critically evaluate the reasons that prompt change and take appropriate action
- Proactively steer internal change
- Proactively manage the exchange of information between the public and the organisation
- Consider the resource implications of change
- Anticipate and respond to emotional and morale issues brought about by change
- Monitor and evaluate the change process to ensure aims are met

Additional information can be found under the corresponding section in the Job Description.

Our Values



People First

We provide services to our people (residents, colleagues, members, partners, visitors and businesses) through lasting, genuine relationships that make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We listen and understand our people's needs and put them at the heart of our decision-making.



Excellence

We strive for the highest quality delivery of our services. This means being accountable for our actions and delivering on our commitments. We share and celebrate what works, are open and learn from what doesn't and take pride in continually improving.



Resilience

We have robust controls, practices and support in place to protect our residents, our colleagues and our communities and empower them to thrive and live well. We are committed to acting sustainably in order to drive the right impact, over the long term, whilst ensuring best value for money.



Respect

We are committed to building a trusting, caring and supportive environment for all our colleagues and communities. That means we are there for each other, act with empathy, value differences and encourage others to express themselves in order to collectively achieve our common goals. We treat others as they would wish to be treated.

Interview arrangements and provisional timetable

The indicative timetable is as follows:

Advert open: 27th November 2025

Closing date for applications: midnight 18th December 2025

Notification to applicants: 12th January 2026

(longlisted candidates will be invited to undertake a Technical Assessment). Shortlisting will take place week commencing 5 January 2026

Assessment Centre: 22nd January 2026

(including a Stakeholder Panel, Staff Panel, Lumina Assessment and Formal Interview).

Appointment confirmation will be subject to Staff & Appointments Committee and full Council approval.

For a confidential discussion please contact our retained consultants at Penna: Nick Raper on 07715 690463, or Kelly Ridley on 07709 512415.

Candidates will be asked to send a CV and supporting information to Penna. More information on the recruitment process can be found here:

penna.com/jobs

Relevant Documentation and Information

Working for Northumberland County Council:

nland.cc/WorkingForNCC

Additional Information and Appointment Arrangements

Rate of Pay

Salary £153,143

(Senior officer salaries are appointed to a specific spot point within the salary band)

Applications

All candidates should send a CV and supporting information to Penna. This link is available via the job posting on penna.com/jobs

Applications must be received by midnight on 18th December 2025.

Employment References

Please include name, address and telephone number of two referees. Candidates should state their relationship with each referee.

Employment references will be taken up for the successful candidate only. If candidates wish to be advised before we contact their referees, this should be indicated clearly beside their names.

Evidence of qualifications

Candidates will be required to bring evidence of their qualifications to the assessment day if shortlisted.

Occupational Health

The successful applicant will need to satisfy the requirements of the role. Any offer of employment will be subject to passing occupational health clearance.

Disclosure and Barring Service Check

Due to the nature of this post, they are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and convictions, whether spent or unspent, must be declared.

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 – Prevention of illegal working

Candidates must be eligible to work in the UK. The successful candidate will be required to provide original evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. Further guidance will be made available to shortlisted candidates.



Northumberland
County Council