

Business Plan - 2007 - 2012

Summary

Each year, our business plan is reviewed and redrafted to reflect changes to our internal and external operating environment and the timescale rolled forward as appropriate. This plan has been written on the basis that the Group will operate as one organisation, trading as Dimensions.

We have **two key aims:**

Aim 1. To become a truly person centred organisation

We need to make sure that the people we support have real control over their lives and are offered the same choices as everybody else.

The challenges that can stop us from achieving this aim can come either from the environment we work in, within Dimensions as a company or within ourselves. So, to begin to overcome these challenges, we need focus on attitudes, values and culture in our organisation.

We will continue to implement both our accountability strategy called Everybody Counts, and the Evolution, a process of cultural change we are rolling out across the organisation.

We will support regions to work in a 'local' way, supporting employees to take more informed risks, and we will focus on improving less person centred services before we look to grow in those regions.

Aim 2. To grow our business so that our turnover (the amount of money we earn in a year) is £80+ million.

We recognise that the consensus that reforming adult social care spending, to achieve more with less, will play an essential part in the way we work in the future. At the heart of this will be the principle of self directed support, including In Control, Individual Budgets and direct payments. So far, reports from these initiatives are indicating that people have significantly better outcomes with services that they control.

This plan is based on the scenario that self-directed support will be gradually introduced over the next few years. As a provider, we recognise that we need to meet the challenge of providing more person centred support for less money, for people who may have higher levels of need and require more specialised services. We must respond creatively and flexibly to purchasers and the people we support.

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Over the next five years, we believe that a lot of our growth will come from developing our transitions service (for young people with a learning difficulty) and from offering a broader range of services, such as assistive technology, that can fit individualised budgets and self directed support. We would also like to focus on gaining more business in areas where we support only a few people.

The business plan also outlines **4 more priorities:**

Priority - Workforce & Organisational Development

We want to enhance our workforce stability and reduce turnover. So far, we have developed a new induction training course called 'Our Approach', focusing on reinforcing our person-centred objectives, which is now a key element of our cultural change and modernisation programme. We have built on this by introducing the 'Our Way of Working' performance management system which formally links individual and team development to performance improvement and quality enhancement. We also propose, in the next five years, to invest even more in employee training, assessment and development.



Priority – Diversity

Our diversity strategy was relaunched in 2006 with a vision of 'working with people fairly and equally'. Each region and function now has a person leading on diversity. While regional offices will focus on all aspects of diversity, the organisational focus will be making sure that we have a mix of men and women, and people from different BME (black minority ethnic) backgrounds represented at all levels of the organisation.

Priority – Finance

Last year, our turnover was £56.4m. Most regions made a surplus of 1% – 3%. Our aim over the next five years is to narrow the range of percentage surpluses made across the regions by investing in improving our services and rewarding employees. We are also identifying more effective and efficient ways of delivering services and support, including using assistive technology, introducing new ways of working following investment in corporate systems and spending less on agency staff. All in all, we have the financial measures in place to provide a solid foundation for the people we support, and the organisation itself, for our long term future.

Priority – Property disposals

We are in the process of selling off our housing stock so that we can concentrate on providing care and support services. To date, we have sold 163 properties, and we have 390 left, which we hope to sell by 2010. Once we have disposed of the properties, we realise that we will still need property expertise. We also see a need for a housing brokerage skill to help the people we support find the housing that they want. We will specify the requirements and funding for a team to provide these services to Dimensions prior to the completion of the disposal.

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