



People First



Explore what

People First has to offer you

Info for candidates 2025

Your future

starts here

wearepeoplefirst.co.uk





Always with passion

"It is a privilege to work for People First ... I have never felt so welcomed, supported and valued."

Member of Staff: Feedback in the 2024 annual staff survey.

Our history at a glance



In 1990, a group of people with learning disabilities in Carlisle decided it was time to make a change. They said, “Enough is enough!” and were determined to shape local services for the better so that everyone who walked through their doors would have their voices heard, and their rights respected. They wanted to create a better future for themselves and future generations and so together they established People First.

In 2012, we furthered our reach, providing advocacy to anyone who needed it, whether they were older adults, black and ethnic minority communities, or people with mental health needs. In 2018 we started working with in Lancashire, providing the same vital support to communities across the county. Then in 2023 we expanded to across the North East with our team of advocates working directly in the community to support people, through our advocacy service, in their darkest and hardest times.

Who we are

People First is an independent customer-led organisation that has worked in the North of England for over 35 years. We have a deep understanding of the region, our communities and the unique challenges many individuals face.

We support thousands of people every year to have their voices heard. Helping them to take control, make informed choices and live their best lives.

Our independence is very important to us; we are not run or controlled by any other service.

We provide a wide range of support and information services across Cumbria, Lancashire, and the North East, all aimed at helping people to live informed, respected, healthy, and fulfilled lives.

Our Head office is based in Carlisle, supported by offices in Barrow-in-Furness, County Durham, Lancashire and Stockton-on-Tees.

We are a passionate organisation which dedicates itself to representing people’s views. We are dynamic and courageous, and not afraid to stand up to help others be counted.

A photograph of a person wearing a high-visibility vest, looking over a brick wall. The wall has a decorative metal fence on top. The scene is outdoors with trees in the background.

Hello

I'd like to thank you sincerely for your interest in working at People First.

There's never been a more exciting time to come on board. We're moving forward with a bold new strategy, focused on helping even more people live the lives they want. Everyday, I'm reminded what a special place this is to work, and our team agrees with 96% of staff recommending People First as a good place to work.

Our people tell us they feel happy, valued and proud of the difference they are making.

- **93%** say they're happy in their roles
- **91%** say their work gives them a sense of accomplishment
- **85%** say they benefit from flexible working.

If you're looking for a role where you can truly make a difference in your community, we'd love to have you with us.

Warmest wishes and best of luck!

David Blacklock
Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David".

David



"During my 24 years at People First, I have seen change happen. Each and every day, when someone in my team or a stranger in the street stands up and refuses to accept the status quo, it reminds me why People First is here. We are not here to keep turning the wheel but to drive real and lasting change."

David Blacklock

Chief Executive

ur vision

We believe in, and actively seek to create, a society where each and every individual is treated equally, fairly, and where their rights, choices and beliefs are respected.

ur mission

We exist to support every customer to live their best life:



We speak out fearlessly, for those who cannot speak out for themselves



We stand shoulder to shoulder with people as they work through their most challenging times



We challenge services to improve based on people's real lived experiences



We build people's skills so that they can lead healthier and fulfilled lives



We connect people to communities, so that they feel included.



Our strategy

People First is a dynamic solution focused organisation that supports thousands of people to live happy, healthy, connected lives.

When anyone faces injustice or inequality People First refuses to look the other way. We stand up for the things which matter most, we ensure everyone has a voice.

Our strategy is based on 5 principles. All of our work is based on these, guiding our decision making, target setting and action planning.

Uniting teams with shared goals and a consistent approach.



Inclusion: We welcome diversity, making sure everyone feels listened to, respected and valued.



Independence: We are fearless and brave with clear objectives which identify opportunities and drive our work.



Impact: We make real differences for people through delivering local impactful services.



Intelligence: We use data, evidence and research to inform our work, our aims and our plans.



Investment: We build organisational stability and sustainability and invest in our people.

Our services



Advocacy: Helping people understand their rights and supporting them to speak up.

Our Advocacy service helps people to understand their rights and have their say. Our Advocates stand with each of our customers to help them be heard when it comes to the decisions that affect their health, family and wellbeing.

UDirect Support: Helping people to stay independent and live at home by employing their own staff.

Our UDirect Support team help adults, children and their families to stay in control of their own care and support; helping them employ their own care staff safely to maintain independence.





Hospitality: Doing hospitality differently in the heart of Carlisle.

We are proud to do hospitality differently. Combining first rate facilities with excellent people we provide meeting and conferencing spaces with a distinct mission; to support people with a learning disability and autistic people into paid employment within the hospitality industry.



Academy: Supporting autistic people and people with a learning disability to gain skills and get into employment.

The People First Academy offers a range of courses that provide students with a learning disability and autistic people, the opportunity to real work experience whilst gaining accredited qualifications. Our courses include:

- Hospitality Academy
- Best Life
- Creating Careers
- Independent Travel Training.



Inclusion: Helping those with learning disabilities and autistic people to be fully included in society.

Our Inclusion team have a wide ranging reach through the valuable work they do across Cumbria and Lancashire.

- Self-advocacy groups
- Young People First
- LeDeR programme
- Inclusive Design Service
- Care and Treatment Review
- Oliver McGowan Training
- Lancashire Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Business: Supporting our staff to be as brilliant as they are, through systems, IT and Finance.

The Business team work across Healthwatch and People First. With support in marketing, finance, communications and business support, the team are here to support you to succeed in your role.





Healthwatch: Supporting citizens to share their experiences of health and care services.

Healthwatch is your local health and social care champion. We are proud to host:

- Healthwatch Cumberland
- Healthwatch County Durham
- Healthwatch Lancashire
- Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees
- Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness.

Each Healthwatch ensure NHS and social care decision-makers hear the voice of people in the community and use feedback to improve care.



Carers Support: Helping people who care for their loved ones

Our Carers Support service is here to offer dedicated help, guidance and understanding to unpaid carers. Whether their helping loved ones full-time or helping out a few hours a week, we're here to make sure they are not doing it alone.

Our commitment to you

We are committed to provide equality, fairness, and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time, full-time or voluntary.

Our aim is for our workforce and volunteers to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee and volunteer to feel respected and able to give their best.



94%

of our staff say they have gained valuable new skills.

Our values



Fairness: We believe that fairness is at the core of everything we do. We are committed to treating everyone justly, without bias and challenging inequality whenever we see it.



Belonging: We uphold and promote people's rights, ensuring that their voices are heard, respected and that they can make decisions for themselves.



Rights: We create environments where everyone feels safe, valued, and part of our community. We celebrate diversity and inclusion in everything we do.



Courage: We stand up for what's right, even when it's difficult. We speak out against injustice, challenge poor practices and take action to drive positive change.



Kindness: We lead with compassion, empathy, and understanding. We treat everyone with patience, dignity, and genuine care, offering support and listening to one another.



Love: We show love to those we work with especially when they aren't able to love themselves.

Why choose us?

At People First we don't just offer jobs, we offer the chance to make a real impact.

If you want to work somewhere that values your voice, supports your growth and puts people at the heart of everything we do, then this is the place for you.



An employer pension contribution of 6%.



Collaborative and supportive team environment where everyone's voices matter.



We offer fantastic benefits including a paid volunteering day, extra day off for your birthday and bank holidays, plus six days off at Christmas.



A brilliant HR team that puts you first, providing support when you need it most.



People First understands that life doesn't stop outside of work. With flexible working options and a genuine commitment to staff wellbeing and a healthy work-life balance.



Work with a driven, values based organisation, focused on supporting people to live their best lives.

Investing in Excellence

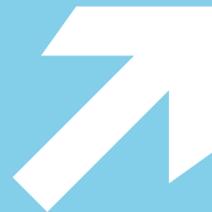
Training Offer



At People First, we believe that staff and volunteers should be given the tools and training to do their very best in their roles. That's why we have launched the Investing in Excellence Training Offer.

Your progression and

development



Your progression and development is vital for you and your career. At People First, we're committed to doing that. Whether it's providing you the skills and learning to become a line manager or develop specialist skills, we invest in you.

Meet our Leadership team



Kellie Woodley
Director of North East
and North Cumbria

A part of the leadership team at People First, Kellie brings her compassionate, empathetic and infectious spirit across the organisation to support our customers across the North of England to live their lives to the fullest.



Steve Holden
Director of Finance
and Business

Steve joined People First in 2023 and has been instrumental in refining process and procedures to ensure People First continues to provide life changing services for years to come.



Lindsay Graham
Director of Lancashire
and South Cumbria

She has been with People First for over 15 years and since day one, she looks forward to making a positive impact on others, collaborating with and tackling new challenges.



David Blacklock
Chief Executive Officer

David has worked in health and social care for his whole career, first in healthcare before training in Psychotherapy.

David has worked in People First for many years in a range of

different roles, before become Chief Executive.

He has supported the organisation to increase its impact, and spread and is proud that People First now works across the north of England and support thousands of people to live better, fuller, richer lives.

Steve Holden

Director of Finance and Business

As a proud Mancunian, with a background in finance, Steve joined PeopleFirst in 2023. Since then, Steve has been instrumental in refining process and procedures to ensure People First continues to provide life changing services for years to come.

Throughout his career, a driving force for Steve has been that each piece of work he carries out, no matter how big or small, makes a positive difference for others.

You might be able to take Steve out of his hometown, but you can't take his hometown out of Steve; a loud and proud supporter of Manchester City, he can often be found cheering alongside Moochester and Moonbeam the team mascots no matter the day.

Meet your future Manager



About the role



Job title

Head of Finance



Reporting to the:

Director of Finance & Business



Department:

Healthwatch Lancashire



Hours:

37.5 per week (full time)

/ 30 hours considered



Contract:

Permanent



Salary:

Up to £45,150 FTE



Additional benefits:

6% employer pension contribution;

Birthday day off; values based organisation



Location:

Carlisle Office (with optional 1 day WFH)



Holiday entitlement:

26 days (FTE) plus bank holidays; length-of-service increments.





Responsibilities and requirements

Role summary

The Head of Finance will play a pivotal role in leading and strengthening financial management across two entities. As a key member of the senior leadership team (SLT), you will provide financial insight, ensure robust financial controls, and support the Director of Finance & Business in delivering strong financial governance. You will lead financial reporting and compliance processes, oversee a high performing finance team, and contribute to business growth and sustainability.

Key responsibilities

Strategic Financial Leadership

- Support the Director of Finance & Business in shaping long term financial strategy and decision making.
- Provide financial insight and analysis to the SLT to support strategic initiatives and organisational growth.
- Lead on financial risk management and ensure sustainability planning is embedded in financial modelling.

Financial Reporting and Compliance

- Oversee the preparation of timely and accurate monthly management accounts.
- Lead the statutory accounts process and annual audit, ensuring compliance with relevant charity SORP, tax, and regulatory requirements.
- Ensure that all balance sheet accounts are correctly reconciled and fully detailed (including relevant backup).

Budgeting, Forecasting and Planning

- Lead the annual budget process, including consolidation, challenge, and presentation to SLT.
- Oversee quarterly reforecasting and variance analysis, identifying risks and opportunities.
- Provide business partnering to budget holders to improve financial understanding and accountability.

- Lead the financial planning and costing of projects, ensuring robust and sustainable budgeting.

Leadership and development

- Manage, develop and support the Finance Manager.
- Oversee the management and development of the wider finance team across multiple locations and two entities.
- Foster a high performance culture through coaching, objective setting, and skills development.
- Champion continuous improvement and promote strong communication within the finance function.

Operations and controls

- Ensure strong financial controls and processes are in place and continually improved.
- Oversee accounts payable, receivable, payroll, bank reconciliations, and daily operations across both entities.
- Lead the development and optimisation of financial systems to enhance efficiency and support organisational growth.

External relationships and representation

- Liaise with external stakeholders including auditors, banks, suppliers, and regulatory bodies.
- Deputise for the Director of Finance & Business as required, representing finance at SLT and trustee board meetings.

External relationships and representation

- Play an active role in the SLT, contributing to cross organisational planning, decision making, and collaboration.
- Any other duties as required by the directors.

Person specification

Essential

- CIMA qualified. QBE considered for the right candidate with demonstrable skills and impact.
- At least 3 years' experience in a senior finance role.
- Strong leadership experience managing multiple staff and functions.
- Proven track record of improving financial processes and delivering strategic insight.
- Excellent communication and stakeholder engagement skills.
- Experience presenting to senior managers and trustees.
- Advanced Excel and familiarity with accounting software, particularly Sage 50.

Desirable

- Experience working across multiple entities or complex structures.
- Understanding of charity accounting principles, regulations, and SORP.

The duties outlined above are not intended to be exhaustive and may change as the needs of the organisation alter in line with current agendas. Due to the developing nature of our organisation, we require staff to remain highly flexible in their approach, and work to meet the changing needs of the projects. **Post is subject to satisfactory DBS clearance.**



How to apply

To apply for this position, please email a copy of your CV including details of two references, to **recruitment@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk**, or alternatively, you can post for the attention of **Human Resources team**, to **People First Conference Centre, Milbourne Street, Carlisle, CA2 5XB**.



All applications should be clearly marked:

Confidential: Head of Finance

To arrive no later than 5pm, 20th April 2026.

If you have not been contacted by 24th April 2026, please consider your application unsuccessful on this occasion.

Previous applicants for our finance roles need not re apply.

Inclusion at the heart of everything we do... including interviewing

We are proud to have an organisation that is shaped and lead by people with lived experience. This is lived experience of our services and of living with a learning disability and autistic people.



Get in touch with us



You can call us:
0300 303 8037



Email us:
recruitment@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk

We are a charity

People First Independent Advocacy are a Registered Charity. No 1184112