

# On-Call Futures Programme – OPM Update – February 2026



Station Manager Chris Watson

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# Introduction – What is an On-Call Firefighter?

- On-call firefighters provide a critical role in protecting communities in our lower incident demand areas.
- They are trained firefighters who provide operational cover via a pager from their home or work.
- 25 of our 38 fire stations are solely On-call crewed fire engines
- 6 other stations have both a wholetime and On-call crew
- Lofthouse and Goathland Stations are crewed by volunteer Firefighters
- 50.5% of NYFRS operational firefighters are On-call (312 personnel)
- NYFRS are currently engaging with 60 employers who release employees to be On-call firefighters
- Applications for On-Call vacancies have increased year on year for the last three years
- One in four applications are successful in becoming an On-Call Firefighter

	Applications Received	Year-On-Year Increase
2025	272	+17%
2024	233	+21%
2023	192	

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# Availability Update



**Comparing 2024 to 2025 – NYFRS is tracking the national declining trend**

**Nine months out of Eleven - declining availability**

**7% Availability drop in two years**

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# On-Call Research Study – Strengths and Challenges – National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)



**On-Call System Strengths** - The on-call duty system remains cost-effective and vital for rural and low-risk areas, delivering strong community value

**Sustainability Challenges** - Structural, cultural, and workforce pressures threaten the long-term sustainability of the on-call system

## **Recruitment and Training Challenges** -

Recruitment is hindered by demographic shifts, employer constraints, and demanding training requirements

**Retention and Work-life Balance** - Retention problems stem from high workload, poor work-life balance, and limited flexibility in firefighter roles



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# North Yorkshire's Specific On-Call Challenges – Supervisory Managers

Research Suggests – **Four Supervisory Managers** per Station

Lack of Supervisory Managers – 102 Supervisory Manager Positions

Vacancies - **22**

Dual Contract Supervisory Managers – 51 or **64%**

Four Stations with only 2 Supervisory Managers

Seven Stations with only **1** Supervisory Managers

Two Stations with **0** Supervisory Managers

In total, **13** On-Call Stations understaffed with supervisory managers

**50** Firefighters in acquisition phase, **70** in development



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# On-Call Supervisory Managers.

## What have we done about it?

- Created the On-Call Support Team – District Watch Managers
- Developed District WM's to become Incident Command Trainers/Facilitators.
- Supporting candidates through Incident Command Level 1 (ICL1) workbooks and course
- Presentations created to assist with ICL1 workbooks
- Professional discussion as a reasonable adjustment
- Identifying and encouraging eligible candidates
- Implementing station support plans at high need stations

## We have also tried...

- Acting Crew Manager role – not accredited.
- NFCC On-Call practitioners' group – ICL1 Sub-Group

## We could...

- Make more Supervisory Manager roles available on stations where there is demand, creating resilience



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# North Yorkshire's Specific On-Call Challenges – Emergency Response Drivers (ERD)

Research Suggests – **Four ERD Drivers** per Station

## Improving Picture!

- One Station with only one driver
- Two Stations with two drivers
- Four Stations with three drivers
- **11** Drivers short overall
- Many stations **5+** drivers bucking national trend



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# On-Call – ERD Drivers.

## What have we done about it?

- Identified primary employers with favourable policies for On-Call Firefighters

## We have also tried...

- Recruiting Large Goods Vehicle trained drivers
- Employing Firefighters on a driving only contract

## We could...

- Reduce training requirement back to 40 hours in line with current legislation, but in contradiction to Fire Standards Board
- Ensure driving course is only accessed once competency is gained, or acquisition courses are complete



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# North Yorkshire's Specific On-Call Challenges - Recruitment

## Research Suggests – **Ten Firefighters** per Station

### Resource Book 2024

- Headcount – 292
- FTE\* – 238.25
- Vacancy FTE\* – 103.75

### Resource Book 2025

- Headcount – **300**
- FTE\* – **232.25**
- Vacancy FTE\* – **110.75**

**19 Stations with < 9 Firefighters**



\*Full Time Equivalent

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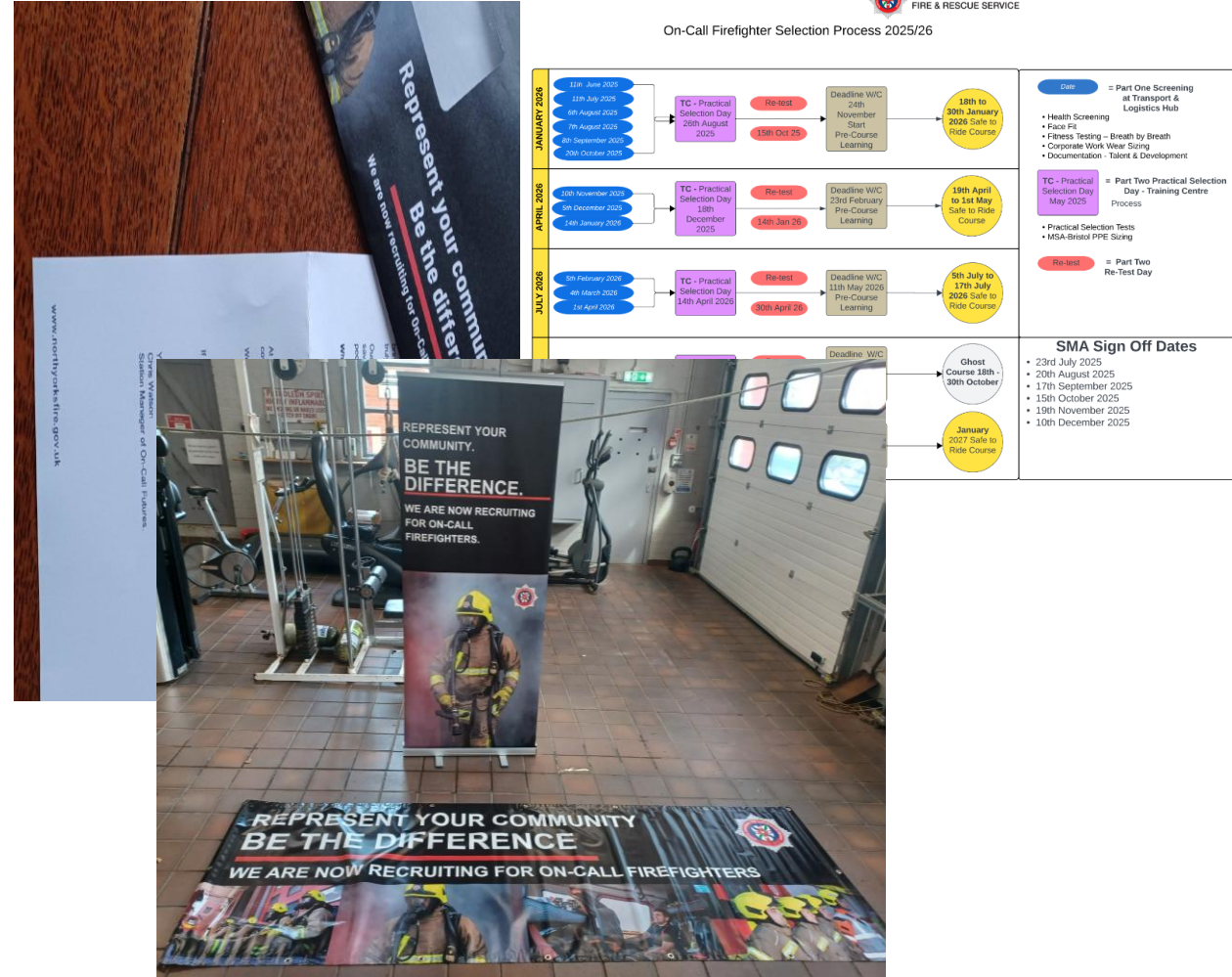


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# North Yorkshire's Specific On-Call Challenges - Recruitment

## What have we done about it?

- Managing expectations interview
- Targeted letter drops - using station footprint population data
- Clear timelines for recruitment processes
- Weekly meeting with colleagues in the Talent & Development function
- Paid social media adverts
- Banners and pop-up advertising
- Online On-Call familiarisation meetings
- Social media hub



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# North Yorkshire's Specific On-Call Challenges

## What else have we done?

- Implemented availability bands
- Purchased 20 Treadmills – District WM to carry Out return to work assessments
- On-Call impact assessment tool
- On-Call policy document
- Primary employer engagement
- On-Call station overviews
- Placed Ford Kuga's at some stations



Bentham Fire Station  
July 3 · 🌐

We took delivery of a brand new treadmill this morning. Another inv  
Fire & Rescue Service in Fire Fighters safety. Keeping our fitness up i  
and efficient service to the public.

This now means we have 2 at Bentham (1 funded by our own crew)  
Another reason to consider joining our amazing team? Maybe!

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incidents as On-call firefighters.

Owner:  
Last review dat  
Next Review Da  
Equality Impact  
Is there an equa  
document?  
Add to NYFRS  
Should this docu

Reeth Fire S

Availability 2024

91%

People and Rec

Personnel  
9

Emergency Res

ERD Drivers  
3

District WM's F

- Focus on recruitm
- Support developm
- Support aspiring IC

Primary Employer E

- Carrs Billington Agriculture, Carlisle.
- Dales Bike Centre, Richmond.

**MASHAM ON-CALL DUTY  
FIREFIGHTER**

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AN ON-CALL (PART-TIME) FIREFIGHTER  
RESPONDS TO EMERGENCY INCIDENTS FROM  
HOME OR WORK WHEN ALERTED BY A PAGER

**TIME  
TO RESPOND 5**

**AVERAGE CALLS FOR A  
FIREFIGHTER PER MONTH**

DAYTIME = 2  
EVENING = 1  
NIGHT TIME = 1

**SALARY  
£4,000 TO £8,000+**

**COMMITMENT PER WEEK  
30 - 120 HOURS ON-CALL**

**POTENTIAL TO EARN MORE  
MONEY PREVENTING FIRES**

**DRILL NIGHTS  
WEDNESDAY  
1900 - 2100**

**AVERAGE LENGTH  
CALL OUT  
42 Minutes**

**CAREERS WEBSITE  
INFORMATION**

**TO MAKE AN  
APPLICATION**

**EMAIL FOR MORE  
INFORMATION**

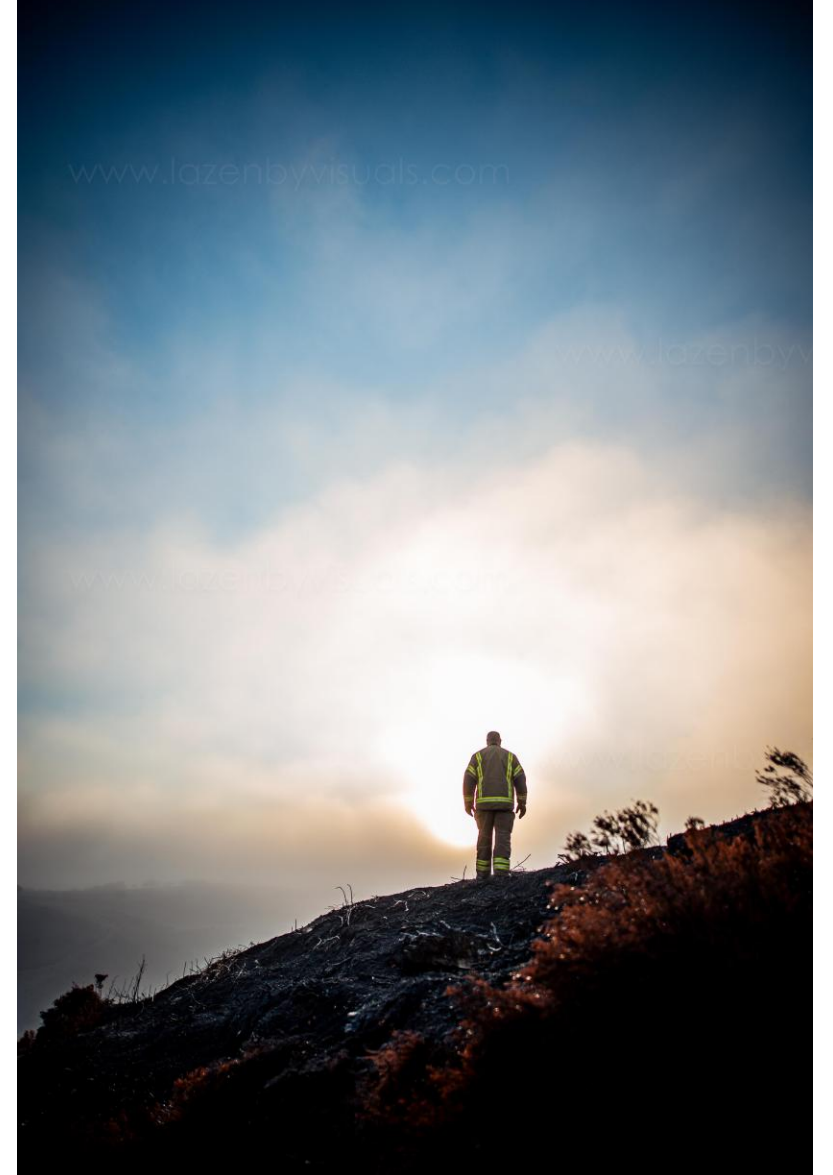
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# What else is coming?

- **Electronic EST 5c – change availability declaration quickly**
- **Dashboard to monitor individual availability**
- **Workforce planning at stations**
- **Pilot of Key Support Members - incident notification**
- **Continuing to invest in fitness equipment**
- **3-hour drill nights**
- **Investment in IT provision for On-Call stations**
- **On-Call Futures Station Manager – permanent position**



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# Further Information & Recruitment

For more information on the role of On-Call Firefighters in North Yorkshire please see our website at - [On-Call Firefighter Recruitment – North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service](#)



January 2026 On-Call Firefighter Safe to Ride Course



On-Call Firefighter Recruitment

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