

# Colleague Handbook



# Hello and welcome to Places for People

**This is your colleague handbook,  
which tells you all about life at  
Places for People – who we are,  
what we do and how we do it.**

**So grab a cup of tea, pull up a chair  
and let us bring you up-to-speed.**

# Thank you for choosing to become part of our team



Dear colleague,

Welcome to the Places for People family! We are so excited to have you here. **We are proud to be one of the largest social enterprises in the UK — our communities change lives.**

I joined Places for People because I wanted to work for an organisation that had a real purpose. And now you, like me, are part of a team of over 10,000 people working to **make a difference** for our customers and communities across the UK.

Whatever your role, there are three things I want you to know and take with you during your career at Places for People.

First, every single one of us in our organisation is working for our customers. Every task we take up, every meeting we attend, and every conversation we have is making a difference to the lives of our customers.

Second, everyone's job is as important as everyone else's.

Third, and finally, when we see something that isn't right, or something that could be done better, it's up to all of us to shout it out.

Your handbook will help you learn about everything we do — from managing homes, support services, and leisure facilities across the UK, to creating social value. We create homes, places and communities that are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally — because we know that **places work when they work for everyone.**

In this handbook you will also find out more about life at Places for People. This includes our SPIRIT values which guide us in everything we do, rewards and benefits, and learning and development programmes.

We're a **People First** organisation because we treat everyone honestly, courteously and fairly. To us, everyone matters. We're working hard to build a diverse and inclusive organisation for a better, fairer future.

Places for People — and everything we achieve — would not be possible without you. We want you to thrive and reach your full potential. If you need training or support to help you with your career or personal development, don't be afraid to ask.

As you settle in, there will be lots of people around to support you. I'd love to know how you're doing and what you're working on, so be sure to give me a shout on Yammer.

Congratulations on your new job and welcome to the team — you're in good company.

Greg Reed  
Group Chief Executive Officer



## | Settling in

Don't worry, we don't expect you to know everything from day one, but we do want you to feel comfortable and confident in your role as soon as possible.

We'll help you settle in and find your place in our organisation through an informative induction tailored to your job role. Here are the steps we'll take you through to get you ready for your place in our team.



## 1. Your colleague handbook

Given you're several pages in, we hope you're finding your handbook useful. It's intended to give you a succinct, yet insightful, overview of Places for People.

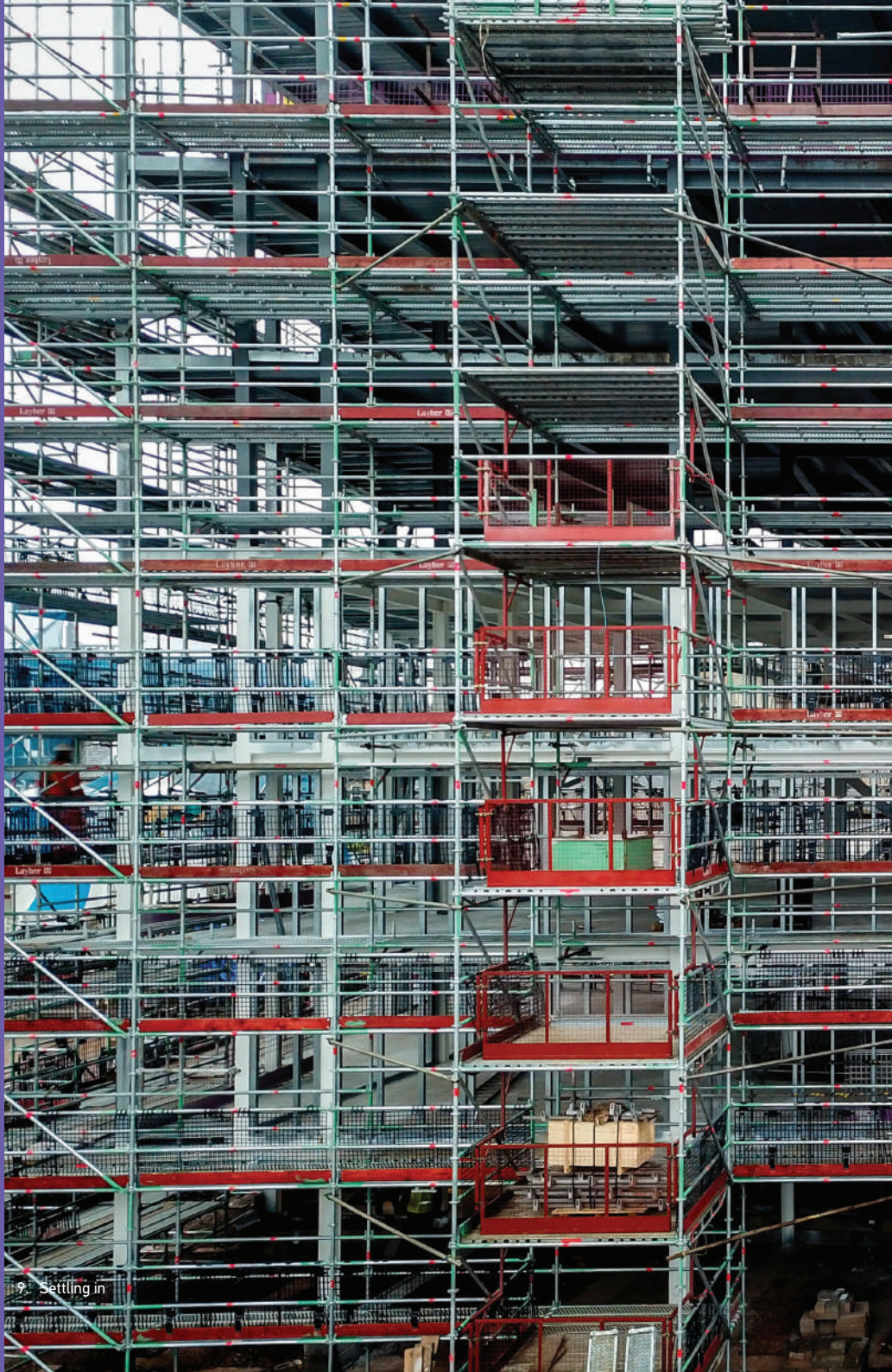
Once you've read it, you will hopefully understand more about our vision, our values, our strategy — but most importantly — how you can be a part of it! And of course, the handbook also tells you all you need to know about our benefits and how we will support you throughout your employment.

## 2. Your own 'buddy' and induction schedule

Once you start your new role, you'll be assigned a 'buddy'; this nominated person will be your guide through these first few months, showing you around the workplace and introducing you to the wider team.

Working with you and your line manager, your buddy will help you quickly settle in, answering any questions you may have — don't be afraid to ask them anything!





# Let's grow together through innovation and learning.

## 3. Regular 1-2-1's

Feedback is so important to us. We really want to know how you're settling in and that you're getting the most out of your role — and that you're happy and comfortable with your place in our team. You'll have regular 1-2-1 meetings with your line manager, during which you can talk openly and confidentially about your role so far.

It's a time for you and your line manager to review progress — they'll carry on right up until you successfully pass your probation — at which point the meeting structure will transfer to our 'Over to You' format.

## 4. Other training during your induction

It's incredibly important to us that each colleague is given a chance to grow and progress their career. That's why we'll encourage you to participate in training appropriate to your job role within Places for People; these can be discussed as part of your early 1-2-1's with your line manager.

We'll also need you to complete other essential training through our e-learning portal such as health and safety, and data protection.

## 5. IT Training

Your buddy and / or line manager will show you our range of user guides, which will help you understand our IT systems here at Places for People.

## 6. Virtual Academy

There are even more opportunities to learn through our [Virtual Academy](#).

This virtual environment hosts courses, guidance and e-learning, designed to support colleague and management development. The portal is aimed at helping colleagues to achieve their full potential and can be accessed through Our Place, the Places for People intranet, to which you'll soon be accustomed...



# At Places for People, we're on a journey to be the best workplace we can be

Together we impact on the lives of millions.  
We create places that benefit people, place and planet.  
Homes to live in, spaces to stay active, communities  
that thrive.  
Places that work for everyone.

Our 10,000 people are making a difference.  
We've over 219,000 homes and £4.8 billion of assets.  
Our boundless ambition means we have huge plans  
for the future.  
And we want you to be part of them.

Careers are exciting and challenging here.  
We're encouraged to be curious and brave.  
We're trusted and enjoy modern ways of working.  
We're inspired to be creative and commercial  
to change people's lives.

We're the place for ambitious people.  
Caring people, positive people.  
Big ideas people, life changing people.  
Jump right in and right first time people.  
Can do, make a difference people.

The place for talented people.





## Who we are, what we do, our aspirations, our vision, our purpose...

Our vision and values are very important to us, and help our colleagues express what we do, and what we believe in.

These sections will help you understand more about our vision, inspire you to think about the areas in which you want to contribute, and they'll form part of your 'objective setting' and 1-2-1's with your line manager.



## 1. Strategic vision

**‘Creating places that work for everyone.’**

That’s our vision statement, and our commitment to creating sustainable and contented communities.

It also underpins our broader business strategy, our aims and objectives.

To read those in full, and to meet our board and leadership team who help shape Places for People, head to [placesforpeople.co.uk](https://placesforpeople.co.uk)



## 2. Business plans

In each area of our business, you'll find managers who have developed detailed business plans to deliver both our vision and the objectives pertinent to their work.

As we work through your settling in period, your line manager will help you learn more about your role, and how you can contribute to the objectives of your area of the business.

The detailed business plans will also ensure that colleagues:

- understand and appreciate the broad range of market sectors that Places for People operates in
- are innovative in helping us shape neighbourhoods filled with diversity and choice
- respond with a choice of products and services to both existing and new customers
- help us provide excellent levels of customer service.

**Every single colleague,  
no matter their role,  
is vital to delivering  
these business objectives.  
By helping us deliver them,  
you are taking us ever closer  
to fulfilling our vision.**

**Our People First Promise and SPIRIT values are the principles which help us deliver our all-important vision of ‘creating places that work for everyone’.**

### **People First Promise**

We treat everyone honestly, courteously and fairly.  
We listen, we learn, we deliver.  
We need our colleagues to tell us what we need to do to achieve this across our organisation.

## **SPIRIT values**

### **Support — always there to help customers and colleagues.**

Recognising when and how customers and colleagues need help and offering support. Working with others, removing barriers and resolving issues. Listening.

### **Positive — a ‘can do’ attitude; encouraging others to achieve.**

Focusing on what I CAN DO for customers and colleagues. Identifying options, alternatives and solutions.

### **Integrity — always delivering on promises; being open and honest.**

Delivering on promises and ensuring actions are in line with words. Being open and honest about the reality of situations, providing information and explanation.

### **Respect — treating people fairly and with understanding.**

Treating people fairly, valuing individuals’ differences and appreciating their contribution.

### **Innovative — open to new ideas; not afraid of failure.**

Open to new ideas and not constrained by the way things have been done in the past. Being prepared to try things and learning from experience.

**Together — believing more can be achieved by working well with others.** Recognising value in working with others, both within a team and across the organisation. Believing more can be achieved by working effectively together.



S P I R I T




## Your benefits, our way of saying 'thank you'. If you're happy, we're happy.

We have cultivated a contented working environment, a place in which people can flourish, thrive, better themselves and work in fantastic communities with inspirational colleagues and customers.

Our boundless ambition means we have big plans for the future – something you are a huge part of – but we know that there's always more we can do to make you smile. If we can save you money or make life a little bit easier for you at the same time, then we will – thanks to our wide range of employee benefits.

Some of these are flexible and you can make decisions to tailor them to best suit you and the way you live your life. There are some rules though – remember that all benefits you receive from Places for People (including, but not limited to, those listed on the following pages) are offered at our discretion and may be modified or withdrawn at any time without notice or any financial compensation.



**We know  
there's more to  
life than work.**

## **1. Our Places for People Pension Plan.**

If you meet the auto enrolment requirements set down in pensions legislation, you will be automatically enrolled into our Places for People Pension Plan on the first day of the month in which your three month anniversary of working with us falls.

The standard way of making pension contributions is 'Pay Exchange', a salary sacrifice arrangement where your contractual pay is reduced by an amount equal to your pension contribution rate. This means that you get full tax relief immediately — and you'll pay less national insurance than if you made contributions in the traditional way. We offer a matched pension contribution, up to a maximum amount. And don't forget, you can choose to join the Pension Plan before your three month anniversary too.

Want to find out more? Our colleagues at [pensions@placesforpeople.co.uk](mailto:pensions@placesforpeople.co.uk) can help. You can also find further details about how Pay Exchange works by referring to the booklet on [Our Place](#).

## **2. Life Assurance**

And... if you join the Pension Plan, you will typically qualify for life assurance cover too.

The standard level of cover is four-times your annual basic salary, although the precise amount of cover and any terms are determined by the Places for People life assurance cover provider.

Life assurance cover is designed to provide a lump sum in the event that you die while employed by Places for People (and while contributions are made to the Pension Plan). It is essential that you get the details right from the start, informing Places for People of the name of the person who you would like to receive any lump sum in the event of your death — you can do this by keeping your Expression of Wish Form up to date.

Again, our colleagues on [pensions@placesforpeople.co.uk](mailto:pensions@placesforpeople.co.uk) can help with all of this.

## **3. Healthcare cashback plan**

We offer a cashback plan for routine healthcare costs to colleagues who don't already receive separate private medical cover.

The plan helps cover routine costs like eye tests, GP charges, dental check-ups and more. If you're eligible for the plan, once you're set up you'll receive an email directly from our provider, WPA, asking you to register on their secure portal.

Want to find out more? Visit the People Services hub on [Our Place](#).

### 3. Income Protection

If you join the Pension Plan and continue contributions for at least five years, you may qualify for the income protection benefit — something designed to provide you with a level of sick pay if you are absent for a very long time, or unable to return to work.

The precise amount of cover and any terms is determined by Places for People's income protection cover provider.

### 4. Employee Loans

Once you've successfully completed your probationary period, you may choose to take out an interest-free loan from Places for People, which can be repaid over a number of months (but remember, the full amount is immediately payable if you leave us!).

It's a brilliant perk for those wanting to apply for things like:

- a computer loan
- a season ticket
- a qualifications loan.

Full terms and conditions can be found on [Our Place](#).

**If we can save  
you money  
or make life a  
little bit easier  
for you at the  
same time,  
then we will.**





## 5. Flexible working

9-to-5 isn't always feasible in the modern world, so that's why Places for People aims to understand and support our needs for more flexible working.

Your line manager can tell you more about the way we work and what applies to your role.

## 6. Star Awards

Without your dedication, commitment, hard work and determination, Places for People would not be such a forward facing, ever evolving organisation. That's why we have our Star Awards — which recognise the many outstanding achievements of our colleagues.

Star Awards celebrate anyone who has 'gone the extra mile', giving them the credit they deserve and promoting them as ambassadors of Places for People. Further details can be found on the intranet.





## 7. Voluntary Benefits

And if all that wasn't enough, there's an additional, extensive benefits package for all of our colleagues within Places for People — with thousands of offers and discounts ready for you to use and save.

Benefits include:

- Cycle to Work Schemes
- retail discounts (from clothes, to groceries, electronics, entertainment, dining and more..!)
- gym membership
- travel.

And our Places for People colleagues also benefit from special offers and discounts.

All of the benefits can be found on the intranet or by visiting [rewards.placesforpeople.co.uk](https://rewards.placesforpeople.co.uk)

## 8. Employee care

We said we want to put a smile on your face, well we really want to help when you're not feeling all that great too.

Our free external, confidential 24-hour counselling and advice line helps colleagues reach out to trained counsellors who are on hand to discuss any challenges you may be facing — be they professional or personal. There is also a number of colleagues across Places for People who have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders to give support and are available to help if we need.

To discuss any issues just head to the intranet where you'll find all of the details and contact numbers.

# Learning and development

We want to see you flourish, that's why you'll be given all that you need to develop professionally.

Learning provides you with the opportunity to develop in your current role. It can prepare you for taking on positions of greater responsibility and scope, and allow you to progress to a new sector within our organisation.

The ongoing feedback on your performance will help you and your line manager make informed decisions about how we can invest in you and the types of learning you need to take your career forward.



## 1. Over to You — Performance appraisal

Remember we told you about the progression of your 1-2-1's? Once you're a permanent colleague, you'll participate in 'Over to You' sessions. These are appraisals, which are shaped and led by you; they're a forum in which you can agree your objectives with your line manager – taking into account business or Places for People objectives and your own personal development.

These objectives cover both what is to be achieved (outcomes) and how it is to be achieved (process and behaviour). In order for the 'Over to You' review process to be effective for both you and your line manager, it must operate as a continuous process.

## 2. Accredited learning

We want you to realise your full potential, so that's why we also offer a range of professional and vocational qualifications across the organisation. You can apply to study for these with our support, and you can identify the right qualifications for you by working with your line manager.

We have colleagues across Places for People studying to support their job role in topics from data and technology to leadership and management. If you are wanting to learn while working, we will support you in that journey. Investing in our people helps us to increase collaboration and career opportunities within Places for People and develop a pool of talented individuals just like you, who are capable of taking on broader roles and responsibilities.



# Our Places for People policies

To ensure we all work together to create a fair and consistent approach to the way we work and treat each other, we have developed a framework of policies. You can also find out what you are entitled to while working with us and the support that is available for you.

The policies also guide us all to understand our responsibilities and expectations. They ensure we manage risk and are legislatively compliant as well as incorporating best practice and consistency. To help understand our policies and practices, you will be provided e-learning modules on key topics as part of your induction.

Our key people policies have been developed collaboratively with colleague representatives.

The key below shows some examples of the people policies which can be found on the intranet —

## Workplace Conduct / Performance

- Conduct & Capability Management
- Behaviour at Work
- Inclusion and Belonging
- Whistleblowing
- Respect

## Recruitment

- Recruitment & Selection
- Organisational Change
- Learning and Development

## Health and Wellbeing

- Authorised Leave
- Sickness Absence
- Health and Wellbeing

## Family Friendly

- New Parent and Caring
- Flexible Working

# Our main policies

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## 1. Workplace Conduct / Performance / Behaviour / Respect Policies

Because of the nature of work that Places for People carries out and our public accountability, we consider our customers — and the public at large — are entitled to demand conduct and performance of the highest standard from everyone in our organisation.

In turn, we also expect you to treat your colleagues with dignity and respect while at work and we will take steps to ensure you have equality and opportunities to progress and excel in your work.

## 2. Recruitment / Flexible Working Policies

For us all to perform at our best, we need to ensure we have competent colleagues to support us and that we are taking responsibility with our manager, for our own learning and development.

Places for People recognises that talent management is critical to our success especially during times of growth. Our recruitment policy ensures we are an equal opportunities employer and that we are attracting and selecting the best people for the jobs who demonstrate our SPIRIT values and behaviours.

You may wish to take up flexible working or a secondment and our policies can support such requests. We want to ensure that you feel like you belong to our team and have support even when you are working off site or alone.

These policies also provide our guidance when handling changes within the workplace which may affect your role or working practices.

## 3. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policies

Providing a safe and protective environment for you to work in is of paramount importance as we value your health and wellbeing and understand how complex the pressures and challenges can be that you face day to day.

We encourage you to take ownership of your own health, safety and wellbeing and this is reflected in our policies. We also provide support and information to colleagues through a range of different options.

The policies are designed to make sure you have clarity around safety standards at work, and the support available to you to maintain your wellbeing.

## 4. Family Friendly Policies

Places for People is committed to supporting you while you are becoming a new parent and while your child or children are growing up. We also have provisions in place to assist with your childcare and any other caring responsibilities you may have.

These policies outline your rights and responsibilities if you are pregnant, have recently given birth, you become adoptive or surrogate parents, and carers. It also sets out the arrangements and criteria for support available as a parent or carer.

# Other policies

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**There are other important policies that you will need to familiarise yourself with while you are working with us. These policies are the framework upon which we all work and abide by to ensure compliance, governance, management of risk, accountabilities, our safety and welfare.**

**These policies can be found on the policy register under the appropriate areas such as Finance, Information Technology, Purchasing, Health and Safety, Data Protection.**

## **Health & Safety**

These policies and standards are to keep us all safe and protected from any risk. They cover all aspects of our work including use of computers, equipment, working practices and the environment within which we work. We all have responsibility to protect each other, our customers, suppliers and any person who uses our services or premises.

## **Finance**

Our Finance policies are in place to protect Places for People from anyone who attempts to compromise the organisation's position in the way we manage our financial interactions between ourselves, residents, customers, contractors and partners. The policies protect Places for People when handling money and ensures our compliance with Financial Regulations. They also ensure that you cannot benefit financially through your employment with us, other than through the terms of your contract or legitimate benefits provided for you.

## **Places for People Purchasing**

These policies cover how we manage spending, ensuring the organisation achieves value for money, cost benefits and the management of any associated risk. Policies such as gifts and bequests, hospitality and personal interests are covered.

## **Information Technology**

The use of information and the computers involved in its processing are essential to the daily operations of Places for People. The policies provide an enabling mechanism for information sharing, while protecting the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the information and computing assets of the organisation and our customers. The policies cover such things as usage, backup and recovery, storage and accessibility and equipment usage.

## **Data Protection**

The protection of your personal data is important to us. All of our Places for People policies are compliant with current legislation, protecting your rights and mitigating any risks or breaches of your data. You will be provided with a privacy notice and information on how we handle and hold your personal and sensitive data. These policies also detail how you should handle data you are responsible for processing in your role.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you read and understand the policies relevant to you and your work. Please familiarise yourself with the rest of the policies on the [Policies and Guidance hub](#) and supported e-learning available on Places Academy.**