



Joining our Board.

A guide for



2.

We are **People First**

We are People First.

We stand shoulder to shoulder, and put people first.

For 35 years we have worked to improve people's lives.

Listening through advocacy.

Engaging with people about health and care services.

Empowerment through training.

We believe in supporting people to live their lives the way they want to.

We make a difference.

We are People First.



Make a difference: Become a Trustee

3.

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. 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.

In 2024 People First began working in partnership with The Well Communities- a lived experience recovery organisation (LERO). This partnership centers on supporting people to take control of their own lives and recovery, helping them to transform and build a stronger future.

A message from our CEO

We are **People First**

People First is an amazing organisation which has grown and diversified in recent years.

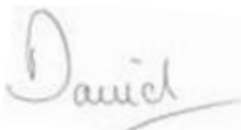
We are lucky enough to have a team of amazing, outstanding staff that work tirelessly to deliver support and services all aimed at empowering lives. We work in communities across Cumbria, Lancashire and the North East.

Whilst it's an inspiring story, with the organisation going from strength-to-strength, it's not always plain sailing! Like any business we have challenges that have to be overcome.

Our Trustees support us to think carefully about what action to take to deal with challenges such as:

- **Strategic planning:** deciding what to do next, and importantly what not to do
- **Finance:** making sure we use our resources wisely, whilst preparing for a rainy day
- **Quality customer experience:** making sure that all our support is high quality and customer focused
- **Workforce:** to get enough great staff to get the job done

I look forward to meeting with you and sharing more information on joining our Board,



David Blacklock
Chief Executive

Who we are

People First Independent Advocacy is a registered charity (Registered charity number 1184112) and an independent customer-led organisation that has worked in the North of England for over 35 years, with the mission to help people live informed, respected, healthy and fulfilled lives. We have a deep understanding of the region, our communities and the unique challenges many individuals face.

People First is a Company limited by guarantee which means that Trustees are guarantors rather than shareholders, so Trustees are protected from financial liability for the charity, any profit/surplus the organisation makes is reinvested into the services it delivers to support more people.

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 across Cumberland, Lancashire and the North East.

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.

Our Board of Trustees is comprised of representatives from a broad range of backgrounds, professions and disciplines; including legal, accountancy, human resources and people with lived experience of a learning disability, all working together to help us to achieve our vision and mission.

The maximum number of Trustees the Board can have at any time is 12 which comprises of Trustees from professional backgrounds and Trustees with Lived Experience of using our services.

Our values are fundamental to this and allow us to drive our strategic objectives forward.

Our 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.

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

Meet our Leadership team



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.



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 people and tackling new challenges.



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.



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 over 25 years in a range of different roles, before become Chief Executive Officer.

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

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

We recognise that being a trustee is a significant responsibility, and we're committed to supporting you every step of the way. From the beginning, we provide clear resources and inductions to help you understand your role and the impact you can make.

Your voice matters here. We're committed to fostering an environment where you can confidently contribute, challenge ideas constructively and help shape the strategic direction of the organisation. Together, we ensure that our mission is achieved responsibly, ethically and with maximum impact.

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.

Being a Trustee with us

Role profile

The role of a Trustee in a growing and ambitious charity is a very important one. People First has a strong Leadership Team that manages the day-to-day business, operational activities and challenges but they can't do it alone.

We need our Board of Trustees to have a wide range of skills and experiences to help plan, think strategically and navigate challenges. The role of a trustee should demonstrate a passion for breaking new ground to lead social change.

- Respect confidentiality
- Promote PF whenever possible
- Plan for the future
- Challenge us to think differently
- Seek assurance on quality.

Together our Board and senior staff must know where we are taking the organisation, support our staff to let their brilliance shine and try to ensure that our customers get what they need.

- Attend meetings
- Contribute to discussions
- Be committed to the work of the organisation.
- Think independently
- Ensure all decisions made in board meetings are lawful.



Your responsibilities

Working with fellow Trustees you will be responsible for providing advice, guidance and challenge.

The key responsibility of our trustees is to provide overall strategic leadership to the organisation and support the staff team to achieve the aims of People First.

They ensure this by attending and taking part in meetings, understanding our rules, and helping us stick to them, making decisions that are in the best interest of People First.

Main responsibilities include:

- Governance of the organisation
- Overseeing strategy and direction
- Monitoring performance and risk
- Ensuring inclusion of people is at the core of the organisation
- Ensure compliance with the charity's values and objectives
- Approving each year's budget, policies, business plan and accounts.

Remuneration and Expenses:

- Trustees are not remunerated for their time but will be reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence expenses occurred to attend board meetings and represent People First as required.

Term of Office:

- The Chair is appointed for an initial term of 2 years, renewable for a further 2 years if mutually agreeable.
- The maximum term for the chair is 6 years.

Roles on the board

Chair/Deputy Chair

The Chair of the Board has overall responsibility for the operations associated with the Board of Trustees which includes the role of chairing/hosting the board meetings. The Chair of the Board is a Trustee who has the necessary skills and experience to exercise their right to a casting vote in the case a consensus of the board cannot be achieved and analysis of the organisation's best interests is needed.

The Deputy Chair of the Board works in partnership with the Board Chair to support the strategic thinking and development of the Board and organisation, as well as chairing Board meetings. The Deputy Chair however does not have the power to operate a casting vote if required and instead their vote will hold the same weighting as the votes from other Trustees. For the avoidance of doubt, the Deputy Chair shall not have the powers of the Chair to a second or casting vote at Trustee meetings

Trustees

Working with fellow Trustees, Trustees are responsible for providing advice, guidance and challenge.

The key responsibility of our trustees is to provide overall strategic leadership to the organisation and support the staff team to achieve the aims of People First.

They ensure this by attending and taking part in meetings, understanding our rules, and helping us stick to them, making decisions that are in the best interest of People First.

Main responsibilities:

- Governance of the organisation
- Overseeing strategy and direction
- Monitoring performance and risk
- Ensuring respect for people is at the core of the organisation
- Ensure compliance with the charity's values and objectives
- Approving each year's budget, policies, business plan and accounts.

The appointment

We are an organisation driven by the values of its people, so experience in managing a 'values - driven' organisation will be highly beneficial.

People First is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Applicants must be willing to undergo a DBS check and any other safeguarding checks as appropriate to the post. The appointment will be subject to the satisfactory outcome of these checks.



How do you become a Trustee?



Individual registers interest to become a People First Trustee through a member of staff or stakeholder.



You would meet with People First's CEO and the Business Manager, to discuss the role, including the skills and experience necessary. It's also a chance for you to ask any questions you have. The meeting will conclude with you sharing with our CEO if you wish to continue with this process.



The CEO and Business Manager will meet to complete a compatibility Assessment following your meeting. This will review your skill set, relevant experience, compatibility with our existing Trustees, alignment with our values, mission and your suitability to the role based on the needs of the Board.



If the CEO deems you suitable for the Board, you'll be invited to attend 3 upcoming Board Meetings. You'll be encouraged to participate during the meetings, however you will not have any voting power associated with Trustees during these trial meetings.



After attending 3 Board Meetings, you will be asked to meet with the Chair and Co-Chair of the Board to discuss your suitability. The Chair and Co-Chair will decide if they wish to propose you to stand for election by the Board.



During the next Board Meeting, following the decision from the Chair and Co-Chair, the Board of Trustees will be asked if they wish to elect you to be a Trustee for a minimum period of 12 months. Once formally voted onto the Board you'll adhere to People First's Constitution and the Role Specification for Trustees which includes the voting power to make organisational decisions at a strategic level.



Being a Trustee is an incredible way to support an organisation. I wanted to contribute to People First's aims and objectives without becoming an employee. I was deeply impressed by their work and passionate about the opportunity to provide support as a Board Member.

Now, as Chair of the Board of Trustees, I enjoy collaborating with the Senior Leadership Team to build upon their successes. Additionally, I have the privilege of working with other Trustees to shape and monitor the organisation's development. The role is challenging but incredibly rewarding. By taking on this responsibility, you too can make a real difference to the organisation and, most importantly, people's lives.

Mark Pannone

Chair of the Board of Trustees



"I am delighted to be a People First Trustee as I have followed the work of the charity for some time with a keen interest. I feel passionate about people being empowered to get what they need in order to be heard and live an independent and happy life. The vision and values of the charity are something that resonate with my own and I feel privileged to be part of the People First family."

Nicola

Trustee at People First



"I feel that being a trustee of People First is a real privilege and something I find really rewarding! I have always been passionate about supporting people and I think that the support People First provides to help people live their best, most fulfilling, life is incredible. The work that the teams do on a daily basis is inspiring and I am proud to be support them with this in my role as a trustee."

Elaine

Trustee at People First

How to apply

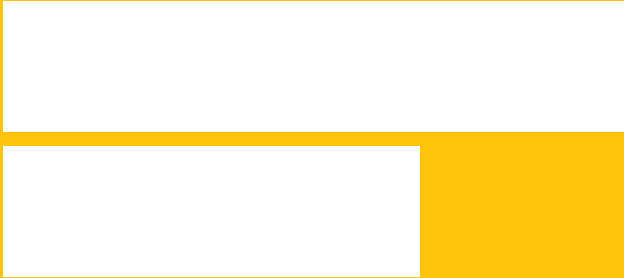


To express your interest in becoming a part of our Board of Trustees, and helping us shape the way we work, please reach out to our Business Manager, **kate.hodges@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk**.

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

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





You can call us:

01228 236348



Email us:

kate.hodges@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk

We are a charity

People First Independent Advocacy are
a Registered Charity. No 1184112

wearepeoplefirst.co.uk

