

**CFRS**

**Policy**

**Mentoring Support Scheme**

Introduction

This service policy sets out guidelines for the management of the Mentoring Support Scheme within Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service ‘CFRS or the Service’.

The Mentoring Support Scheme is designed to support newly appointed personnel through their initial period of employment with CFRS.

Starting a new job can be a daunting prospect. One way of reducing the impact of this and enabling an employee to settle in and feel confident in their role quickly is to provide them with a mentor. The mentor will support the employee on a day to day basis by ensuring they feel comfortable with their surroundings, have a sense of belonging to the team, and the confidence to ask the questions they may be too embarrassed to ask their manager. Just knowing that somebody is there to listen and is genuinely interested in helping, can help staff feel supported.

Scope

The aim of this service policy is to ensure that employees settle into their role within CFRS. Using a mentoring scheme offers employees a friendly face and a source of advice when they may be overwhelmed by new experiences, information and responsibilities. A mentoring scheme is used to provide a route for individuals who may have difficulty raising some issues with their Line Manager, People Management or colleagues.

This service policy applies to all new permanent, temporary and fixed term employees and employees returning to service e.g. maternity leave. This service policy also applies to student placements and relevant employment agency staff. Participation in the scheme is voluntary.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

* People Management are responsible for providing advice and guidance on any aspect of the Mentoring Support Scheme.
* People Management are responsible for the implementation of the Mentoring Support

 Scheme.

* Learning and Skills are responsible for the training of mentors.
* Line managers should support the Mentoring Support Scheme by allowing those involved adequate time away from their normal regular duties.
* Line managers are responsible for ensuring claims for mileage and overtime and dealt with appropriately.
* People Management will monitor and review the Mentoring Support Scheme to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

[Principles](http://www.intouch.ccc/elibrary/Content/Intranet/536/671/5053/6001/41410105256.doc)

A mentor will provide general support and guidance on a day to day basis to employees in their job role. This support and guidance will generally be everyday queries that are answered in an informal way. Assistance usually given will include explaining “how things are done around here”, organisation jargon, changes to working practices, recent news and organisational developments etc.

The mentor is there to offer moral support and would guide an employee to talk to their line manager.

A mentor should ideally be/possess the following:

* A good understanding of the Service
* A genuine interest in developing other people and the ability to facilitate learning
* Committed to Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service
* Well-developed inter-personal skills
* An open-minded and flexible attitude
* Friendly, supportive, helpful and a positive role model
* A willing volunteer
* Available for the first few weeks of the mentoring relationship i.e. not on leave/training
* Has been selected in advance and trained in mentoring responsibilities

A mentor is/will not:

* Going to tell someone what they can/cannot do
* A new best friend or confidante
* Undertake the full induction of the new employee
* Assess competence
* Provide formal job related training

The mentor is expected to provide informal advice and guidance and is not expected to replace the line manager who will retain full responsibility for formal support and training.

Taking part in the Mentoring Support Scheme allows the mentor the opportunity to:

* Actively contribute to a new employee’s induction into the Service
* Improve their self confidence
* Improve their communication skills
* Increase their job satisfaction
* Introduce new colleagues
* Improve their mentoring/coaching techniques
* Increase their knowledge and understanding of a department and the Service as a whole.

Being a mentor requires commitment but should not require giving up large amounts of time.

All mentors will receive training by the learning and development department to fulfill their role.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a mentor should contact People Management.

Procedure

People Management will keep a list of all mentors and will match them on the following basis:

* The mentor will usually be at a similar level in the organisation to the new employee.
* The mentor will be in the same location as the new employee where possible, but if not, in the same geographical area.
* For retained appointees, the mentor will be either from the same station or someone who has been retained and is now regular.
* A mentor will have no more than four employees assigned to them.

A mentor will be assigned wherever possible but for certain posts in the organisation, finding a match between a mentor and the employee, may become more difficult. In this instance People Management would discuss the issue with an appropriate manager to try to resolve the situation.

The mentor and the employee will have an ‘opt out’ clause if either or both parties felt the relationship was not working in the spirit of the policy. In this case, both parties would contact People Management who will then assign an alternative mentor to the employee following the guidelines above. There may be some instances where the guidelines have to be notified to suit particular circumstances.

The mentoring relationship will normally last for three months. These timescales could be longer or shorter if mutually agreed.

For all staff other than regular firefighters the mentoring process will ideally start on the employees first day, as part of the induction process. Newly appointed regular firefighters or firefighters returning to service will be assigned a mentor at the end of their initial training course. During this course there will be a named person within the Learning and Skills Department, who will act in a similar capacity as a mentor for the duration of the course.

The first meeting will normally be held at the employee’s base location and subsequently at a venue mutually agreed. The frequency and form of any other contact will be up to both parties to decide and it will be the responsibility of the mentor to maintain contact. It should be noted that face to face contact may not always be necessary and speaking on the phone may be all that is required.

Mentors volunteer to undertake these duties, however if the duties do not take place during normal working hours then time in lieu (at single time) may be claimed. All time in lieu relating to the mentoring scheme must be notified to the appropriate line manager.

If either party has to travel to a mentoring meeting then fire service transport should be used, where possible. Where a private vehicle is used then the standard mileage rate will be paid. Where there may be a requirement to travel to meetings the appropriate line manager will set guidelines at the outset of a particular mentoring relationship. Changes to travel requirements during the course of the relationship must be discussed and agreed with the appropriate line manager. All travel expenses should be authorised through the normal channels.

People Management will contact mentors during their first six months as a mentor to discuss any problems that may have arisen with regard to policy and guidance. (It will not be to discuss individual cases).