



People First - September 2025

13 min read

As we enter a new academic year, we are excited to bring you our fourth edition of ***People First***. Filled with fresh insights and valuable updates designed to support and inspire you, this is your go-to space for all things wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion, learning and development, and staff benefits.

We hope you enjoy this edition! We'd love to hear from you! If you have ideas, stories, or feedback, please do get in touch at staff.wellbeing@hud.ac.uk

Please note: this newsletter includes content on sensitive topics such as suicide and baby loss, with information on support and resources available.

Newsletter Contents

- [In the spotlight](#)
 - [Taking Action Together](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Highlights](#)

- [Priorities for the year](#)
- [Diversity Calendar 2025 – 2026](#)
- [Black History Month](#)
- [Get involved](#)
- [Team Update](#)
- [Staff Wellbeing](#)
 - [World Suicide Prevention Day](#)
 - [Baby Loss Awareness Week](#)
 - [Regular Wellbeing Initiatives](#)
 - [Menopause Talk and Support](#)
 - [Staff Choir](#)
- [Learning and Development](#)
 - [Unlock your potential with coaching](#)
- [Staff Benefits](#)
 - [Annual Leave Purchase](#)
 - [Active Hud Special Offer](#)
 - [Will Writing Service and Webinar](#)
 - [New Benefit – Tastecard](#)
 - [Pension Awareness Week and Information Sessions](#)
 - [Halfords Trade Card](#)
- [Macmillan Coffee Morning](#)



In The Spotlight.....

Taking Action, Together

Join us this Autumn and turn feedback into action!

At the heart of every great organisation are its people and meaningful change begins with listening and working together. That's why we're launching our *Taking Action, Together* workshops: interactive sessions designed to give every colleague the chance to help shape the future of our University.

These workshops build on the key themes that emerged from this year's staff survey and provide an open, collaborative space for colleagues to share perspectives, challenges, and most importantly ideas for improvement. By taking part, you'll be helping to turn feedback into meaningful action.

Each session will spotlight a different theme, with input from a lead in the relevant area who will bring context and insight to the discussion. Topics include:

- **Action Planning** – Turning survey insights into concrete steps for improvement
- **University Confidence** – Building trust in leadership, strategy, and direction
- **Career Development** – Strengthening opportunities for growth and advancement
- **Belonging and Connection** – Creating an inclusive and connected workplace
- **Internal Communication** – Enhancing how we share information, listen, and stay aligned
- **Reward and Recognition** – Exploring how we celebrate success and show appreciation

Every session will begin with a summary of the latest staff survey results, followed by open discussion. Ideas will be captured, prioritised, and carefully assessed to ensure they can be developed into real, impactful actions.



Find out more and book your place(s)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Highlights

Brief overview of priorities for the year

This academic year, a big focus is how the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team are working strategically and collaboratively across the university.

Our key priorities are likely to include:

- Developing our new EDI Strategy
- Increasing staff engagement with our Staff Equality Networks, Diversity Champions and Dignity at Work Advisors
- Creating a comprehensive programme of learning experiences in collaboration with People and Organisational Development (POD)
- Establishing our identity within the university, and ensuring clarity for staff of our team purpose
- Increasing the psychological safety of staff at all levels of the organisation, creating a culture where all colleagues feel included and heard

Alongside this, we will be running a selection of events and activities that support our commitment to creating and sustaining an inclusive culture of mutual respect and dignity.





Diversity Calendar 2025-2026

The Diversity Calendar 2025-2026 is now available on our webpages and offers a reference point for staff on some of the key awareness days and dates of religious observance. This calendar can offer support in the planning of meetings, teaching and events, and can be used to guide requests for flexibility on the grounds of religion or belief.

The EDI team, staff networks and teams across the University will celebrate a selection of awareness days and observances, but we also encourage departments and teams to acknowledge dates of significance to your area of work and colleagues.

Not all dates have been included, and the selection is focussed on key dates observed in the UK. If you would like to see other dates included in this calendar please contact the [EDI Team](#).

UoH Diversity Calendar 2025-2026

Coming up . . .

Black History Month - October 2025

Black History Month falls in October each year and celebrates the culture, origins, history and achievements of African and Caribbean Communities and their diaspora. The University will mark the month with a selection of events and activities in partnership with the Student

Union. It will also be an opportunity to prioritise our work on the [Race Equality Charter Action Plan](#).

The theme this year is “Standing Firm in Power and Pride” inviting individuals and communities to do just that and continue the work to actively shape a world where black voices are heard, celebrated and valued.

Keep an eye on the [Staff Hub](#) and [EDI News page](#) for events and booking details.



Powered by Africa: The Power of the Outsider

Wednesday 29th October 2025, 4:30pm, On Campus

Join award winning social entrepreneur, best-selling author and inclusion expert, [Samuel Kasumu](#) for this Black History Month talk and Q&A that will focus on Africa’s rich contributions in the past, present, and future and explore this year’s theme ‘Standing Firm in Power and Pride’.

Samuel served as a Special Advisor to former Prime Minister Boris Johnson where he held the Civil Society and Communities Brief and, under former Prime Minister Theresa May, he was a member of the Race Disparity Audit Advisory. He is the founder of Inclusive Boards, an executive headhunting firm that improves board diversity and develops stronger governance structures.

Samuel recently authored ‘The Power of the Outsider: A Journey of Discovery’ where he explores themes of ‘outsiderness’ as experienced throughout his career and how that can amount to high achievement and success.

There will be opportunity to buy signed copies of the book at this event.

Book your place

Get involved

This academic year the EDI team will mark (along with a few other key weeks and days):

- Black History Month (Oct)
- Interfaith Week (Nov)
- Disability History Month (Nov/Dec)
- LGBT+ History Month (Feb)
- Women's History Month (Mar)
- South Asian Heritage Month (Jul/Aug)

If you or your team is interested in holding or contributing to an event or an initiative in relation to any EDI key dates, please get in touch. We also welcome suggestions of other activities and will do our best to support.

Team Update

The EDI team would like to welcome Alison Needham as the University Athena Swan Lead, Alison was previously in the Wellbeing Team, covering a period of maternity leave for our Wellbeing Officer, Bianca Sykes-Muskett.

Alison now has responsibility for taking forward our new 5-year Athena Swan (AS) action plan as submitted to Advance HE this summer. We are currently awaiting the outcome of our [AS submission](#) which is due in October and will be communicated in the next People First newsletter. Alison will be reaching out to Schools and Services over the coming weeks and months and working closely with the Staff Engagement, EDI and Wellbeing Team.

Staff Wellbeing

World Suicide Prevention Day

Wednesday 10th September

This year, World Suicide Prevention Day is a reminder that **suicide is preventable** and that **small actions can make a big difference**. With the right support, suicidal thoughts can be interrupted — and lives can be saved.

The Samaritans recently surveyed people with lived experience of suicide, and the majority said their suicidal thoughts had been interrupted by someone close to them, such as a friend or family member. At the University, we want to support staff in recognising and responding to suicide risk—asking directly can bring relief and show someone they're not alone. Remember: **you don't need to be an expert to help**. Reaching out could make all the difference.

The Samaritans have excellent advice on [supporting someone with suicidal thoughts](#).

Further Resources and Support

- [Samaritans](#)
- [Staff in Mental Health Crisis Guidance](#)
- [Suicide Awareness Training](#)
- [CIPD Guidance](#)
- [Vivup](#)
- [Mental Health First Aiders \(MHFAiders®\)](#)

Baby Loss Awareness Week



9th - 15th October is Baby Loss Awareness Week, an opportunity to unite bereaved families to commemorate their babies' lives and raise awareness of pregnancy and baby loss in the UK.

Providing Support for Baby Loss Session

Thursday 9th October 12:15 - 13:15 - On Campus

Join Talk Thru, a local charity who provide pregnancy and baby loss support, for an informative session on how to be there for someone who has experienced pregnancy or baby loss.

It's not always easy to know what to say, whether it's a friend, family member, colleague, or even partner. This session will offer understanding, guidance, and practical ways to provide comfort and support when it's needed most.

[Sign up for the session here](#)



Oastler Building Illumination

In honour of Baby Loss Awareness Week, from 9th to 15th October, the Oastler Building will be illuminated in pink and blue each night.

Further Support

If you are affected by pregnancy and/or baby loss, there is lots of support available. Please reach out for help if you need it.

- [The Lullaby Trust](#) offer a supportive and confidential space for anyone affected by the sudden or unexpected death of a baby or young child
- [Sands](#) (UK) offers support to anyone who has been affected by the death of a baby before, during or shortly after birth, whenever this happened and for as long as they need support including [specific support for men](#)
- [Talkthru](#) offers a counselling service for anyone facing pregnancy choices, the loss of a pregnancy or baby and many other pregnancy-related issues.
- [Tommy's - The Pregnancy and Baby Charity](#) (UK) is dedicated to finding causes and treatments to save babies' lives as well as providing trusted pregnancy and baby loss information and support. They have dedicated [support for dads and partners](#).

Regular Wellbeing Initiatives



Menopause Talk and Support

Wednesday 15 October 12.00 – 13:00 Online

Nutrition for Perimenopause and Menopause Masterclass

Are you...

Flat and unmotivated where you were once enthusiastic?
Struggling to focus and concentrate at your usual level?
Less able to cope with day to day stress and pressure?

What if you could...

Feel calm and relaxed and better able to handle the daily stresses of work and home?
Focus on tasks and be more productive?
Be back to your old self again?

With the right knowledge and support you can feel energised and enthusiastic again. This session covers how you may have arrived at perimenopause already depleted from the 24/7 lifestyle you've been living for years and how the onset of menopause can sometimes be the straw that breaks the camel's back. We'll talk about why you may be feeling depleted and the foundations to get in place to start feeling better.

This session will be led by Joanne Crovini, a Nutritional Therapist with over fifteen years experience working with individuals and organisations to support energy, mental health and resilience. She believes in simple and practical changes that have a big impact.

Menopause Nutrition Masterclass Sign Up

Staff Choir

The Staff Choir will be returning this term and we'd love you to join us! We'll be meeting on campus on Thursdays, 12:30 – 1:15pm during term time (starting *Thursday 25th September*).

It's totally relaxed — no auditions, no solos (unless you *want* one), and no experience needed. Just come along, have fun, and see if it's for you. Chances are, you'll be hooked after the first rehearsal!

The choir is led by the brilliant Sue Bennett from Kirklees Musica — an inspiring teacher and choir leader who always makes rehearsals fun. You'll leave with a smile on your face (and probably a song stuck in your head).

All staff welcome — come along and give it a try!



[Staff Choir Sign Up](#)

Learning and Development

Welcome to 2025/2026 Academic Year!

We understand that sometimes it's difficult to invest in yourself with a half day or full day course, that's why this year P&OD are going Bite Size!

In addition to our longer courses, we will be creating sessions that are 1 hour 15 minutes long which will give you a quick insight into various topics such as The Drama & Empowerment Triangle, Sleep, Mental Toughness and many more.

Keep an eye on the [P&OD website](#) to find out more.

Unlock Your Potential with Coaching

Have a goal but unsure where to start?

Feeling stuck and need a fresh perspective?

Want to explore new ways of thinking about a challenge?

Struggling to break down a complex task—like a PhD—into manageable steps?

If any of these resonate with you, coaching might be just what you need.

At the University of Huddersfield, we offer up to six one-hour sessions with a qualified coach, designed to support your personal and professional development. With over 100 successful coaching relationships to date, the impact speaks for itself.

Whether you're navigating a career transition, tackling academic challenges, or simply seeking to grow, coaching offers a safe, supportive space to reflect, plan, and move forward.

Here's what some of our colleagues have said:

"Coaching at the University of Huddersfield has been a transformative experience for me. It helped me challenge my limiting beliefs, gain clarity in my career direction, and build confidence in my role. The support I received has been invaluable in guiding my professional development and preparing me for future success."

"With the skilled help of a coach, I've been helped to look and think about a situation in a different way."

"Coaching has helped me to fully think through my approach to specific settings and has helped me to see the skills and abilities that I already possess that will help me to succeed



Interested in finding out more about how a coach can help you?

[Listen to our podcast](#), where Georgina Blakely talks about the impact coaching has had for her.

Interested in having a coach?

Complete the [Mentoring & Coaching Request Form](#) and take the first step toward unlocking your potential.

and recognise the success I have already achieved.”

Quick Fact, for those who like stats

Last academic year (2024/2025) there was over 3000 attendances on courses delivered through the P&OD team and our colleagues across the University, including RIKE, Digital Skills team, the Strategic Teaching and Learning team, Teacher Ed and the Graduate School.

Thank YOU!

Thank you to all our wonderful colleagues from around the University for sharing your ideas, knowledge, experiences and jollity. We look forward to working together in the coming year and beyond.

Staff Benefits



Annual Leave Purchase Scheme - Opening Soon

We are pleased to let you know that the **Annual Leave Purchase Scheme** will be open for requests from **2 October 2025 – 24 October 2025**.

Any deductions will begin from the **November payroll**.

Full details, including how to submit a request, links to our webpages, and an FAQ, will be communicated once the scheme goes live — so **keep your eyes peeled for more information!**

September Special Offer at ActiveHud

ActiveHud in partnership with KAL, have launched their 2025 £5 Gym, Swim and Class Membership offer! Pay £5 for the first month's membership, inclusive of joining fee and get unlimited access to ActiveHud and all KAL sites.

Visit [ActiveHud - University of Huddersfield](#) for more information and to sign up now.



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Free Will Writing Service and Webinar

The Taylor Lucas Partnership

Donna Byrne from The Taylor Lucas Partnership will be providing a 30-minute webinar to discuss the **free will writing service** that is currently available for all our staff members and your partner/spouse. This will be held on **Tuesday 23rd September at 12.30pm**.

[Click here to register for the session](#)

[Click here for more information on the free will writing service](#)

New Staff Benefit - Tastecard

We've partnered with Tastecard, the UK's largest dining club, to offer you the very best restaurant offers and deals to help you save money every time you dine out.

You can get 2 for 1 Meals, 50% Off Food or 25% Off the Total Bill (including drinks) - saving on average £25 per meal and up to £960 a year! As well as 50% off pizza delivery, coffee club discounts, and savings on cinema and days out!

Enjoy 12 months' access for just £29.99 which will be deducted from your next salary. Be quick, as this offer is only available from 10th September to 28th September 2025!

[Sign up for Tastecard here](#)

Pension Awareness Week - 15th-19th September

My Money Matters

Ever wondered what retirement might look like? Whether it's travelling the world, helping the grandkids, or just taking it easy, your pension plays a big part.

This Pensions Awareness Week, My Money Matters are providing an easy-to-access webinar, "Knowledge gives you choice" to help you make sense of your pension today, so you have more choice, control and confidence tomorrow.. No sign-up, no pressure. Just solid information, simple explanations, and smarter choices.

Click on the session below to reserve your spot!

Monday 15 th Sept	Tues 16 th Sept	Weds 17 th Sept	Thurs 18 th Sept	Fri 19 th Sept
Morning	Morning	Morning	Morning	Morning
Afternoon	Afternoon	Afternoon	Afternoon	Afternoon

Bonus: Take the "Future You" quiz



In Person Staff Drop in Sessions | Thursday 25th September

In addition My Money Matters will be hosting some drop in sessions and a Q&A session on site on **Thursday 25th September 2025**.

If you would like to speak to a representative and get more information about AVC's just come along.

Thursday 25 th September		
11.00am – 12 noon	Staff Drop in - anytime	OA5 /11
12.00 noon	Presentation & Q&A	OA5/11

It takes 2 minutes. It's fun and (surprisingly!) helpful. Find out your pension personality and get tips to match!

[Take the Quiz](#)

Thursday 25 th September		
1.00pm to 2.00pm	Staff Drop in - anytime	OA5 /11

Affinity Connect

Financial education specialists Affinity Connect are also delivering a series of increasingly popular, interactive sessions designed to help you plan for a financially secure future. The next two sessions for colleagues are:

[Local Government Pension Scheme \(WYPF\) Tuesday 23 September](#)

[The Teachers Pensions Scheme \(TPS\) Thursday 16 October](#)



Halfords Trade Card

Through our partnership with Halfords we are able to offer all staff a Halfords Trade Card which enables you to benefit from exclusive pricing and discounts online and instore.

Save 10% on Car Cleaning, Body Repair, Parts, Blades, Seasonal Chemicals

Save 20% on Halfords Workshop & Tools, Batteries, Fuses & Fixings, Oils & Additives

For details of how to take advantage of this great benefit head over to the Discounts and Perks section of the [Staff Benefits Hub!](#)

☀ Don't Forget ☀

All staff benefits - from discounts and wellbeing support to financial advice and lifestyle perks, are available anytime on our Staff Benefits Hub.

It's your one-stop shop for exploring what's on offer, finding out about new schemes, and making the most of the benefits available to you as a member of staff.

[Visit the Staff Benefits Hub](#)

Join us for Macmillan Coffee Morning

The HR team are taking part in the Macmillan Coffee Morning this year and we welcome colleagues from across the University to join us.

The event will take place on Wednesday 24 September 2025 between the hours of 11am – 2pm. The Cake Sale will be hosted in the Castle Hill Room (SB6/41), where you can donate to Macmillan Cancer Research in return for a slice of cake or a bun!



Until next time

If you have any questions, suggestions, or would like to get involved in upcoming wellbeing activities, please don't hesitate to reach out:
staff.wellbeing@hud.ac.uk
