



Safer Recruitment Policy

Responsible Director:	Lindsay Graham
Date of review:	July 2025
Next review date:	July 2026
Version:	1.0

Contents

- 1. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 2. Recruitment and Selection**
- 3. Employment**

Policy Statement

At People First, we are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for both our employees and the people we serve. We believe that ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone in our workplace starts with a thorough and careful recruitment process. This policy outlines the steps we take to ensure we recruit staff and volunteers who are suitable for the roles they apply for and who share our commitment to safeguarding. By following these guidelines, we aim to prevent harm and promote a positive, secure environment for all.

It is our policy to prioritise internal promotion or transfer to fill open positions wherever possible. We believe in supporting and developing our existing staff and volunteers. However, if appropriate, we will consider external applicants to ensure we find the best person for the role.

All applicants will be assessed objectively on their merits in accordance with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all, and we select candidates for interview based on their talent, skills, qualifications and experience. We welcome applications from a wide range of candidates including those with criminal records.

Aims of the Policy

Our Safer Recruitment policy is in place to make sure we choose the right people for roles, helping us protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We aim to prevent anyone who might not be suitable from being hired by following clear and safe recruitment procedures.

Our recruitment process is designed to match applicants to roles based on their skills, experience, qualifications, and how well they fit the job description and person specification.

We are committed to carrying out recruitment in a professional and timely way, always following current employment laws.

If any staff member involved in the recruitment process knows the applicant personally or has a close relationship with them, they must let us know immediately and remove themselves from the selection process.

Our aim is to carry out this process carefully and consistently, gathering and reviewing all the necessary information to make informed decisions about applicants applying for roles at People First.

1. Roles and Responsibilities

At People First, everyone involved in the recruitment process has an important part to play in ensuring we hire staff who are safe, suitable, and committed to safeguarding.

Trustees:

- Ensure effective policies and procedures are in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Monitors compliance with these policies and procedures.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- Provide overall direction and oversight to ensure safer recruitment practices align with the organisation's safeguarding policies.
- Ensure that safeguarding is a priority in all recruitment decisions and strategies.
- Ensure that the recruitment process is regularly reviewed and updated to remain compliant with legislation and best practices.

HR Team:

- Oversee the recruitment process and ensure that all pre-employment checks (such as DBS, references, qualifications, and right to work checks) are completed and appropriately documented.
- Support Recruiting Managers/Team Leaders by providing guidance on safer recruitment practices and ensuring compliance with policies and legal requirements.
- Ensure interview panels have appropriate safeguarding training and are briefed on the importance of safeguarding in the recruitment process.
- Ensure that all recruitment records are kept securely and are up to date, including keeping track of DBS checks and updates.
- Ensure that comprehensive reference checks are obtained for every candidate and that they are from appropriate individuals who can speak to the candidate's suitability for working with vulnerable groups.
- Review references for any red flags or concerns and follow up with the referee if necessary to clarify any information.

Recruiting Managers/Team Leaders:

- Work with HR to develop accurate job descriptions and person specifications that clearly state the necessary qualifications, skills, experience, and responsibilities related to safeguarding and the role.
- Lead or be part of interview panels, ensuring that safeguarding is a key focus throughout the process.
- Make final hiring decisions in collaboration with HR, ensuring that safeguarding concerns are fully considered and addressed before any offer of employment is made.
- Ensure that the recruitment process is inclusive and non-discriminatory, providing equal opportunities for all applicants.

Interview Panel Members:

- Include people who are experts with relevant lived experience to bring different perspectives and make the recruitment process more inclusive and understanding of real-life situations.
- Participate in interviews with a clear focus on safeguarding and ensuring that candidates are suitable for working with vulnerable groups.
- Ask relevant questions related to safeguarding and assess the candidate's understanding of safeguarding principles, including their personal values and experience.
- Provide a fair, balanced assessment of the candidate's suitability, based on their qualifications, experience, and commitment to safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Lead or Officer:

- Offer advice and guidance to the recruiting team throughout the process, especially when safeguarding concerns arise during interviews, reference checks or DBS/Prohibition checks.
- Where safeguarding concerns have arisen, check and approve decisions taken to either reject or accept a candidate before they are communicated to the candidate.
- Support HR and Recruiting Managers/Team Leaders in making decisions related to safeguarding and ensuring appropriate risk assessments are conducted where necessary.
- Monitor and ensure the application of safeguarding policies throughout the recruitment process, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.

Training and Development Team:

- Provide safeguarding training for all staff involved in recruitment to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to apply safer recruitment practices effectively.
- Offer ongoing safeguarding training to ensure that recruiting managers, HR staff, and other relevant team members stay updated on current best practices and legal requirements.

All Staff Involved in Recruitment:

- Actively follow safer recruitment procedures to ensure that the safety and welfare of vulnerable individuals are always prioritised.
- Attend Safer recruitment training and refresher sessions to stay informed about changes in safeguarding policies, recruitment best practices, and legal requirements.

All staff and volunteers:

- Are required to complete Safeguarding children, Safeguarding adults and PREVENT training. This will be at the point of induction and refreshed annually or sooner should there be changes to local and national procedures, guidance and/or legislation.
- Must abide by all policies including Whistleblowing.

By clearly defining these roles and responsibilities, we can ensure a collaborative approach to safer recruitment that prioritises safeguarding while providing an inclusive, fair process for all applicants.

2. Recruitment and Selection

Job Advertising

To give everyone an equal opportunity, People First will advertise vacancies widely, using a variety of media to reach as many potential candidates as possible. All vacancies are advertised externally and internally.

All job ads will clearly highlight our commitment to safeguarding and include the following:

- Job title
- Salary or pay scale
- Any benefits offered
- Minimum qualifications and required skills/experience
- Key details about the role (e.g. part-time, fixed-term, location)
- Application closing date

We are committed to avoiding any language that could unfairly exclude candidates, ensuring a fair and inclusive application process for everyone.

At the point of advertisement, the following should be identified and agreed:

- Selection/Shortlisting criteria
- Dates and venue for interviews
- Interview Panel

Application

At People First, we require all applicants to complete our application form, which collects essential information necessary for the selection process, including details of their full employment history, suitability for the role, and any gaps or discrepancies in their employment record. The form also includes a declaration regarding any convictions and their suitability to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

Depending on the nature of the role, applicants may be asked to submit a CV and cover letter in addition to, or instead of, completing the application form.

Applicants will be informed that providing false information is an offence, potentially leading to rejection, dismissal, or referral to the police or regulatory bodies.

All information will be kept confidential and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, and the ICO Employment Practices Code. We will only request information necessary for the selection process.

Throughout recruitment, applicants will be kept informed about when to expect updates and what the next stage will involve.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

Every role at People First will have a clear job description and person specification. The job description outlines the key duties and responsibilities of the role, while the person specification highlights the skills, experience, and abilities needed. If relevant, it will also include the suitability for working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

When we advertise roles, we include only the most important details from the job description and person specification, like essential skills and experience, to keep the advert clear and relevant.

Selection

We will carefully review all applications to make sure candidates meet the essential requirements listed in the job description and person specification. Our selection process is designed to be fair, clear, and based on the skills, experience, and qualifications needed for the role.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview, where we'll explore their ability to do the job and meet safeguarding standards. Throughout the process, we are committed to treating everyone equally, avoiding discrimination, and selecting candidates based on their skills and suitability. All decisions will be made by a panel of trained staff to ensure fairness and consistency.

Internal Candidates

We are committed to the development and promotion of our staff and volunteers. We ensure this is done through a fair and non-discriminatory process.

For internal candidates, we offer the opportunity to submit an expression of interest when applying for new roles within the organisation.

Any available promotion opportunities will be shared with all staff and volunteers. We encourage people to apply and reach out with any questions or support needs they may have prior to applying.

All volunteers who meet the essential criteria and apply for paid positions will be guaranteed an interview.

Interviews

Where possible, we will conduct face-to-face interviews. We will use the same panel to interview all applicants for a position which will include a minimum of two people

including an expert by lived experience.

Prior to the interview, the criteria for the position should be identified. Criteria that isn't relevant should be avoided.

Applicants invited for an interview will need to bring original documents proving their identity, address, and qualifications. Photocopies will be taken, and unsuccessful applicants' documents will be destroyed at the end of the recruitment process.

The interview process will focus on the applicant's ability to perform the duties outlined in the job description and meet the person specification. It will also allow the panel to address any gaps or concerns in the applicant's background to ensure they meet our safeguarding criteria.

Any information about past disciplinary actions, allegations, cautions, or convictions will be discussed and considered based on the individual case. At least one member of the interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training, and wherever possible, an HR representative will be present on the panel.

All questions asked will directly relate to the selection criteria for the role, and personal circumstances will not be discussed unless relevant to the position. Thorough notes will be taken.

Where tests or presentations are used in the recruitment process, they will be checked by the Manager to ensure:

1. They are free from any discriminatory element
2. The test is directly relevant for the position being interviewed for.

Once the interview is complete and a decision has been made, we will contact the successful applicant to arrange the start date. If relevant, we will have an open discussion about any offences or other matters that could impact the role. Failing to disclose important information during the recruitment process may result in the withdrawal of the offer or termination of employment.

If any concerns arise during the recruitment process, they should be reported to the hiring manager for review.

Offer of appointment and new employee process

The appointment of all new employees is subject to the receipt of a satisfactory DBS Certificate, references, medical questionnaire and copies of qualifications and proof of right to work in the UK. A personnel file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with safer recruitment.

The HR Department will confirm that all paperwork has been received and then a start

date can be agreed.

Candidates may be asked to come to the practice for a short trial period (paid) of up to a week before the company makes an offer.

References

References for the successful applicant will be sent for immediately following interview. Two professional references must be provided. One must be from the candidate's current or most recent employer. These will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information. Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. PF does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives. Employment is subject to these references being satisfactory.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with, or having access to children, young people and vulnerable adults. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' must be declared when applying for any position at People First.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

At People First, most staff will need to have an Enhanced DBS Certificate before starting their employment. In some cases, depending on the role, a DBS certificate with a Barred List check or a Standard DBS certificate may be required. We make sure the appropriate certificate is in place before any new employee starts their role.

As an organisation that supports and employs people with lived experience, we understand that some applicants may have experienced addiction, alcoholism, or offending behaviour. This may require disclosure at the appropriate level, so we can provide the right support for our staff and volunteers.

All new staff are required to sign up for the DBS Update Service, and we also have a rolling programme to help current staff join. Volunteers will also undergo the same checks as staff, as needed. We ask volunteers to register with the DBS Update Service as well to streamline future checks.

Types of DBS Checks:

1. **Standard DBS Check:** Provides information on criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands, and warnings from the Police National Computer (PNC).
2. **Enhanced DBS Check:** Includes everything in a standard check, plus any extra information held by the police that is considered relevant.
3. **Enhanced DBS Check with Barred List:** For roles involving regulated activity, this includes additional checks to see if the individual is barred from working with

children or vulnerable adults.

DBS Update and Renewal:

Staff are required to register with the DBS Update Service once they receive their DBS certificate. For new staff, PF will cover the cost of a DBS check if they are not already registered. Current staff will be re-checked every three years through the Update Service.

If additional information is added to a staff member's DBS record after their initial check, People First may choose to run a completely new DBS check.

If a staff member fails to register with the Update Service, they will be responsible for the cost of their new DBS check every three years. As of December 2024, the updated fees are:

- Update Service: £16 per year
- Basic DBS Check: £21.50
- Standard DBS Check: £21.50
- Enhanced DBS Check: £49.50
- Enhanced DBS Check with Barred List(s): £49.50

Volunteers are also encouraged to join the Update Service to make checks easier.

People First will not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Dealing with Convictions:

If a DBS check reveals any convictions, People First will consider several factors before making any decisions, including:

- Whether the person has disclosed information in advance
- The seriousness and relevance of the offence
- How much time has passed since the offence occurred
- Whether it was a one-off or part of a pattern of behaviour
- Evidence of remorse or change

A meeting will take place with the HR department to assess the situation, and decisions will be made based on these factors with approval sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Confidentiality and Data Protection:

We follow all legal requirements under the **Data Protection Act 2018** and other relevant regulations. All DBS certificates and information are handled with the utmost confidentiality and stored securely.

PF is an equal opportunities employer, and we are fully committed to safeguarding. All staff and volunteers must undergo the necessary DBS checks before beginning work with us, ensuring that everyone is safe in our care.

Prohibition Checks (Education)

A Prohibition Check will be carried out before the commencement of employment of any new employee working within our Education offer at People First.

Identity, Right to Work and Qualifications Verification

Proof of Identity and Right to Work in the UK

All applicants invited to interview will need to bring original identification documents, such as a passport, birth certificate, or driving license, to confirm their identity and eligibility to work in the UK. This is in line with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS Code of Practice Regulations.

Verification of Qualifications

Applicants must also provide evidence of any academic or vocational qualifications required for the role, as stated in their application. This ensures they have the necessary skills for the position.

Overseas Checks

If an applicant has lived outside the UK, we will carry out additional checks as required by the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. This may include obtaining overseas criminal records or other relevant documents to verify their eligibility to work in the UK. See Appendix 2.

Record Retention

People First will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be destroyed. The 6 month retention period allows People First to deal with any data access requests, recruitment queries or to respond to any complaints made to an Employment Tribunal. All information retained on employees is kept on Breathe HR.

3. Employment

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction to working at People First. This will include:

- Our history, values, mission and strategic goals
- An introduction to our structure and key members of staff
- People First policies and procedures, including the Safeguarding Policy
- Expectations and codes of conduct which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- Mandatory and role specific training including work shadowing.

Single Central Register

In addition to the staff record kept on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept. This is kept up-to-date and retained by HR.

The Centralised Register contains details of the following:

- All employees who are employed to work for People First
- All others who have been chosen by People First to work in the organisation. This will cover volunteers and Trustees.

Probation

At People First, all new employees will be subject to a probation period of six months. This period allows both the employee and People First to assess whether the role is a good fit and for the employee to settle into their new position.

Probation Reviews

Probation will be reviewed on a monthly basis in line with the job description and person specification. During these reviews, performance, conduct and progress towards meeting the required skills and expectations of the role will be assessed. Feedback will be provided to the employee and where necessary, any areas for improvement will be discussed, with appropriate support offered including reasonable adjustments. Reviews are recorded and any agreed actions recorded with progress tracked.

Extension of Probation Period

In some cases, the probation period may be extended. Reasons for an extension could include, but are not limited to:

- The employee has not yet demonstrated the required skills or performance expected for the role.
- There have been ongoing issues with attendance or punctuality.
- There are concerns about conduct or behaviour that need more time to assess.
- A need for further training or support to meet the requirements of the role.

Any extension will be discussed with the employee and reviewed at the time to ensure it is fair and reasonable. Employees will be supported to improve with a clear plan in place.

We are committed to equality and will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made, where appropriate, for employees with disabilities or those who need additional support to succeed in their role. We will always consider equality and reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 when reviewing probation periods and making any decisions.

Ending Probation Due to Poor Performance or Unsuitability

If, at the end of the probation period, the employee's performance is deemed unsatisfactory or they are found unsuitable for the role before the period ends, probation may be ended. This decision will be based on documented reviews and feedback. The employee will be informed of the reasons for the decision and, if appropriate, considered for alternative roles within the organisation.

Should probation be ended, the employee will have the right to appeal the decision, and this will be handled in accordance with the organisation's grievance and appeal procedures.

Ongoing Employment

People First believe that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the beginning of employment but is part of a wider policy framework and our ongoing commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone. We provide continuous training, supervision and support for all staff, tailored to their needs, as identified through our annual appraisal process.

Leaving Employment

Despite our best efforts to recruit safely, there may be times when allegations of abuse are raised against staff. In such cases, the Disciplinary Policy will apply. If the employee is dismissed or resigns due to these concerns, People First will inform the relevant authorities, such as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), about the circumstances surrounding their departure.

We are committed to handling any safeguarding concerns with care and transparency. All safeguarding concerns or misconduct will be thoroughly documented, and relevant records will be securely maintained in line with our Data Retention policy. If necessary, these records will be shared with other employers or regulatory bodies as part of the safer recruitment process, ensuring that individuals who may pose a risk to vulnerable groups are not placed in positions where harm could occur.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A table setting out the specific process and responsibilities is followed by HR and all other members of staff involved in the recruitment process. (This table can be requested from HR).

Appendix 1 Prohibition Check

Prohibition Check: What It Is and How It Works

A Prohibition Check is a background check used to make sure that a person isn't banned from working in education in the UK. This check is essential before hiring anyone in educational settings, particularly for roles like teaching or working closely with children and young people.

It applies to jobs in schools, colleges, and other educational settings, including:

- Primary schools (ages 4-11)
- Secondary schools (ages 11-18)
- Post-16 education, such as sixth form colleges and further education colleges
- Special education settings

The check is designed to confirm that the person hasn't been prohibited from teaching due to issues like misconduct or safeguarding concerns. It's an important part of keeping children and young people safe.

How the Prohibition Check Works

The check is done online through the Teacher Services system, which is run by the Department for Education (DfE). Here's how it works:

- For Employers: Before offering someone a teaching or relevant role, schools or educational institutions will use the Teacher Services system to see if the individual is prohibited from teaching or has any restrictions. This needs to be done before the person starts work.
- For Individuals: If you're applying for a job in education, your employer will request the check on your behalf. You don't need to do it yourself unless you are self-employed or the employer.

What Employers Need

To do the check, employers will need the person's:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Other identifying information

They'll then log into the Teacher Services system to confirm if the person is prohibited from teaching or has any restrictions.

Why It's Important

The Prohibition Check is part of the safer recruitment process, and employers must complete it before hiring someone for a teaching or relevant role. It works alongside other important checks, like the DBS check.

For more details and to start the check, employers can visit the Teacher Services system here: [Teacher Services – Department for Education](#).

Key Points

- The check applies to anyone working in a teaching role or any position with unsupervised access to children (e.g., supply teachers, support staff).
- It must be completed before starting work in education.
- Employers can complete the check online via the Teacher Services system.

The check is free for employers and ensures that only individuals who are fit and safe to work with children are hired in educational roles.

Appendix 2: Right to Work Process

Purpose:

As an employer in the UK, People First has a responsibility to make sure that everyone we employ has the right to work here. By carrying out right-to-work checks, we protect both our business and the employee from potential issues, as it ensures we meet legal requirements and avoid penalties.

Step 1: Obtain Documents

We need to collect original documents from either List A or B of the acceptable right-to-work documents. Common examples include:

- Passport
- Birth certificate with National Insurance number

Please note: Items like a driver's license, library card, or student union card are not accepted as proof of the right to work.

Step 2: Check Documents

When reviewing the documents, it's important to make sure:

- The documents are genuine and not tampered with
- The person presenting the documents is the rightful holder and matches the photo and details
- The expiry dates for any immigration permissions are current
- Any work restrictions are clearly understood (e.g., for students with limited work hours)
- If there are any name differences across documents, supporting evidence (e.g., a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or deed poll) must be provided and copied

Step 3: Make Copies

Once the documents have been checked, you'll need to:

- Make a clear copy of each document
- Retain the copies securely (either electronically or as hard copies)
 - Keep a record of the date you made the check

For specific documents:

1. Passports: Copy all pages with the expiry date, nationality, date of birth, signature, immigration permission, and biometric details
2. Other documents: Make sure to copy the full document, including both sides of an Immigration Status Document

Important: Keep copies of these documents for the duration of employment and for 2 years after employment ends. After this period, securely destroy them. The copy should also be sent to HR for uploading into the system.

Home Office Checks:

Applicants will need to provide a share code, which you'll use to conduct a check. Make sure to download and save the results from the Home Office portal for your records. You can find more details on what to look for [here](#).

Further Guidance:

While you can check right-to-work documents during the interview, you must inform applicants that they need to bring the original documents on their first day for verification and copying. Without these, their employment cannot begin.

If you need help with any of the steps, please contact HR or check out the Employer's Guide to Right to Work checks [here](#).