

People First Volunteering Volunteers Report

April 2024

Wearepeoplefirst.co.uk

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Foreword

Volunteering at People First

Volunteering is a huge part of what we do at People First; we started out as a volunteer led organisation working for people with learning disabilities and have grown into the well respected and impactful charity we are today.

Our 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

This is our first report to focus solely on volunteering at People First, and it gives us a good idea of where we are, and where we need to be going when it comes to volunteers.

Please note that all local population information in this report has been taken from the Office for National Statistics 2021 Census Data. Information was last accessed on 23rd January 2024 at the following link: [Topic Summaries - 2021 Census - Census of Population - Data Sources - home - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2021/summary)

Volunteering

The situation up to now

Where do you volunteer

40.9% of respondents answered Lancashire

59.1% of respondents answered Cumbria

Up until last year, volunteers were surveyed about their experience as part of the yearly staff survey. However, after the recruitment of two dedicated Volunteer Coordinators, we are moving towards a more strategic approach to our volunteering offer.

In order to do this, we conducted a Diversity Audit and a Volunteer Experience Survey to evidence who our volunteers are, which area they are volunteering in, and what they thought about their volunteering experience so far.

Both reports should be read side by side to gain a full picture of volunteering at People First.

We currently have 12 different volunteering roles available across People First and Healthwatch, and across Lancashire and Cumbria.

The largest number of volunteers are in our cafe and in Healthwatch Lancashire, but we also have volunteers in Advocacy, Self Advocacy, the Conference Centre, Learner Services, Youth Services and all of Healthwatch.

Age & Disability

What is your age?

Responses:

- 17 or under: 5%
- 18-24: 5%
- 25-49: 25%
- 50-64: 30%
- 65-79: 35%

Most of our volunteers (65%) are between 50 and 79 years old. In comparison, 45% of the population in Cumbria and Lancashire are in this age group.

This shows that we need to carry out some targeted recruitment to focus on bringing younger volunteers to the organisation, as well as our older volunteers.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Responses:

- Yes: 35%
- No: 65%

35% of our volunteers consider themselves to have a disability, compared to 18.8% in the general population of Cumbria and Lancashire.

This shows that a commitment to our Mission flows throughout the whole of People First.

Gender

What is your gender? Is it the same as your sex assigned at birth?

Responses:

- Male: 40%
- Female: 60%
- Gender same as assigned at birth: 100%

Although there were options in the gender field including non-binary and 'other', 100% of volunteers answered either male or female to the question around gender.

100% also agreed that their current gender was the same as the one assigned at birth.

Our volunteers are 40% male and 60% female, compared to Cumbria and Lancashire as a whole, where the population is 49.2% male and 50.8% female.

Although all of our volunteers stated that their current gender is the same as their sex assigned at birth, in Cumbria and Lancashire 0.5% of residents identify as a gender different to their sex registered at birth.

We currently have no volunteers who openly state that they are transgender, agender or non-binary. In order to represent this group appropriately, we will need to audit our recruitment process to make sure we are not unconsciously making it difficult for these volunteers to apply.

Relationship Status

What is your relationship status?

Responses:

- Single: 30%
- Divorced: 15%
- Married or Civil Partnership: 25%
- Co-habiting: 20%
- Prefer not to say: 10%

Please note: Nobody stated that they were in a Civil Partnership, but as the UK Government does not differentiate between these in the Census, they have been joined together.

Interestingly, we have fewer volunteers who

are:

- widowed (0% compared to 6.7% regionally)
- married (25% compared to 47.7% regionally)

And more volunteers who are:

- Divorced: 15% compared to 6.9% regionally
- Single: 30% compared to 22.9% regionally.

This could be because the question wasn't as specific as the Census question, or it could be something in the profile of volunteering today.

Sexual Orientation

What is your sexual orientation?

Responses:

- Heterosexual (straight): 90%
- Bisexual: 5%
- Prefer not to say: 5%

There were multiple possible options for answers to this question, including asexual, pansexual and undecided, but only 5% of volunteers openly stated that they were of a sexuality other than heterosexual, compared to 2.4% regionally. 5% also preferred not to answer the question (Compared to 6.6% regionally).

Ethnicity & Beliefs

What is your ethnicity?

We added the following to help explain the question: Ethnic origin is not about nationality, place of birth or citizenship. It is about the group to which you perceive you belong.

Responses:

- Black or Black British: African – 5%
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean – 5%
- White: British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish – 90%

90% of our volunteers described themselves as White (British, English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish), 5% as Black or Black British, and 5% as White & Black Caribbean. In Cumbria and Lancashire combined, white people make up 94.7% of the population. However, there is a difference between Cumbria and Lancashire, with Lancashire having an 88.9% white population.

Nobody in our volunteer pool identified as Asian or Asian British, yet this group makes up 8.1% of the population in Lancashire and 3.4% overall in our region.

Beliefs

Which is your religion or belief?

Responses:

- Christian: 55%
- No religion: 45%

In Lancashire & Cumbria, 56.1% of people stated that they were Christian. Comparatively, 55% of our volunteers stated that they were Christian. The other 45% of our volunteers stated that they had no religion, compared to 34.5% in the local area.

There were no volunteers of any other religion. In Lancashire, Muslims represent 6.9% of the population (2.6% regionally), so this is a group where we need to recruit more volunteers.

Caring Responsibilities

Do you have caring responsibilities?

Responses:

- None: 75%
- Primary carer of a child/children (under 18): 10%
- Primary carer of a disabled adult (18 and over): 5%
- Primary carer of an older person: 10%

In Cumbria and Lancashire as a whole, only 10% of the population had caring responsibilities.

Amongst our volunteers, that number is 50% higher at 15% (not including care of non disabled children).

There was an option to state that a volunteer was caring for a disabled child, but nobody chose this option, so we can only assume that those who chose 'child under 18' meant typical child caring responsibilities.

(Please note that NOMIS 2021 Census states: "An unpaid carer may look after, give help or support to anyone who has long-term physical or mental ill-health conditions, illness or problems related to old age")

Carers are an often unheard group in Health & Social care and it is important that this group is represented amongst our volunteers.

Carers often face barriers to support and inclusion as their caring responsibilities can make it difficult to attend any groups or events.

Life Experience

Do you have any experience in any of the following areas / communities?

This could be through personal experience, caring experience, through supporting a friend or family member with this issue, or through working with people in these groups.

This question is to ensure that our group of volunteers is representative of the community we aim to represent as an organisation.

These groups are those who are under represented when it comes to influence in Health & Social Care and it is our vision that we can act as an amplifier for their voices to reduce barriers in access to Health & Social Care.

Maternity / Giving birth:

- Personally 5
- As a carer 1
- As a friend 4
- Through work 0
- Total 10

Substance misuse:

- Personally 1
- As a carer 1
- As a friend 2

- Through work 3
- Total 7

Social care (at home):

- Personally 3
- As a carer 2
- As a friend 7
- Through work 4
- Total 16

Living in a care home:

- Personally 1
- As a carer 3
- As a friend 7
- Through work 2
- Total 13

Mental health:

- Personally 6
- As a carer 2
- As a friend 6
- Through work 1
- Total 15

Mental health inpatient care:

- Personally 1
- As a carer 0
- As a friend 3
- Through work 2
- Total 6

Neurodiversity (Autism / ADHD):

- Personally 3
- As a carer 1
- As a friend 7
- Through work 1
- Total 12

Ex prisoners:

- Personally 2
- As a carer 0
- As a friend 3
- Through work 3
- Total 8

Veterans & Military families:

- Personally 2
- As a carer 0
- As a friend 3
- Through work 4
- Total 9

Language barriers or not speaking English as a first language:

- Personally 1
- As a carer 1
- As a friend 1
- Through work 4
- Total 7

The refugee / asylum system in the uk:

- Personally 1
- As a carer 1
- As a friend 0
- Through work 3

- Total 5

The Ukraine or Hong Kong refugee / asylum system:

- Personally 1
- As a carer 0
- As a friend 1
- Through work 3
- Total 5

Being a carer:

- Personally 4
- As a carer 2
- As a friend 3
- Through work 2
- Total 11

Homelessness:

- Personally 3
- As a carer 1
- As a friend 2
- Through work 2
- Total 8

Being registered blind or having a visual impairment:

- Personally 2
- As a carer 1
- As a friend 1
- Through work 5
- Total 9

The deaf and signing community:

- Personally 0
- As a carer 1
- As a friend 3
- Through work 4
- Total 8

Young people:

- Personally 5
- As a carer 3
- As a friend 5
- Through work 7
- Total 20

LGBTQ+ community:

- Personally 2
- As a carer 0
- As a friend 3
- Through work 4
- Total 9

Physical disability / Disabled community:

- Personally 6
- As a carer 2
- As a friend 7
- Through work 5
- Total 20

Learning disabilities:

- Personally 2
- As a carer 2
- As a friend 6
- Through work 4

- Total 14

Dementia:

- Personally 1
- As a carer 2
- As a friend 9
- Through work 4
- Total 16

Those who live on boats:

- Personally 1
- As a carer 0
- As a friend 2
- Through work 2
- Total 5

Farming communities:

- Personally 5
- As a carer 1
- As a friend 3
- Through work 3
- Total 12

Gypsy, Roma or Irish travelling communities:

- Personally 1
- As a carer 0
- As a friend 3
- Through work 3
- Total 7

Conclusions and next steps

From the data in this report, we can see that our current volunteers do not represent the ethnic and religious diversity of the area we work in. The Asian population in Lancashire is especially underrepresented as that group constitutes 8% of the population in Lancashire.

We have also found that the LGBTQ+ community and those who care for disabled children are under-represented amongst our volunteers.

As an organisation, there is also work to be done to engage with those who live on boats, and the travelling community. This group is also under-represented in our volunteer population.

In order to rectify this imbalance, we will commit to the following in the next financial year:

- An audit of our recruitment process to identify any unintentional or indirect discrimination.
- An audit of our recruitment advertising to ensure that all sectors of our community are represented as far as possible.
- Targeted recruitment campaigns to engage with members of underrepresented communities, starting with the Asian and LGBTQ+ communities.

- A Diversity audit every year

