



We are  
People First.



Impact Report 2021/22.

# How we help.

We Listen. Engage. Empower.



[wearepeoplefirst.co.uk](http://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk)



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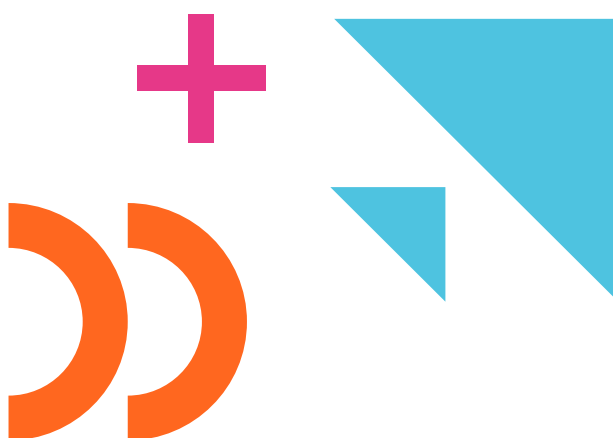
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## Accessibility.

This report is designed to be an accessible document.

If you do need an alternative version please email us at [hello@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk](mailto:hello@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk)



## On the cover.

**Richard** and **Mark** are Project Workers within our Lancashire Self-Advocacy Team. For more information about their work see **page 18**.



**We are People First.** We listen, engage and empower.

For over 30 years we have worked to improve people's lives. **Listening** through advocacy. **Engaging** with people about health and care services. **Empowerment** through training. We believe in supporting people to live their lives the way they want to.

**This report shows our impact from April 2021 to March 2022.**

**We make a difference.**  
**We are People First.**

# Co-chairs' message.

## Making a difference for our customers.

Since 2020, we have had the privilege of introducing three People First Impact Reports; in each, we have used the term, 'unprecedented'.



**John Mills,**  
Co-Chair  
Board of Trustees



**Steven Corlett,**  
Co-Chair  
Board of Trustees

● This is not a symptom of a lack of imagination, instead, this reflects the unpredictability, the changes and the challenges that our customers, and our teams, have experienced in recent years.

Looking back at the year past, once again we are drawn to the term; once again, we have experienced the unprecedented. As communities have experienced the Covid-19 vaccination programme, our Healthwatch Teams have worked with innovation to hear and share their views. As hospitality venues re-awakened after the pandemic, our Conference Centre Team welcomed people back with confidence and kindness. As vulnerable people took their steps back out into communities, our Self Advocacy staff helped them to engage and connect.

In each report published since 2020, we have also used another term, 'determination'. It is the determination of our staff, of our volunteers and trustees that drives the work mentioned above and makes the impact described in this report possible; and that determination has been in full force this year too.

From expanding our self-advocacy network into Lancashire, to opening a brand new and inclusive café space; from increasing our advocacy offer in the Northeast, to welcoming the former Disability Association Carlisle and Eden team into People First; determination has powered our people and in turn inspired us.

We are grateful for all the work, the energy, and the dedication of the People First team. On behalf of the thousands of customers we work with, we'd like to say a heartfelt thank you. Their continued efforts have built upon People First's strong foundation and, we are confident, prepared us to continue to give support, guidance and assistance in the changing context of the year ahead.

**John Mills, Co-Chair**  
Board of Trustees

**Steven Corlett, Co-Chair**  
Board of Trustees

# Highlights 2021/22.

24,060

customers accessed our services from across Cumbria, Lancashire and the Northeast.



££  
38%

increased turnover from 2020/2021.

over 2,358

learning hours delivered by The People First Centre for Learning.



1,881

people from seldom heard groups shared their views with our Healthwatch teams.



1,116

separate Conference Centre bookings, supporting the Hospitality Academy and our wider work.

Book



97%

of people who received advocacy support said they were satisfied.



341

counselling sessions delivered by our Here counselling service.



2,436

people provided with advocacy support.



30,395

people engaged with our Healthwatch teams to share their health and care experiences.



179

young people took part in our youth projects





Caitlin,  
Independent  
Advocate.

# We Listen.



## **)) We Listen.**

**We listen to people to truly understand their needs and wishes.**

**Our work enables people to feel respected, to be heard, and helps get them the outcomes they deserve.**



# Independent Advocacy.

## Standing shoulder to shoulder with people across the north.

**Advocates support people to speak up for themselves, have their rights and choices respected, and challenge inequalities.**

● This year, through the dedication and hard work of our team, working in partnership locally and nationally, and connecting customers through our Advocacy Hub, our service has supported over 4,000 people to have their rights upheld.

From expanding our provision, to extending our work with Lancashire's refugee community, furthering our work in Teesside and developing our self-advocacy network into Lancashire, 2021/2022 has seen our team deliver powerful outcomes.

### **Working together in partnership.**

We continue to engage in national opportunities to represent our customers and

build our reputation. This has included collaborating with NHS England and other partners during their review of advocacy services provided to people with learning disabilities and autistic people in mental health hospital settings.

### **The impact:**

The review provided an invaluable opportunity to explore, understand and address issues impacting provision of high-quality advocacy, raising awareness of improvements to ensure people receive the timely support they need when they need it the most.

## » The impact.

**2,436** 


People supported through our Advocacy Projects.

**3,313** 

Referrals made through our Advocacy Hub.







Miriam,  
Independent  
Advocate.

### **Extending our work with the refugee community in Lancashire:**

We are proud to have been awarded additional funding from Lancashire County Council to extend our Health and Social Care project for another year. This enables us to continue supporting people who are refugees or seeking asylum within the Lancashire and Blackpool areas. Our support includes:

**One-to-one advocacy:** working alongside people to help them achieve their desired health and social care outcomes.

**Group Advocacy:** facilitating group sessions to support people to feel confident and comfortable to speak up for themselves.

**Health and Social Care Sector Support:** working with health and social care providers to identify issues they face which may create barriers for people accessing their services.

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**Into 2022/2023, we will continue to develop our advocacy service whilst ensuring our teams and projects continue to deliver a high quality service that our customers deserve.**

### **Our core Advocacy services:**

At People First our experienced and skilled advocates provide a variety of advocacy support, including three types of statutory advocacy:

#### **Care Act Advocacy:**

We support people to be fully involved with decisions about their care and support, including local authority assessments, care and support planning, care reviews and safeguarding processes.

#### **Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy:**

We support people who have been assessed as lacking capacity, where there is a decision to be made about their care and treatment.

#### **NHS Complaints Advocacy:**

We support people to navigate the NHS complaints process and to share their experience of treatment or care that they, a family member or friend has received from an NHS service.

**“ I am so grateful for your kindness this year. You have played a part in my recovery by helping me make sense of my health appointments and problems. You were very patient and compassionate, and I really needed that. Thank you!”**

Advocacy customer.

# Advocacy impact.

## NHS Complaints Advocacy Case Study.

### Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy supports people to raise concerns and complaints about NHS care and treatment.

● Our Advocates work alongside people to help them understand the complaints process and raise their complaint.

Our advocates help people to feel confident in understanding the NHS complaints process, to explore their rights and options, access self-help information and compile and submit their complaint.

This work included supporting Liam (not his real name).

#### Case Study

Liam suffered multiple fractures to his face playing sport and needed an operation to repair the damage. Following the operation, Liam has suffered from ringing in his ears. Although he was reassured by doctors the ringing would ease,

it has continued, and he has since been advised by several healthcare professionals that it should not still be happening. Liam contacted People First for help and support in making an NHS complaint as he wanted answers about the operation and to find out if correct medical procedures had been followed.

#### Support from an advocate

The advocate made initial contact with Liam to discuss his options and the complaints process. Following his decision to proceed with a complaint, the advocate worked alongside Liam, supporting him to



Following his decision to proceed with a complaint, the advocate worked alongside Liam and supported him to compose a letter to detail his issues and concerns.

### Want to know more?

Download our NHS Complaints Advocacy 'Good to Know' Guide and FAQs.



Image does not depict any persons involved in this case.

compose a letter to detail his issues and concerns. Liam sent the letter to the CEO of the Trust and the Case Officer.

Our advocate supported Liam through all stages of his complaint, which included providing him with updates from the Case Officer and Trust. The advocate also supported Liam to request the Trust have a Local Resolution Meeting to discuss the complaint, however, this was declined.

The advocate supported Liam to progress the complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

## » The impact.

- The PHSO investigated Liam's complaint and sent him a decision which advised him to seek legal advice as they think he has a medical negligence case to be answered. Liam can ask for financial compensation regarding his damages along with seeking further investigation and hopefully answers, relating to the problems he is experiencing with his ears.

**Liam was very happy with all the support and advice he received from the advocate and felt he would not have been able to get this far without it.**



# Advocacy impact.

## Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy case study.

**Our Independent Mental Capacity Advocates support people who have been assessed as lacking capacity to make a specific decision.**

● If a person does not have family or friends appropriate to consult and lacks capacity, an advocate can help. They work to ensure that people are fully represented in the decision-making processes that impact their lives.

Among our customers this year was Polly, (not her real name), here's how we helped.

### Case study:

Polly is an elderly lady who suffers from dementia and after living independently in her own home all her life, she was admitted to hospital after becoming ill. She was subsequently discharged to a care home for what she thought was a temporary period of respite.

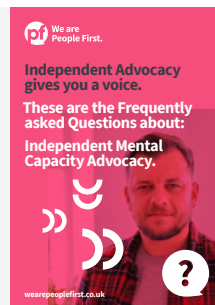
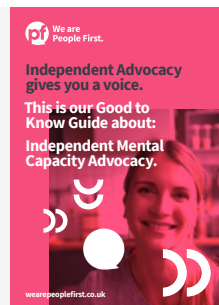
Polly thought that once the local authority had arranged support for her, that she would be able to return home. However, it was decided that Polly should remain in the care home on a permanent basis which caused Polly to be very unhappy as she longed to return home. On one occasion, Polly tried to leave the care home to go for a walk which resulted in her being placed under a **Deprivation of Liberty safeguard (DoLS)\*** and she was not allowed to leave the care home of her own accord. This made Polly very upset, and she could not understand why she was not being allowed to make decisions about her own care and residency.

### Support from an advocate

A mental capacity advocate was instructed to support Polly and when the advocate made

### Want to know more?

Download our **Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy** Good to Know Guide and FAQs.



**A Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard** is put in place when a person in a care home or hospital has been assessed as 'lacking capacity' to consent to their care or treatment and it is necessary to keep them safe from harm.

Image does not depict any persons involved in this case.

an initial visit to Polly at the care home, they found that she was extremely distressed and wanted to go home.

As the advocate explored Polly's wishes and feelings, it was apparent that she had capacity in relation to her care and residence and she was a victim of an unlawful deprivation and being held against her will.

The advocate gathered all the relevant information from professionals involved in Polly's care and they all believed that Polly had capacity to make decisions about her care and residency.



## » The impact.

→ The advocate contacted a legal firm and instructed them to make an application to the Court of Protection, on Polly's behalf, to challenge the deprivation of liberty safeguards, so that a Judge could hear her views and wishes about her care and residency.

This case was heard by a judge at the Court of Protection and, with effective collaboration between professionals involved in Polly's care, she was able to return home.

**Polly now receives two hours of care per day within her own home and is thriving.**

**Polly stated she will never be able to thank the advocate enough for helping her get her independence back.**

# Direct Payments and Benefits Support.

## A new team with an established history.

**People First's mission is to help people live their best lives. This year, this mission saw us develop an entirely new part of our organisation.**

● In 2022 we welcomed a new team to the People First family to deliver Direct Payments, Managed Accounts, and Benefits Support.

### **Welcoming a complimentary service.**

The team were formerly part of the well-known Disability Association Carlisle and Eden (DaCE), which ceased operating in 2022. DaCE had been supporting people with disabilities across Cumbria since 1999.

As an organisation that shared many of the same values and aims, we were delighted to welcome this knowledgeable

and experienced team, allowing these essential services to continue without interruption.

People First and DaCE worked together, along with the Local Authority and the NHS, to transfer these services to allow a smooth transition and minimise disruption.

### **An established service with a new home.**

The Direct Payments team supports customers throughout Cumbria with Direct Payments and Personal Health Budgets. The Benefits Support team supports customers in the Carlisle and Eden area.

“

**I have been using the services of DaCE for approximately 18 years. When I found out that DaCE was closing, I was so pleased and relieved that they had organised for People First to continue all the services that I use and need. There was hardly any change noticeable when the transition happened, and I am very thankful for People First's past and continued help and support.”**

Direct Payments customer.





**Chris,**  
Independent Living  
Coordinator.

The teams comprise of Independent Living Co-ordinators (ILCs) and Payroll and Managed Accounts. The ILCs are based throughout Cumbria and the Payroll and Managed Account team are based in the People First Office in Carlisle. Since the transfer we have recruited additional members to the team but most of the DaCE team transferred with the service which provided continuity for our customers.

**An introduction to the service**

Direct Payments and Personal Health Budgets allow customers to have control, choice and flexibility; we support over 1000 customers throughout Cumbria. Direct Payments and Personal Health Budgets are offered to children and adults.

The team set up Direct Payments and Personal Health Budgets, which includes creating a costing plan, supporting with recruitment, training for Personal Assistants, DBS checks, contracts of employment, payroll, managing client's funds and making payments on their behalf.

**Looking ahead**

We appreciate the legacy created by DaCE and are proud to support the expert team to continue delivering their established service.

We were in a unique position to ensure that these services continue to operate. We are excited to continue to ensure the quality of this transformative work continues to have impact across Cumbria and beyond.



Team members and CEO David Blacklock.



# We Engage.



**Hannah,**  
Education Team Leader,  
the People First  
Conference Centre.

# **+ We Engage.**

**By engaging with people and communities we can find out what really matters to them.**

**We use this information, and people's stories, to influence decision makers, improve services and improve people's lives.**





# Self-Advocacy Groups.

## Growing a network for Lancashire.

**For over 30 years, People First has been rooted in the delivery of high-quality self-advocacy. It was as a self-advocacy group that our founding members came together to establish our organisation.**

● This year, building on our reputation in Cumbria, we have been excited to develop our self-advocacy network into Lancashire. Commissioned by Lancashire County Council, we have started to deliver self-advocacy group support for people with learning disabilities in Lancashire.

### **Self-Advocacy in Lancashire.**

Self-advocacy brings people together to share experiences and to support each other. It is peer-led and aims to create a safe environment in which people can learn and connect.

Based on over 30 years of experience, our aim in Lancashire is to provide group advocacy, whilst supporting peer advocates with learning difficulties, to develop a strong self-advocacy network across Lancashire.

The network will encourage people to share experiences, influence change and empower one another; it will have a voice, representing views that contribute to service reviews and re-design.

### **Starting as we mean to go on.**

So far, we have connected with 91 individuals from across Lancashire. With this growing community, we have delivered group sessions that have focused on supporting people to explore topics including health and wellbeing, new hospital facilities, hospital passports and

## + The impact.

“

**Now that the meetings are face to face, I get to see my old friends which is helping my mental health.”**

Self-Advocacy member.

“


**I get advice and support from group meetings.”**

Self-Advocacy member.

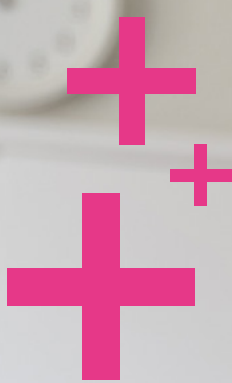
“

**I feel able to talk to my parents now about getting back on the bus to travel more independently like before lockdown.”**

Self-Advocacy member.



**Richard and Mark,**  
Project Workers within  
our Lancashire Self-  
Advocacy Team.



what to do if you experience a problem with your healthcare.

Our team of peer advocates, local people with learning difficulties, have connected with local agencies and organisations to raise awareness of the network and to grow membership. We have promoted self-advocacy by attending meetings with local day services and have proposed delivering sessions in these settings to encourage membership.

We have worked together to ensure that people with learning difficulties have their views heard. This has included our members being part of a consultation lead by Lancashire Mind regarding local mental health services.

### **Looking ahead**

So far, we have established a base membership that we will continue to develop in the year ahead. This will include continuing to support the development of the Learning Disability Partnership Board in Lancashire, increasing the number of young people involved in our groups, and strengthening our relationship with statutory service providers and voluntary organisations.

We are ready to continue developing the network in Lancashire and look forward to connecting more people to share experiences and create meaningful friendships.

# Healthwatch Lancashire.

## Connecting with communities. Shaping improvements.

**Healthwatch Lancashire amplifies the voices of thousands of Lancashire residents, to ensure local people are driving improvements to their local health and care services.**

● This year, whilst communities adjust to an increasingly post-pandemic world, Healthwatch Lancashire's engagement activity has returned to in-person events.

The team have re-established vital work within care settings such as care homes, and through the Healthwatch Together partnership (see pages 24/25), furthered collaborative working across the region to increase the power of local representation.

Key projects this year included:

### **Making a difference to emergency departments:**

Healthwatch Lancashire engaged with 565 people across 17 sites in Lancashire and South Cumbria to understand patient experience at Emergency Departments, Urgent Treatment Centres and Walk-In Centres.

### **Project Impact**

- The Urgent and Emergency Care Network are using our reports to inform their operational plans for 2022-23
- The North West Ambulance Service and NHS England Improvement have shared our reports with their regional Health and Equalities Unit
- NHS Communications Leads are creating plans to improve local communications.

## + The impact.

  
**49,885**

views of our work online via the Healthwatch Lancashire website and social media accounts

**605**

people who considered themselves from a seldom heard group connected with us this year

**93**

recommendations made by our team to improve health and social care in Lancashire







**Alison,**  
Engagement  
Officer.

**New Hospitals Programme:**

The team gathered the views of 889 people about changes to local hospitals. We aimed to encourage people and communities who identify as members of seldom heard groups to express their views.

**Project Impact**

- We ensured that those who often go unheard, felt empowered to have their say
- Our intelligence on the longlist of proposals have informed a shortlist of proposals
- We highlighted the need to target efforts into addressing the concerns of seldom heard groups.

**Hearing from care home residents:**


Although access into social care settings was still restricted due to

Covid-19, we began to conduct several visits into care homes to hear the views of residents, staff and families. Following each visit we produced a report making recommendations on improvements and citing examples of excellent work.

**Project Impact**

Our recommendations have included:

- Increased contact with family through use of accessible technology
- Improved living environment through increased frequency of cleaning.
- Increased choice and control over mealtime choices through working with catering managers to identify residents' preferences

**14,568**

people engaged with us online and in person to access information and to share their views and experiences

# Healthwatch Cumbria.

## Connecting local people with the design and development of local services.

**Healthwatch Cumbria connects with thousands of people across Cumbria each year to ensure that the shared experiences of local people shape services within Cumbria.**

● This year, the team's connection with Cumbrian communities has remained at the heart of our work.

Through case studies, focus groups, attending engagement events and online surveys, Healthwatch Cumbria has engaged with over 15,000 people this year, including members of the public and health and care professionals.

Our role as Cumbria's champion of health and care experiences continues to have a powerful impact for local people.

Our work this year has included a diverse range of projects including:

### **West Cumbria Dental Project**

We have been supporting the development of a new University of Central Lancashire dental campus based in Cumbria, after identifying a need within the county.

### **Mood of the Public:**

Through engagement we gauged the attitudes and opinions of the public of being on a hospital waiting list. This informed the Elective Care Recovery Group's modelling process on how to combat the situation.

## + The impact.

**15,827**



people engaged with us online and in person to access information and to share their views and experiences

**52,225**



views of our work online via the Healthwatch Cumbria website and social media accounts

**1270**



people who considered themselves from a seldom heard group connected with us this year





**New Hospitals Programme:**

We supported engagement work with the public to gain a deeper insight into the views of the local community (especially seldom heard groups) on the optimal proposals of the development of the hospitals in Lancashire and South Cumbria, which were used to inform a longlist to shortlist process.

**Emergency Departments:**

We engaged with patients presenting at Emergency Departments, Urgent Treatment Centres and Walk-in-Centres to explore reasons for attendance, to gain insight into experiences and highlight themes, which advised recommendations to the NHS to help alleviate winter pressures and support their communication.

**North Cumbria Primary Care (NCPC):**

NCPC is an innovative, not-for-profit model, which has been set up to sustain a network of family practices within Cumbria. We have been carrying out public engagement with the group to ensure patient experience informs decision making, including supporting the development of PPGs and to encourage direct engagement via an online feedback centre.



recommendations made by our team to improve health and social care in Cumbria

Amy,  
Research and Data Officer.



# Healthwatch Together.

## Working in partnership across the north west.

**Healthwatch Together is a dynamic collaboration bringing together four local Healthwatch: Cumbria, Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire.**

● The collaboration draws together the experience of engagement professionals, to expand the reach and impact of Healthwatch's presence in the region, to connect with more communities, hear more experiences and support more far-reaching improvements.

### **Healthwatch Together Strategic Lead: an innovative role.**

2022 marks a key milestone for the collaboration as it secured funding from the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) to appoint a Strategic Lead to drive the collaboration forward.

Healthwatch Together is proud to be one of the first Healthwatch collaborations in England to be able to appoint a specific position to lead on its strategic work with the ICB.

### **A year of impact across the north west.**

Working together, sharing expertise, Healthwatch Together delivered a varied programme of projects this year, each designed to connect the views of local people with the services they use; this included:

### **The New Hospitals Programme.**

Healthwatch Together, helped to facilitate and encourage patient and public involvement in the Lancashire and South Cumbria New Hospitals Programme (NHP). The programme is aiming to enhance the region's

## + The impact.

889

peoples views connected with the New Hospitals Programme for South Cumbria and Lancashire

44

case studies produced to support emergency settings project

16

focus groups facilitated to understand people's experience of emergency settings



**Sue**, a Healthwatch Lancashire Engagement Officer talks with a member of the public engagement event in Preston.



hospitals and services, to provide excellent and connected hospital care for local people.

Healthwatch Together's role was to ensure that the local community were able to share their thoughts on a longlist of proposals for future investment, to identify the most and least preferred, and collect this feedback to inform the next phase of this programme.

**The impact:** We connected the views of 889 local people from across Lancashire and South Cumbria to the New Hospitals process. 796 of these connected with us through 16 public roadshow events.

**Making a difference to emergency settings.**

Healthwatch Together (HWT) engaged with members of the public across South Cumbria and Lancashire to understand patient experience and presentation at Emergency Departments, Urgent Treatment Centres and Walk-In Centres. Together, we visited 17 sites and spoke to 565 people including developing 44 case studies and facilitating 16 focus groups. Based on these conversations, we produced a set of reports that are now influencing improvements across our area.

**The impact so far:** The Urgent and Emergency Care Network comprises of the NHS clinical leads from across Lancashire and South Cumbria are using the reports to inform their operational plans for 2022-23.





Tom, a Learner within the People First Hospitality Academy, at the People First Cafe.



# We Empower.



## **➤ We Empower.**

**Our role is to support people to empower themselves.**

**We create the environment and conditions in which a person is supported to take control of their own future.**



# Youth Projects.

## Supporting young people to develop lifelong skills.

**Our Youth Projects offer supports young people to have fun whilst making lasting friendships, developing skills and confidence.**

● People First Youth Projects offer a dynamic collection of activities and programmes, which includes:

### **Next Steps**

The Next Steps Project continues to support young people with learning difficulties and/or autism now that Covid-19 restrictions have eased. We have supported young people and their families to become more tech savvy through online challenges and interactive workshops.

### **Journeys**

This year we expanded our youth offer by launching the Journeys Project which supports young people in West Cumbria. We aim to support young people to speak up for themselves, become better self-advocates and increase emotional resilience.

### **Activities.**

The People First Youth Team delivered a variety of interactive workshops and activities including arts and crafts, cooking and trips to various community settings such as Maryport Aquarium. These activities gave vulnerable young people the opportunity to meet new friends and explore their community, whilst taking positive risks and developing independence.

**Cora** and **Cat**, from the Youth Projects team, with participants at a visit to Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle.



## ➤ The impact.

“

**The children have thoroughly enjoyed the sessions.”**

SENCO of West Cumbrian Primary School.

“

**At the start of lockdown she was getting quite withdrawn and it was worrying, so it's fabulous that she obviously feels so comfortable with you.”**

Young Person's Parent.

“

**Thank you for tonight I really enjoy it and I enjoy meeting new people that I never met before.”**

Young Person's feedback on an activity.



A Youth Projects participant taking part in an art session at the People First Conference Centre.

### A young person's experience

Erin (not her real name), who is 13, has been attending youth activities at People First for a year now.

Erin was initially shy at activities and needed encouragement to attend. Through regular attendance and lots of support and praise from staff and carers, Erin is now a regular at her local Boccia club, where she rivals even the most seasoned club members.

Erin has made new friends and developed her confidence to take part in activities more independently. Erin enjoys being an active member of the community, taking part in activities such as bowling, sports and using the Nintendo Switch to keep fit.

### Partnership in the community.

People First Youth Workers formed strong links with the local community this year. Young people in Carlisle were introduced to their local Boccia group where they made new friends, increased their confidence and experienced a new social setting.

People First Youth Workers also worked in partnership with several Cumbrian schools; delivering a range of fun, interactive workshops for over 50 young people. Participants learned how to create safer passwords, coping strategies for exam stress and how to map out their social support systems.

A young person from Keswick school identified he liked 'how much they have assisted me' and thanked youth workers for 'coming in to help us.'

### Growth of youth projects offer.

The future of People First Youth Projects is bright. We're expanding our 'tech savvy' activities to include podcast experiences and further developing our coding offer.



young people took part in our youth projects



# The People First Centre for Learning.

## Unique education.

### Education and Research is a core part of what we do at People First.

● Our Centre for Learning provides life-changing education. For learners, we provide an environment to gain impressive workplace skills and qualifications.

It's been a year full of opportunities and achievement.

#### **The Hospitality Academy**

This year we have worked together with our learners to foster their resilience and confidence following the Covid-19 pandemic. Following over twelve months of online-based learning, we were determined to ensure a safe return to the in-person, workplace-based education that is central to the experience we provide.

Once restrictions eased, our learners were keen to return to the People First Conference Centre. They adapted to the changes to keep us and guests safe; from wearing masks to extra cleaning to temperature checks.

As restrictions eased, we expanded the opportunities available to our learners by reopening our onsite restaurant the Riverbank Kitchen as well as a new location, The People



## ↙ The impact.

“

Attending People First has been an incredibly positive experience. Working in a professional environment while feeling support has been hugely helpful, especially after lockdown.”

People First Learner.

“

My son loves coming to People First. It's really helped him grow in confidence and independence.”

Parent/carer.

“

I've liked meeting everyone and learning about what it's like to work. I think People First is a great place!”

People First Learner.



“

I appreciate all that People First have achieved for my son. I am especially grateful for the support we were given during the pandemic, much more than any other organisation or agency.”

Parent/carer.

First Cafe. In doing so, we have added additional opportunities for learners to experience a commercial kitchen, food-prep, customer service, and a whole new commercial environment.

### **The Best Life Programme**

In September 2021 we established our first ever dedicated Best Life course as part of our Centre for Learning offer.

The Best Life course is an alternative view on Independent Living in the Community and has Self Advocacy at its heart. Learners on the course explore

their rights, interests and what matters to them via workshops and activities planned by our Education Team. Staff work with our learners to help set targets and goals and then work together to achieve.

The course is currently being delivered for the first time and has attracted students who are looking to increase independence and develop skills. We will continue to grow this course in the years ahead.

↑ **Marcus**, a Learner within the People First Hospitality Academy, at work in our kitchen.



# People First Hospitality.

## New location, new opportunities.

During the past year, People First's unique hospitality offer has developed and positively impacted our customers and learners.

● From the seamless easing of Covid-19 restrictions in our established Conference Centre, to the scoping, and launching of our new venue, The People First Cafe; 2021/2022 has seen great developments for the Hospitality Team and its services.

### The People First Conference Centre:

Our commitment to exceptional service remains; the experience of customers, the frequency of their visits to the People First Conference Centre and repeat business continues to grow and helps solidify our reputation within Cumbria and beyond.

This year we have extended the offer available at the centre to include onsite catering from The Riverbank Kitchen.

Supported by our learners, our newly developed Kitchen Team produce excellent food and drink, providing customers with a more complete hospitality experience.

### New for 2021/22: The People First Cafe:

Our aim to combine the worlds of first-rate hospitality and first-rate education for people with learning difficulties, continues to push us, and has underpinned the development of our new location, The People First Cafe.

The cafe is located in the new Northern Centre for Cancer Care



## ▶ The impact.

  
**1,116**

Conference Centre bookings

  
**178%**

growth in income for the People First Conference Centre

  
**3,193**

visitors to the Conference Centre



**Vic**, Cafe Team Leader, and **Ricardo**, Learner, at the People First Cafe.



in Cumbria. The Cafe provides delicious food and drink for patients attending appointments, families and friends, as well as staff delivering life-saving care.

Learners from the Hospitality Academy take their first step in working at an external venue and are supported by our experienced Cafe Team Leader to develop customer service and catering skills, whilst providing an exceptional service to our customers.

The Cafe has become a source of warmth and refreshment for people in need of nourishment. We are delighted by the experience this has provided for our learners, and the service they deliver. We're looking forward to developing this offer in the years to come.

“  
**The cafe has become a place of happiness and hope.”**

Debra, Cafe customer

“  
**We love how cheerful and helpful the learners are and feel proud to be able to support their hospitality journey by us enjoying coffee and cake.”**

Simon, Hospital Team Member

# People First fundraising.

## Growing support.

During a year of unpredictable change, the support we have received from individuals and businesses has continued to grow, helping us to provide the services our customers need.

● Through increased fundraising activity, diverse fundraising events, campaigns, and public support, we have developed our fundraising programme to be a dynamic and engaging way for people and organisations to engage with us.

This year, individuals have completed sponsorship challenges, businesses have pledged in-kind support, funders have supported our work with grants and awards; all to help us extend the reach of our work and the positive impact we're proud to have in communities across the North.

Georgina, from Lloyd Carlisle Mini, with Chris, People First Learner.

This year, this has included:

### Support from the community:

Among the local heroes who have pledged their time and energy to support our work, this year we were honoured to be represented in a major running event for the first time.

In September 2021, after being postponed due to Covid-19, four kind-hearted Cumbrians ran the Great Manchester Run to raise money for People First.

The runners, who each had their own connection with People First, trained over the course of a year to complete the race. They excelled in their efforts, achieving personal bests, and raising over £1000.



## ▶ Our donors, sponsors and funders 2021/22

- Children in Need
- Barclays
- People's Panel
- Cumbria Community Foundation
- National Lottery
- Scotmid Lakes and Dales
- Cumbria County Council
- Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership
- The Albert Hunt Trust
- Police and Crime Commissioner Community Fund
- Moto in the Community
- Persimmon Community Champions
- Arete Foundation Community Grant
- Social Enterprise Support Fund
- Carlisle City Council
- Aviva Community Fund
- Dobies
- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- The High Sheriff of Cumbria
- IM Events
- UK Online Giving Foundation
- Premier Electrical
- Morrisons
- Tesco
- Cumbria Social Enterprise Awards
- The Good Things Foundation
- Online Systems
- David Allen IT
- Lancashire County Council
- University of Cumbria
- North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Inspira
- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- North Cumbria & North East Transforming Care Partnership
- NHS Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group
- North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group
- Middlesbrough Borough Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- NHS England and NHS England Improvement
- Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS





Looking ahead we will be increasing our involvement in sponsorship events in the new year; we have secured 12 places for 2022's Great North Run, and have runners confirmed for each spot.

**Backing from local businesses:**

Building on the momentum of the previous year, we are grateful to have developed key relationships with figures from the business communities within our region.

This year, these relationships have helped us to expand awareness of People First, provide opportunities for our learners and lay the groundwork for ongoing connections. This has included:

- Sponsorship from the team at **Online Systems** and promotion
- An in-kind sponsorship package from the event organisers of the Carlisle Half Marathon, **IM Event**
- Involvement in charity events from members of the **Marsh Commercial Team**
- Donated hampers from **John Watt & Son** to help us promote the People First Cafe
- Donated use of a sponsored vehicle from **Lloyd Carlisle Mini** to support work experience for our learners

**A big pf Thank you.**

We would like to thank all our donors, funders, sponsors and fundraisers for their amazing support and generosity.

**Thank you for helping us to be there for those who need us.**



# Our volunteers.

## A vital part of our team.



Every year, our team of dedicated volunteers contribute their time, knowledge and skills to support our work. This year was no different.

● Making a huge contribution to our work and the lives of others, we know our organisation runs at its best when we have a dedicated cohort of volunteers to support us.

As a core part of our team, volunteers support us in a variety of roles, including Advocates, Cafe Volunteers, Youth Workers, Group Facilitators and Healthwatch representatives.

Volunteers bring a wealth of knowledge and experience and thanks to their efforts we can expand our impact and the reach of our work.

### Volunteer case study: Healthwatch Lancashire.

Contributing to our work, and experiencing the personal enrichment of volunteering, our volunteers include individuals who support our Healthwatch Lancashire team to reach out and hear the views of communities:

“

Since I started volunteering with Healthwatch I have been helping out at my local care home. This is where I have been engaging with dementia residents by playing games to stimulate their brain and helping them to join in with activities. The Healthwatch team have been really helpful in making this happen for me to get a taster of what it's like to work in a care setting.”

Healthwatch Volunteer.

A  
big  
Thank  
you.

To each and every **People First** volunteer thank you for your time, effort, support, commitment and passion.

# Helen Horne.

## Thank you for your service.

**This year, we were saddened to share the news that the former Chair of Healthwatch Cumbria, Helen Horne, passed away after fighting advanced lung cancer.**



● Helen passed at home with her family around her, and with the unreserved admiration, gratitude and love of the People First team. Professionally, and personally Helen was a source of energy and compassion who used her time and immense dedication to improve the lives of others.

In her varied and devoted life, Helen had a career as a renowned teacher of English at Trinity School in Carlisle, she served as a non-executive director on Eden Valley Primary Care Trust, as a Board Member of Cumbria Council for Voluntary Services, an Elected Member of Cumbria County Council, a volunteer with Age UK, the President of Soroptimist International Carlisle, a Governor of Richard Rose Morton School and a Governor of Carlisle College. Helen used every minute and every ounce of her great capacity for social change to make things better for the people of Cumbria and beyond.

Most recently, Helen was the Chair for Healthwatch Cumbria. Helen supported and encouraged our Healthwatch team to listen to the views of thousands of people in their bid to help improve services. Helen's passion for fairness and for health and social care equity was also extended to Healthwatch England, where

Helen represented the views of the Northwest as a Committee Member. In this role, Helen brought the experiences of our region to an influential forum, ensuring that our views were part of national conversations. For that, and for so much more the Healthwatch Cumbria team will be forever grateful.

Thank you, Helen, for your service, your guidance and your leadership.

“

**Helen was a passionate force for good, she dedicated her whole life to helping others, to tackling disadvantage and to supporting people to live better lives. Helen believed in fairness, equality and human rights. Helen leaves us with a legacy of public service and advocacy. She has supported individuals, and organisations across our county to strive for fairness and excellence. She leaves memories of compassion and a family shaped by love and kindness.”**

David Blacklock, CEO of People First and Healthwatch Cumbria.

# CEO message.

## Organisational transformation.

Looking back on the past year, I am heartened that the work of our dedicated staff continues to transform even more people's lives.



● I couldn't be more proud, or inspired, by the outcomes that we have helped people to achieve over the past 12 months.

In addition to the work described here, not captured within this report is the scale of the transformation that has been going on within our organisation to strengthen our teams and prepare us for future development.

This year, we welcome a new, dynamic, and experienced Senior Leadership Team and an Extended Management Team in response to the growth our services have experienced. Working together, we're investing time and resources to empower each of our teams, and their managers, to take ownership of their work, set their priorities based on the needs of their customers and their future direction.

Improved planning, performance management, staff training, appraisals and solid financial planning are helping to push us forward to extend our support to more people across our region.

Working with Fred Wilenius from the Disability Association Carlisle and Eden (DaCE) to transfer the Direct Payments and Benefits team into People First has been a real privilege. I am pleased and honoured to have been able to support these vital services to

continue. The team has such exciting plans for the coming year.

On behalf of the many Cumbrians who have accessed DaCE's services over the years, I'd like to extend a personal thank you to Fred for his service and a heartfelt thank you to the talented and inspiring team that have joined the People First family.

Looking to the future, I'm deeply concerned about how the most vulnerable in our society will be impacted by the cost-of-living crisis, increased energy bills and changes to essential services. In this context, People First must be flexible and prepared to continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with those most in need; this will be our number one priority.

Whilst the year ahead will hold challenges for the people we support, I know that our hard-working staff, volunteers and trustees are ready to be there for those who need us. It is our people that make us who we are, and I thank them all for their commitment to the people of Cumbria, Lancashire, the north east and beyond.

**David Blacklock.**  
CEO, People First.



# Our money.

People First operates as two registered charities, **People First Independent Advocacy (PFIA)** and **People First Services (PFS)**. Both charities share premises and a vision but have distinct roles and purposes.

**Overall combined income 2021/22**

**£2,431,125**

Previous year 2020/2021: £1,759,561

Combined surplus

**£555,116**

Combined Reserve Funds

**£1,456,289**

## People First Independent Advocacy.

Income

**£1,856,532**

Expenditure

**£1,512,774**

Surplus

**£343,758**

Reserves

**£1,162,591**

made up of unrestricted funds of **£1,078,260** and restricted reserves held of **£84,331**.

## People First Services.

Income

**£574,593**

Expenditure

**£363,235**

Surplus

**£211,358**

Reserves

**£293,698**

of which **£289,168** was unrestricted and **£4,530** was restricted.

The above is a summary of our 2021/22 accounts.

For full accounts information please visit the [Charity Commission Website](#)



**We are  
People First.**

# Contact us.

**0300 303 8037**

**hello@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk**

## **In Carlisle.**

**The People First  
Conference Centre.**

Milbourne Street, Carlisle CA2 5XB

## **In Barrow-in-Furness.**

**Cavendish House**

78 Duke Street Barrow-in-Furness  
Cumbria LA14 1RR

## **In Leyland.**

**Lancashire Business Park**

Leyland House Centurion Way  
Leyland Lancashire PR26 6TY

## **We are a charity.**

People First Independent Advocacy  
is a Registered Charity and Company  
Limited by Guarantee

**Registered Charity No.1184112**

**Company No.5438407**

The People First Centre for Learning  
and Conference Centre are part  
of People First Services.

**A Registered Charity No.1184467**

**We Listen.  
Engage.  
Empower.**



**wearepeoplefirst.co.uk**

