



People First



The Well Communities

# Environmental Policy

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## Introduction

This policy applies to all colleagues and volunteers across People First (PF), The Well Communities (TWC) and Carer Support West Cumbria (CSWC); throughout this document, we refer to these organisations collectively as ‘we’ / ‘our’ / ‘us’.

At People First, Carers Support West Cumbria and The Well Communities we recognise the importance of protecting our environment for the benefit of our staff, funders,

beneficiaries and future generations. We acknowledge our responsibility to minimise our environmental footprint and are committed to reducing our impact through continual improvement of our environmental performance.

This policy is an integral part of our business strategy and operations. It is regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with all relevant environmental laws and alignment with best practices.

We will encourage our beneficiaries, suppliers and partners to adopt similar standards.

### **Policy Aims**

We are committed to:

- Complying with all relevant environmental legislation, including waste, recycling, and carbon reduction requirements.
- Incorporating environmental considerations into all business decisions.
- Continually monitoring and improving our environmental performance.
- Promoting environmental awareness among our staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and partners.

### **Scope of Policy**

This environmental policy applies to all our staff, volunteers, and operations, regardless of where work is carried out. This includes our premises, other premises where we work and home-based or hybrid working environments.

We recognise that environmental impacts can occur beyond our offices, including during travel, procurement, events and remote working, and we will support our staff and volunteers to make environmentally responsible choices wherever they are based.

### **Policy Priorities**

#### **1. Energy & Water**

- Reduce energy and water usage in all our facilities through efficient systems and staff engagement.
- Source energy from sustainable and ethical suppliers, where financially viable.
- Track usage and implement annual reduction targets.

#### **2. Food & Drink**

Minimise food waste and manage any unavoidable waste through composting or food donation partnerships.

- Choose sustainably produced, locally sourced, and low-carbon food and drink options wherever possible.

### **3. Sustainable Travel & Transport**

- Promote active and low-carbon travel options such as walking, cycling and public transport for work-related travel.
- Use of personal cars, taxis, or hire vehicles will only be reimbursed where no practical public transport option is available or for reasons of safety, efficiency, or accessibility.
- Where taxis are used, electric or low-emission vehicles are preferred.
- People First discourages air travel for business, especially within the UK or for European journeys under 500km.
- Any necessary air travel must be approved in advance, conducted in economy class, and offset via Gold Standard or equivalent schemes.
- Interest-free loans are available to staff for bicycle purchases and accessories, supporting greener commuting.

### **4. Waste & Recycling**

- Significantly reduce overall waste generation.
- Ensure proper segregation of recyclable materials and compliance with local authority recycling standards.
- Phase out single-use plastics in our offices and events.
- Use only licensed waste carriers and audit waste disposal methods annually.

### **5. Procurement & Supply Chain**

- Integrate environmental criteria into all procurement processes.
- Prioritise goods and services that are ethically sourced, energy-efficient and recyclable or reusable.
- Work with suppliers who share our commitment to environmental responsibility.

### **6. Company Administration**

- Embed sustainability into governance, planning and reporting processes.
- Provide training and resources to staff to help them act in environmentally responsible ways.
- Publicly communicate our environmental commitments and performance to stakeholders.

## **Regional Compliance & Local Context**

To support our commitment to environmental responsibility, we align our waste and recycling practices with the latest regional regulations and initiatives in Cumbria, Lancashire and the North East, including:

- **Cumbria:** Introduction of separated kerbside recycling (2026) and paid garden waste collections.
- **Lancashire:** Weekly food waste collections (from 2026) with waste processed through anaerobic digestion.
- **North East:** Expanded kerbside recycling (to include plastic film by 2027) and weekly food waste collection starting by March 2026.

We will review this policy annually to ensure continued alignment with national and local environmental requirements and emerging best practices.

## **Our Commitment to Transparency**

We are committed to making meaningful environmental progress and to doing so with honesty and transparency. We acknowledge that we still have work to do and that sustainability is a continuous journey.

We do not claim to be perfect or to have reached our final goals. Instead, we commit to openly sharing our progress, challenges and next steps, and will avoid any form of greenwashing or misleading environmental claims.