



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Responsible Director:	Kellie Woodley
Date of review:	July 2025
Next review date:	July 2026
Version:	1.0

Contents

- 1. Our Commitment**
- 2. Roles and Responsibilities ensuring that discrimination is addressed properly**
- 3. Understanding Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Language**
- 4. Making Services Fair and Accessible**
- 5. Fair Recruitment and Employment**
- 6. Understanding our workforce**
- 7. Training and Development**
- 8. Working with Partners**
- 9. Speaking Up and Taking Action**
- 10. Creating Inclusive Spaces**
- 11. Monitoring and Accountability**

Policy Statement

At People First, we are committed to fostering a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and included. Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy reflects our dedication to creating an environment that embraces diverse perspectives and supports equal opportunities for all. We believe that a diverse and inclusive team drives innovation, collaboration, and success.

This policy outlines our approach to promoting diversity and ensuring fairness in everything we do. Together, we can create a culture where everyone thrives.

This policy applies to all members of staff. In this policy 'staff' includes staff, trustees, sessional workers, experts by experience, and volunteers. Acceptance of a role with PF, whether as a member of staff, volunteer, member, or Trustee is deemed an acknowledgment that you understand and accept this policy.

This policy will be available in a variety of accessible formats upon request, including large print and alternative languages, to ensure it is accessible to all staff and volunteers.

The policy's purpose is to:

Provide equality, fairness, and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time, full-time, voluntary or as a member.

Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation

Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms, and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training, or other developmental opportunities

1. Our Commitment

People First are committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (Equality Act 2010) in everything we do. We do not tolerate discrimination and will take action to prevent and address it.

People First will:

- Treat everyone fairly and with respect, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Challenge discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in any form.
- Provide accessible and inclusive services.
- Ensure fair and open recruitment, employment, and volunteer opportunities.

People First are also committed to complying with all relevant national and international laws and regulations regarding equality and human rights, in addition to the Equality Act 2010.

2. Roles and Responsibilities ensuring that discrimination is addressed properly

Board of Trustees / Senior Leadership Team

- Lead by example and set a clear commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion within our organisation
- Ensure that People First policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, updated, and fully supported.

EDI Lead

- Oversee the implementation, and ensure compliance with EDI policies and procedures including reporting concerns
- Oversee Discrimination complaint investigations and ensure learning is shared and implemented.

Managers and Team Leaders

- Actively promote and implement EDI practices within teams and day-to-day operations.
- Provide support to staff and volunteers, ensuring they feel safe and empowered to report any concerns of discrimination.
- Oversee the handling of complaints fairly and sensitively, ensuring the process is followed.

HR

- Oversee the implementation of EDI policies and ensure compliance.
- Provide regular training on EDI, discrimination, and the reporting process for all

staff and volunteers.

- Take responsibility for investigating discrimination complaints or appointing an impartial investigator.

Staff and Volunteers

- Embrace and promote EDI in all interactions, respecting the diversity of colleagues, people who draw on our support and partners.
- If you witness or experience discrimination, speak up! Use the available reporting channels to raise concerns in a confidential and safe way.
- Offer support to colleagues who may need it and contribute to a culture of inclusion and respect.

Everyone's Responsibility

- No matter your role, it's important to contribute to an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and heard.
- We all share the responsibility of ensuring that discrimination is not tolerated and is addressed swiftly and fairly.

3. Understanding Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Language

- **Equality:** Ensuring everyone has equal access to opportunities, resources, and treatment.
- **Diversity:** Valuing and embracing differences in race, gender, age, background, and perspectives.
- **Inclusion:** Creating an environment where all individuals feel respected, valued, and able to contribute.
- **Harassment:** Any unwelcome behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation:** Treating someone unfairly because they've raised a concern about discrimination or harassment
- **Discrimination:** Discrimination is unacceptable, whether intentional or not. Discrimination can take different forms, including:
 - **Direct discrimination** – Treating someone unfairly because of a protected characteristic (e.g., not hiring someone because they have a disability).
 - **Indirect discrimination** – Applying a rule that disadvantages certain groups unfairly (e.g., requiring unnecessary physical requirements for a job).
 - **Harassment** – Unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel offended, intimidated, or humiliated.
 - **Victimisation** – Treating someone unfairly because they raised a concern about discrimination.
 - **Institutional discrimination** – When policies, practices, or culture within an organisation disadvantage certain group (e.g., systemic racism).

4. Making Services Fair and Accessible

We believe that everyone should be able to use our services easily and equally. We will:

- Regularly check our services to spot and remove anything that might make it hard for people to access our support. This includes physical access, how we communicate or attitudes and behaviours.
- Listen to people with lived experience to help us improve how we design and deliver our services.
- Make sure all our information is easy to understand and available in different formats, for example easy read, large print, audio or digital versions, based on what people need.
- Use trained, professional interpreters and British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters when needed, so people who don't speak English or who use sign language, can still access our services fully. This requirement will be identified at the earliest opportunity through referral pathways.
- Offer different ways to get support including in person, by phone, online or through outreach, so that people can choose what works best for them.
- Train our staff and partners to use clear and inclusive communication and to understand the different needs people may have, including people with learning disabilities, autistic people, or anyone who has experienced trauma.
- Work closely with local communities and groups to better understand what support people need and how we can remove barriers.
- Keep track of who is using our services and regularly ask for feedback, to ensure we keep improving.

Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to support people to access our services. This means we will change how we work where needed, to meet someone's individual needs. Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- Offering longer appointment times for someone who needs more time to process information.
- Meeting in a quieter, more private setting for someone who finds busy places overwhelming.
- Providing written follow-up after a meeting for someone who struggles to remember or take in spoken information.

We will always try to agree adjustments in a way that works for the person and is practical for our team to deliver.

Feedback and Improvement

We welcome feedback from everyone who uses our services. This includes individuals, families, carers, professionals and partner organisations. Your views help us understand what's working and what could be better.

We are also committed to giving helpful, respectful feedback to others when we notice barriers or ways that services could be more accessible. We believe working together is the best way to create fairer systems for everyone.

5. Fair Recruitment and Employment

People First ensures fair and equal opportunities in recruitment, employment, and volunteering by:

- Ensuring a wide range of advertisement methods
- Using inclusive job descriptions and fair shortlisting processes.
- Making reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and volunteers.
- Providing training and development opportunities for all.

People First has an approved EDI Recruitment statement which features on all our recruitment literature:

Welcoming All: Our Recruitment Pledge

At People First, we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace where everyone feels welcomed, supported, and valued. We believe that our team's unique backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences make us stronger and help us better serve the communities we support.

We are proud to be an equal opportunity employer and actively encourage applications from people of all backgrounds, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, criminal background, or previous experiences with addiction. We understand that people's past experiences do not define their potential, and we are committed to providing opportunities for growth and success to everyone.

We are dedicated to creating a recruitment process that is fair, accessible, and inclusive, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to thrive. If you need any accommodations during the recruitment process, please let us know – we are here to support you.

Together, we can build a team that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve and fosters an environment where everyone can succeed.

6. Understanding our workforce

People First want our workforce, members, and volunteers to reflect the communities we serve and to feel respected, valued, and supported. We will run an annual EDI survey for staff and volunteers. This will collect anonymous, voluntary data on the diversity of our workforce to monitor our progress on EDI. This data will be used solely to identify areas for improvement and ensure that our recruitment practices are inclusive and our teams have the right support to succeed.

We encourage the development of employee resource groups or networks that provide support, advocacy, and development opportunities for underrepresented communities within the organisation.

7. Training and Development

People First will provide ongoing training to staff and volunteers to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, including how to escalate concerns, helping to prevent discrimination and improve awareness.

In addition to general EDI training, we will also provide cultural competency and sensitivity training to ensure staff and volunteers are aware of and respect the diverse cultures and backgrounds of those we serve.

Additional training and development needs will be identified through one to ones and appraisals.

8. Working with Partners

We will collaborate with organisations that share our commitment to equality and inclusion. If we identify barriers within People First or our partners, we will escalate concerns to the EDI Lead and take appropriate action. This can include both informal and formal escalation routes.

9. Speaking Up and Taking Action

If you experience or witness discrimination, we encourage you to speak up. We take all concerns seriously and will address any issues promptly and fairly.

Reporting Process:

Step 1. Reporting the Issue

- There are a number of ways you can report your concern—via email to HR@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk, phone, or in-person.
- You can report it to your line manager, HR or the EDI Lead.
- Choose whichever method is most comfortable for you.

Step 2. Acknowledge the Complaint

- After you report the issue, you should receive an acknowledgment within 48 hours. This will let you know your complaint is being taken seriously and outline what happens next.
- Please be assured that your report will be handled confidentially, and your privacy will be respected throughout the process.

Step 3. Investigation

- People First will appoint an impartial investigator to look into your complaint. This ensures that the investigation is fair and unbiased.
- Both you and the person accused of discrimination will be supported during the investigation. You should feel comfortable knowing you are being heard and respected.

Step 4. Resolution

- Depending on the situation, People First may offer an informal resolution (like mediation) if both parties agree, or take formal action, such as training or disciplinary steps, if necessary.
- If you experience discrimination, we offer confidential support through our staff wellbeing support, and other resources to help you navigate the situation and ensure your wellbeing.

Step 5. Feedback and Outcome

- You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and any actions taken. It's important to know that your concern was addressed.
- If you feel the outcome was unfair or if the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you have the right to appeal the decision. You can do this by writing to the CEO highlighting why you are dissatisfied and your desired resolution. The CEO, unless implicated, will review your appeal.
- People First reserve the right to seek independent support to review our approach.

Monitoring and Improvement

- The reporting process will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and accessible. Your feedback will help improve the system over time.

10. Creating Inclusive Spaces

People First will ensure that all workspaces and meeting spaces are welcoming, accessible, and inclusive for everyone.

11. Monitoring and Accountability

Our **EDI Lead** and **Managers** will oversee this policy. We will review and update it annually, consulting with our team within the review to ensure it reflects our values and culture.

We are committed to setting and reviewing specific, measurable EDI objectives to ensure our progress toward a more inclusive and diverse environment. These objectives will be reviewed annually to align with our continuous improvement process.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or removal from the volunteer role, depending on the severity of the violation.