

Frequently Asked Questions



Q. What is the main purpose of the Charter?

A. It is a commitment to work together to put people first at organisations across the built environment, and continually improve by focusing on behaviours and actions to create positive cultures.

It is also to publicly recognise that organisations who put people first are the most successful due to creating a positive workforce culture, attracting and retaining talent, and bringing in diversity of thought to tackle the world's biggest challenges.

Q. Who is leading this initiative?

A. The initiative is led by the Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE), supported by their membership and Constructing Rainbows.

Q. What are signatory companies' commitments under the Charter?

A. The aim of the Charter is to encourage signatory companies to collaborate more widely, continually improve, and share best practice around creating a people first culture.

By signing the People First Charter signatory companies pledge to:

- Appoint a member of the senior leadership team as a 'People First Champion'
- Participate in the Building Inclusivity campaign as an active sponsor for change
- Agree an action plan, monitor and report on progress made under the 4 guiding principles;
- Actively demonstrate the provision of opportunities for training and education of employees, support the progression of diverse individuals into senior roles
- Place the wellbeing of employees at the heart of the organisation
- Create a culture that fosters inclusion and provides a safe space for all employees to talk openly, including at industry events and in meetings
- Create transparent people policies and processes that are accessible and attractive to everyone.
- Proactively and continuously seek opportunities to recognise and celebrate individual and whole sector successes

We accept that not all signatory companies will be able to make the same commitments and that the time and resources available to each signatory company will vary significantly. However, we encourage all participating organisations to pledge to collaborate with each other and to take pro-active actions that aim to promote a people first culture within their company and the wider industry.

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Q. What are the benefits of signing up to the Charter?

Involvement in the People First Charter community will help you to improve the culture within your own organisation, with all the positive impacts that will bring. It will demonstrate your commitment to your employees, their progression and wellbeing, and to building a better industry for all.

The benefits of being a People First Charter signatory company include:

- Visible pledge to prospective employees
- Support in achieving your People First goals
- Greater involvement in improving inclusion across the profession
- 2 meetings per year to share knowledge, best practice and connect with thought leaders in this area
- Quarterly newsletter
- Opportunity to feature in Infrastructure Intelligence highlighting People First best practice
- Access to templated best practice policies, frameworks and guidance documents
- Access to helpline for general advice on the journey (peoplefirst@acenet.co.uk)
- Certification which can be used to evidence or demonstrate commitment to the Charter for example recruitment, bids and other external accreditations
- Marketing materials for example badges /logos to be used on footers, recruitment campaigns
- Company listed on ACE /EIC website as a People First adopter
- Ongoing support at a discounted rate to EDI specialist Constructing Rainbows
www.constructingrainbows.co.uk
- Review of biennial submission and recommendations for future focus areas
- Access to best practice documentation to share with clients to promote positive ways of working

Q. How do we sign up?

To sign up to the People First Charter, you need to complete a simple form (found on www.acenet.co.uk) providing us with your contact details. By doing so, you are agreeing to the charter pledge listed above.

You will be asked to provide details of two people:

- a "People First Champion", who must be a senior leader and have the authority to make the pledge on behalf of the organisation; and
- a designated People First Officer, who will be the main point of contact between your organisation and ACE and will be responsible for acting on the Charter commitments.

Your People First Officer can be the same as the People First Champion.

Please remember to let us know about any significant changes to your organisation, for example the appointment of a new People First Officer, or a change of name or address or legal status. Please note that for your organisation to remain a Charter signatory, we do need to have contact details for the People First Officer and People First Champion.

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Q. How much does it cost to sign up to the Charter?

Nothing. It is totally free to sign up to the Charter and you get access to all the benefits listed above.

Q. What happens after I have signed up to the Charter?

Shortly after you have signed up to the Charter, your People First Champion and People First Officer will receive a welcome email and will be subscribed to our People First Charter mailing lists so they can receive all updates circulated by ACE. We will also add your name to the website as a People First Charter signatory. Companies should then formulate their action plan to meet their commitments demonstrating continuous improvement.

ACE will arrange best practice sharing sessions twice a year and invite signatories along for sharing and learning from each other and industry leaders. There is an expectation that signatories submit an annual case study to ACE which demonstrates the charter in action at their workplace, these will highlight successes and best practice to showcase the work of your organisation.

ACE will require a two-yearly report from signatories detailing how they have been continuously working towards the 8 commitments they have signed up to under the People First Charter. This will be reviewed by ACE and feedback provided.

Q. What if a company already has a people first programme in place?

A. We know that many organisations already have people first policies and are involved in people first initiatives. The Charter is not intended to replace or conflict with these but to compliment them.

Q. Who is the Charter open to?

A. Currently the Charter is open to ACE and EIC member organisations who wish to promote positive change in our industry.

Q. Who else has signed up?

Take a look at our list of current Charter signatories.

Q. What is the deadline for signing the Charter?

A. There is no deadline for signing the Charter. The launch date is Thursday 18th May 2023, but ACE will be accepting signatories after the launch date.

Q. What if we need help fulfilling the Charter Commitments?

Don't worry. ACE is here to help. We will be sharing plenty of useful templates, frameworks, guidance and information sources on our Building Inclusivity page.

Through our Building Inclusivity campaign we are also running frequent training and awareness-raising events that are free to attend.

All signatories will have access to a helpline for general advice on the journey (peoplefirst@acenet.co.uk), and for more specialist advice and ongoing support we have agreed a discounted rate to EDI specialist Constructing Rainbows www.constructingrainbows.co.uk

Q. Who do I contact if I have any queries?

A. Please email peoplefirst@acenet.co.uk who will be able to advise you.