



Job Description and Person Specification

Assistant Director (Operational Area Commander) | 2026

Job Description

Assistant Director Area Commander (Grey Book Operational)



Main purpose of the role

To lead and assist in the development and implementation of strategic Service and departmental objectives and ensure their effective and efficient implementation. To provide full operational cover on the Area Commanders' rota and respond to operational incidents (Level 3 and Level 4) adopting the appropriate role within the incident command system.

To provide strategic leadership and support the Principal Officers in providing overall coordination of the Service including change management, development of best practice, organisational strategy and transformation, effective industrial relations and exploring opportunities for collaboration with partners in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

Dependent on role, the strategic departmental responsibilities will vary but will be consistent with the national Area Manager role map and will consist of a portfolio of several varied departmental responsibilities.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

(aligned to national Area Manager Role Map and NFCC Leadership Framework)

Key Duties and Responsibilities:	Examples of this include:
Plan implementation of organisational strategy (EFSM 5, 23 & 17)	• Develop and agree policies, processes, strategy, systems and structures to support achievement of organisational aims and objectives. • Ensure that plans, allocation and work activities meet the identified need within agreed budgets and resources allocated. • Implement and evaluate work plans to achieve the stated objectives. • Make recommendations for improvements to any identified work activities that are not effective and efficient in delivering the desired outcomes.

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Key Duties and Responsibilities: Examples of this include:

Implement and lead organisational strategy (EFSM 6, 8, 18, 19 & 25)

- Allocate roles and responsibilities, delegate related work activities and maintain effective working relationships.
- Obtain information to aid strategic decision making, analyse data, generate options and consult to achieve strategic goals.
- Establish and maintain quality assurance systems and make recommendations for improvements.
- Implement a performance management system to ensure realisation of local risk management objectives.
- Manage the work of substantial, complex projects critical to strategic objectives.
- Audit, implement and monitor overall compliance with quality systems.
- Ensure that non-compliances are managed effectively, carry out trend analysis of performance data and report to the appropriate service level performance monitoring manager.

Implement and manage change (EFSM 9)

- Identify opportunities for improvement
- in activities and working practices including building relationships with partners at a District, Service, Regional and National level.
- Evaluate any proposed changes looking closely at the benefits, advantages, costs and risks.
- Plan implementation of desired changes.
- Introduce and embed the changes in working practices or activities.

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Key Duties and Responsibilities: Examples of this include:

Select and Manage required Personnel (EFSM 13 & 14)

- Identify personnel requirements and select required staff to meet Service level needs.
- Allocate and delegate work to teams and individuals.
- Agree the objectives and work plans with team members/ individuals.
- Assess the performance of the teams and individuals.
- Provide feedback to teams and individuals on their performance.
- Resolve any performance issues with teams and individuals.

Develop teams and individuals (EFSM 15)

- Identify and agree with the individual development needs.
- Plan how development needs can be best addressed, in consultation with appropriate staff.
- Assist in delivering individual learning and support for further sustained development.
- Evaluate and report upon the effectiveness of the chosen development methods and the resultant impact on the teams and individuals performance.

Lead, Monitor and Support to resolve Operational Incidents – Incident Command System (EFSM 2)

- Review and determine incident status.
- Assume responsibility and implement actions to support those involved in the incident in accordance with the prescribed Incident Command System and policies.
- Debrief the staff involved following resolution of an incident.
- Minimise risk and maximise progress.
- Closing down the operational phase of incidents effectively and debriefing people following incidents.

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Key Duties and Responsibilities: Examples of this include:

Exchange of Information and development of information systems to ensure effective service delivery (EFSM 20 & 22)

- Plan, chair and participate at both
- internal and external meetings, locally, regionally and, nationally to meet the requirements of the role.
- Represent the Authority at identified and appropriate meetings.
- Analyse all relevant information to
- support own decision making and the decisions of the Senior Management Board (SMB).
- Provide advice and information on the results of that analysis to other members of the Service.
- Identify, select, implement and monitor management and communications systems.

Management of self to achieve work objectives (EFSM 16)

- Organise and structure own personal work activities to achieve objectives.
- Develop and continuously improve working relationships with other members of the team.
- Develop and implement, in consultation with appropriate functions, personal development plans to continuously improve own personal performance.

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Key Duties and Responsibilities: Examples of this include:

Resource management (EFSM 11)

- Formulate and implement a business plan for allocated directorate, monitoring agreed targets and objectives through an effective system of performance and management.
- Manage the staff and resources within a directorate. To be responsible for setting and managing the departmental budgets. Support the process of sourcing and bidding for external funding opportunities that arise from time to time.
- Oversee and manage budgets within allocated reference.
- Effectively bid for and allocate resources to meet service delivery needs.
- Make fully assessed recommendations to expenditure.
- Monitor, review and control expenditure reporting on any identified growth, overspend or efficiencies.
- Identify and report on risks to assets including severity, likelihood and proximity. Assist in identification of suitable risk reduction/mitigation methods.

The postholder will be required to undertake any other reasonable duty commensurate with the grading and responsibility of the post. This could be at any location across the Service working a variety of shift patterns, in order to meet Service priorities, business continuity requirements or personal development. A vehicle is provided for the role with the ability to undertake personal usage with the relevant taxation implications and mileage charge.

The Area Commander rota is agreed locally and sits outside of the current NJC National Conditions of Service. This is currently a three-week duty pattern, consisting of one 24-hour duty for a 7-day period (Monday to Monday), followed by two weeks of working for nine hours per day flexibly (Monday to Friday). You may also need to work evenings and weekends, as required, and an Area Commander should be available for recall to duty at any reasonable time.

When rostered as 'duty AC', the postholder must be available for immediate operational response within the Service area. At other times, Area Commanders will work as required by their role within the Service.

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Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by
Qualifications and Training		
Hold or have previously held an operational assessment pass at Incident Command Level 3	Essential (may be undertaken as part of the selection process)	Application, Selection process
Ability to pass an Incident Command assessment at Level 4	Essential	Incident Command Assessment if required
A professional management and leadership qualification (Level 5 or above) or equivalent	Essential	Application, Qualification certificate
Evidence of continued professional development at senior officer level	Desirable	Application
Ability to pass a professional management and leadership qualification level 7 following appointment	Essential	N/A
A Health & Safety qualification or equivalent experience appropriate to the role	Essential	Application, Qualification certificate if applicable
A Fire Safety qualification or equivalent knowledge and experience appropriate to the role	Desirable	Application, Qualification certificate if applicable
Be a Member of the Institution of Fire Engineers	Desirable	Application, Qualification Certificate
Experience		
As a current UK Local Authority competent Group Commander or above	Essential	Application, References
Experience of effective operational command at large and complex incidents within a multi-agency setting (Silver and Bronze level) and/or within a Local Resilience Forum	Essential	Application, Selection process
Experience of working successfully as part of a team, building and maintaining collaborative relationships with peers, managers and partners	Essential	Application, Selection process

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Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by
Experience of managing the performance of diverse teams and individuals, setting and monitoring objectives	Essential	Application
Significant experience of delivering cultural and technical change and improvements	Desirable	Application, Selection Process
Experience of strategic planning and delivery, as well as developing strategic documents	Desirable	Application, Selection Process
Knowledge and Understanding		
A clear understanding of the cultural issues facing the sector and knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to HWFRS as an employer and service provider	Essential	Selection Process
Knowledge of specific legislation applicable to the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to Health & Safety, Fire Safety and FRS operations	Essential	Selection Process
Up to date knowledge of Fire and Rescue Service developments including the work of the NFCC	Essential	Selection Process
Significant knowledge of the principles and practical application of project and programme management and budgetary management	Desirable	Application, Selection process
Demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to the Fire Service Core Code of Ethics	Essential	Selection Process
Demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to the national Fire and Rescue Service Leadership Framework for a Strategic Manager	Essential	Selection Process

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Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by
Skills and Abilities		
Well-developed verbal and written communication skills with the ability to articulate complex issues and information to a wide range of audiences in various methods	Essential	Application, Selection Process
Ability to positively impact on organisational culture by championing leadership throughout the organisation	Essential	Selection Process
Ability to effectively manage demanding and competing priorities	Essential	Selection Process
Demonstrates a commitment to quality in public service in regards to efficiency and accountability	Essential	Selection Process
Achieve and maintain the required skills and fitness levels to meet operational requirements	Essential	Fitness Test
Achieve the required medical standards to meet operational requirements (subject to reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 where appropriate)	Essential	Medical
Hold and maintains a current full UK driving licence and ability to pass and undertake emergency response driving	Essential	Application, Driving Licence Check

