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Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Annual report April 2023 – March 2024

Introduction

Welcome to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Review April 2023 – March 2024

It is pleasing to report continued commitment to the EDI agenda across the organisation despite some issues of capacity. The reshape of the previous part-time 'Supported Employment Advisor' role to a generic 'EDI Advisor role' in September 2023, has provided more resource across all areas of the EDI strategic priorities.

There has continued to be some steady progress with the EDI agenda over the last year, but the Target Operating Model (TOM) project and absence/vacancy in the team have impacted, with some objectives being carried over to the next financial year. Despite this, it is evident there is a desire to ensure our practices and conduct are as inclusive as possible and a commitment to ensuring that colleagues have a positive experience of working in Dimensions.

This review of the last year highlights areas where we have made progress and identifies issues that need greater focus. There continues to be positive partnership work with departments across the organisation which has enabled us to ensure Dimensions is an inclusive employer where diversity is valued and respected.

Lisa Govier
Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Section 1 – Valuing the diversity of colleagues

Great Place to Work EDI survey results

Once again this year it is really pleasing to see that colleagues feel they are treated fairly in relation to their diversity. The scores remain among the highest overall in the survey results.



Statement	Organisation wide 2023	Organisation wide 2022
People here are treated fairly regardless of their sexual orientation	93	93
People here are treated fairly regardless of their religion, belief, non- belief	92	92
People here are treated fairly regardless of their gender	91	91
People here are treated fairly regardless of their disability	91	91
People here are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnic origin	90	90
People here are treated fairly regardless of their age	85	83

When reviewing the results by demographics there were mixed responses for all groups. Some caution needs to be given to these as the numbers of respondents are relatively low.

In the disability group, respondents who had musculoskeletal disabilities were the lowest scoring. There may be some work to do regarding publicising the reasonable adjustments process and passport that may help colleagues.

As with previous years, colleagues aged 25 years and younger were the lowest scoring in age.

Ethnic origin, Scottish (9 respondents) and 'any other mixed background' (8) were the lowest scoring. As the numbers are so low it is unlikely any actions can be taken.

Respondents who identified as a gender other than male/female were the lowest scoring for all EDI statements. We are aware the language around gender is changing and we need to consider how we address this in our practice and communications. We previously reached out to engage with this community but no response. We intend to work with the Diversity Champions for gender identity to consider what we can do to improve the experience for colleagues.

Buddhism (14) was the lowest scoring religion and identifying as another sexual orientation not listed also scored low (17 respondents). Again, this is an area that is changing, and we need to ensure we are inclusive in our language and culture.



Ethnicity pay gap report

For the second consecutive year Dimensions published its ethnicity pay gap.

This report provides a snapshot of the situation on 5 April 2023. At this time 70 % of our workforce (4257 out of 6069 colleagues) had shared their ethnicity.

The ethnicity pay gap shows the difference in hourly earnings between white colleagues and BAME colleagues, shown as a percentage of white colleagues' earnings.

We use this same method to calculate the gender pay gap report.

We are extremely pleased to report that in 2023 there was no median hourly pay gap. This compares with 2022 when there was a 6.8 % gap.



Ethnicity pay gap	2023	2022
Mean (average) hourly pay gap	9.1 %	11.8 %
Median (middle) hourly pay gap	0.0 %	6.8 %

There is a mean hourly pay gap, however this has reduced by 2.7 percentage points since 2022. The mean hourly pay gap shows that the mean hourly rate for white colleagues is 9.1 % higher than for BAME colleagues.

We are also pleased to state that the proportion of BAME colleagues paid at the Upper, Upper Middle and Lower Middle quartiles has increased from last year leading to a more even distribution of ethnicity by pay quartiles.

Gender pay gap report

The Gender Pay gap report for 2023 which provides a snapshot of the situation on 5 April 2023 can be viewed on our website. This is for Dimensions only as Discovery report their Gender Pay Gap separately.

This analysis measures the difference between average female earnings compared to average male earnings regardless of roles as below.

	2023	2022
Mean (average) hourly pay gap	1.5 %	2.6 %
Median hourly pay gap	0.0 %	3.5 %
Mean (average) bonus pay gap	7.1 %	4.1 %
Median bonus pay gap	9.2 %	8.5 %

Proportion of men who received bonus pay*	77 %
Proportion of women who received bonus pay*	68 %

We are extremely pleased to report that in 2023 there was no median hourly pay gap. This compares with 2022 where there was a 3.5 % gender pay gap. This shows that the median hourly rate for both men and women colleagues is the same. The median, rather than mean, pay gap is the more commonly used metric when referring to pay gap information.

There is still a small mean hourly pay gap, however this has reduced by over one percentage point since 2022. The mean hourly pay gap shows that the mean hourly rate for men is 1.5 % higher than for women.

The bonus pay gap is mainly due to a surplus payment that accounted for 86 % of bonus payments made. We have a higher number of women than men on part-time hours, which is testimony to our flexible working policy, and this surplus payment was pro-rated for part-time colleagues and therefore skewed the results for this year.

Section 2 – Diversity information

Diversity information of colleagues

Since the management instruction for all colleagues to complete their diversity data in January 2023, we have slightly exceeded the target of an 85 % completion rate to 86.5 %. This has been added to the business as usual (BAU) dashboard and is discussed at regional performance reviews. Business in the Community (BITC) suggest that 90 % is a reasonable target to achieve but as our data also includes relief workers, it is reasonable to expect that we may not achieve that level of completion.

There is still however a low completion rate for new starters which is disappointing as this is now an action to be completed within the Induction Checklist. Since the new induction implementation, only 47 % of colleagues have done this. The information to new starters has been amended to make it clear that it is a requirement to do this, but this will be reviewed to see what else we can do to increase it.

Another area that we have looked at has been the percentage of 'prefer not to say' responses with sexual orientation being the highest at 14.9 % and gender the lowest at 8.6 %. The Chair of Human Resource Committee (HRC) wrote a blog to colleagues about the value and importance of disclosing this information, and there have been numerous communications about where and how the diversity data is used. We have yet to find any benchmarking to compare our stats with for non-completions, but we have just joined 'The Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion,' so hoping we will be able to seek some expert advice to enable us to improve this.

The information enables us to compare how well we are reflecting the diversity of the people we support and the communities we work within, identify where we need to focus resources and helps us to ensure we are an inclusive employer.



Section 3 – Ethnic diversity of managers

KPI to increase ethnic diversity of first level managers to 12 % (ALM, first level business support managers and above to LM)

This KPI remained the same from 2022/23 to 2023/24 as there had been little change. I am pleased to report that we have slightly exceeded the target to 12.2 %. There has been fluctuation throughout the year but with the increase of completions of data this is positive to see.

We continue to use positive action in recruitment using the same principles as the Disability Confident process which requires anyone who voluntarily identifies as being from a Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic background within the application process, and meets the essential criteria is invited to an interview.

Since funding spaces in 2015, **41%** of colleagues who have been on the Skills for Care Moving Up programme have achieved promotion...

This year, five colleagues completed the Skills for Care Moving Up programme which is specifically for colleagues aspiring to become leaders in social care who are from a Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic background.

The 2023 Skills for Care report 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce' states that the figure of colleagues from Black, Asian and minority Ethnic backgrounds (BAME) in all posts remains at 17 %. It was noted that there are local variations, and this is very much reflected in Dimensions. With Discovery operating in a predominantly white area, and only 2.5 % of managers identifying as from a non-white background this will impact.

Since funding spaces in 2015, 41 % of colleagues who have been on the programme have achieved promotion which is really positive to see. Due to the impact of the programme the Head of L&D has agreed further funding for places for 2024/25.

With 25 % of colleagues who have completed their diversity information who are at support worker/first level being from a BAME background, we will continue to improve our efforts to address this imbalance within our organisational hierarchy.

For the 2024/25 strategy we have set the target of 14 % with actions to ensure we can continue to have equitable representation of ethnic diversity at first level management.



Increase ethnic diversity of senior managers to 10 %

This KPI relates to all management positions above locality manager level and first level managers in Business Support. In April 2023 9.1 % of senior managers (Operations Director, Regional Managing Director, Group Executive Directors and Non-Executive Directors) identified as being from BAME backgrounds. Since then, however, the changes in Board demographics have impacted and this is now at 6.7 %. There however remains diversity in other demographics within the Board makeup. At Operations Director level only one colleague of 22 has identified as being from a BAME background. Low turnover (two vacancies last year) at Operations Director level and Regional Managing Director level has undoubtedly impacted, however, we will be reviewing the applications to understand if there are any barriers there. Referring to the SFC report again, states 17 % of senior roles are filled by people from BAME backgrounds so we have some way to go to achieve this.

The critical friend role that ensures we have a diverse panel for senior recruitment, was implemented a couple of years ago. This enables us to ensure we have diversity of thought and lived experience within the decision-making process. We intend to review this to see what else we can do to ensure the process is fair and inclusive.

We continue to have a good working relationship with Values Based Recruitment who support Non-Executive Directors and General Executive Team recruitment who has been proactive in ensuring we have had a diverse mix of high-quality candidates and understands our intent.

Section 4 – Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive Leadership and increasing diversity at Board Level

The National Housing Federation Code of Governance requires a level of accountability around Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, setting out that the Board ‘must demonstrate a clear and active commitment to achieve equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion in all of the organisation’s activities, as well as its own composition. It must have policies and statements which meaningfully demonstrate this commitment and set priorities and objectives for the organisation to achieve.’ In addition, the Board must seek ‘regular assurance about how these commitments and objectives are being delivered in practice, and track progress against the priorities it has set.’

Executives and Board members from across the Group attended an externally facilitated workshop in June 2023 which covered the current EDI demographics activities, policy and priorities in the Group, the impact these activities have for the organisation and the people involved, key issues that might help or hinder inclusivity within the organisation, how Executives and Board members can make an impact and what we can do differently both collectively and individually (resulting in ‘I will’ statements from participants).

As a result of the workshop the following has taken place:

- Conversations have continued to ensure the Board & Committee meetings are inclusive and welcoming of diverse views, including this featuring as an area for Members to assess in the Annual Effectiveness Reviews and appraisals completed in 2024.
- The Remuneration & Nomination Committee discussions on succession planning continues to consider Board composition from an EDI perspective.
- We have signed up to the Chairs Challenge organised by the National Housing Federation with a commitment to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in the Board’s work.

Some of the continuing actions are:

- HRC agenda/papers will always feature something from an EDI perspective that will feed up to the Board through the Chair's report. The intention is for this to follow through to other Committees.
- The EDI Annual Report and Strategic Objectives will be presented to Board annually.
- A Board Member will attend the Diversity Matters Group at least annually to reflect on the Board's conversations around EDI and/or ask questions that have arisen from the Board's conversations.
- The Leading Diverse Teams eLearning will be included in the material available for Board members, specifically the 'we all belong here', 'inclusion mindset' and 'cultural awareness' modules.
- Continuing to encourage Board members to bring their whole selves, including sharing their experience via internal communications.



Section 5 – Supporting colleagues from a BAME background

Reverse mentoring

The fourth cohort of reverse mentoring (where senior managers are reverse mentored by junior colleagues from BAME backgrounds) started at the end of 2023, with most mentees having their first mentoring session in January 2024. We have been fortunate to have the support of one of our Executive Team members who has experience as a mentor, reverse mentor and lived experience as a Black woman so we are very fortunate to have her expertise during this time.

This year we extended the offer to Operations Directors (as an action to address the underrepresentation in senior roles) along with Board Members, RMD's and Executive Directors.

This year four ODs, one Board member, one Group Director and one Head of Department participated in the programme.

The engagement and appetite to make a difference as a result of the programme has been impactful. A couple of examples are discussions and actions to address discrimination from people we support and reviewing how we ensure we are engaging with diverse communities and understand their needs.



Listening circle for colleagues from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

Following the externally facilitated listening circle in January 2023, which was conducted by Business in the Community to enable Dimensions to gain a clear understanding of the lived experiences of colleagues when at work, a report with findings and recommendations was produced and shared within the executive team.

The CEO and Head of EDI met with the group to acknowledge the findings and recommendations and agree next steps. This included a communication from the CEO to all colleagues acknowledging that some colleagues had shared they had experienced discriminatory behaviour at work, and this would not be tolerated.

An action plan was developed which was reported to HRC quarterly, and also with the participants of the session as well as the Diversity Matters Group.

The report was also shared with the reverse mentors to give them an insight into the experience of some of our colleagues.

Actions taken included a review of the Bullying and Harassment Policy, a review of the Grievance Policy, a full review of the recruitment process and providing cultural awareness training.

There is one outstanding action of 'Let's talk about Race training which UNISON have developed but due to their capacity this has not yet been completed.



Section 6 – Supporting colleagues with disabilities

Embed the reasonable adjustment process

For the last two years there has been a centralised reasonable adjustment budget which is managed by the Head of EDI. The intention is to ensure that colleagues who need resources would not be refused them due to reduced budgets. This is also intended to cover the cost of any resources that may benefit a particular group.

To ensure that colleagues who have a disability, health condition or learning difficulty get the support they need to be able to do their job, and be the best they can, we implemented a standardised reasonable adjustment process.

The intention is that at the point of a colleague joining Dimensions they receive the appropriate support, information, and reasonable adjustments relating to a disability, learning difficulty or long-term health condition.

Any colleague that has a disclosure on the health questionnaire when starting work, if appropriate, will be encouraged to apply for Access to Work funding. However, there is currently a five month wait time for an advisor to complete an assessment.

The HR team and EDI team have worked collaboratively to develop a process and passport to ensure that managers are considering with the colleague what support they made need. This also applies to existing colleagues who acquire a disability or for any reason share during their employment that they have a need for support due to a disability.

It is also worth noting that an employer has a duty to make reasonable adjustments even if the colleague has not disclosed they have a disability.



Improve the experience for colleagues with dyslexia

Since the report last year there has been little improvement in this area partly due to capacity in the EDI team.

Of the 8 % of colleagues who have completed their diversity information who shared they have a disability, 25 % of them are dyslexic. With 10 % of the UK population thought to be dyslexic, this is a key area of focus as the actual number of colleagues who are dyslexic is highly likely to be higher.

The majority of the support that is requested from the EDI team is related to dyslexia and ADHD. A pulse survey was conducted for colleagues who are dyslexic to complete in April 2023 and again in March 2024. As below, there has been some improvement in colleagues feeling that Dimensions is a good place to work for someone who is dyslexic.

	2023	2024
Sometimes	53 %	43 %
Never	8 %	5 %
Always	39 %	52 %

Another positive result was the question relating to if a colleague felt they had been performance managed in relation to their dyslexia.

	2023	2024
Yes	19 %	12 %
No	81 %	88 %

The feedback relating to awareness of resources available however was poor including awareness of the focus group, dyslexia awareness pathway and Read & Write resource.

A guide for adjustments in training has been developed and the information provided when colleagues register for training has been revised to make it more prominent that colleagues can request adjustments. The EDI team and Learning & Development team are working together to address some of the challenges that colleagues face when attending training or completing eLearning. There has been positive collaboration, and colleagues have been consulted on accessibility of training whilst it is being developed.

The Head of EDI has worked with OPUS (the owner of the Medication Policy) to revise the procedure for assessing medication competency to ensure adjustments are made to protect both the people we support and colleagues and this is reflected in the revised policy and assessment procedure. It is not possible to review if there has been a reduction in

medication errors as a result of this, but the performance management question is a possible indicator.

The reasonable adjustment budget has been used to purchase items such as scan pens that are particularly helpful with checking medication spellings. Dyslexie-font, a font that can help people with dyslexia, is available on all laptops and tablets and can be found in the drop-down list of fonts. We aim to further embed the use and value of Read & Write for all colleagues across the Group.

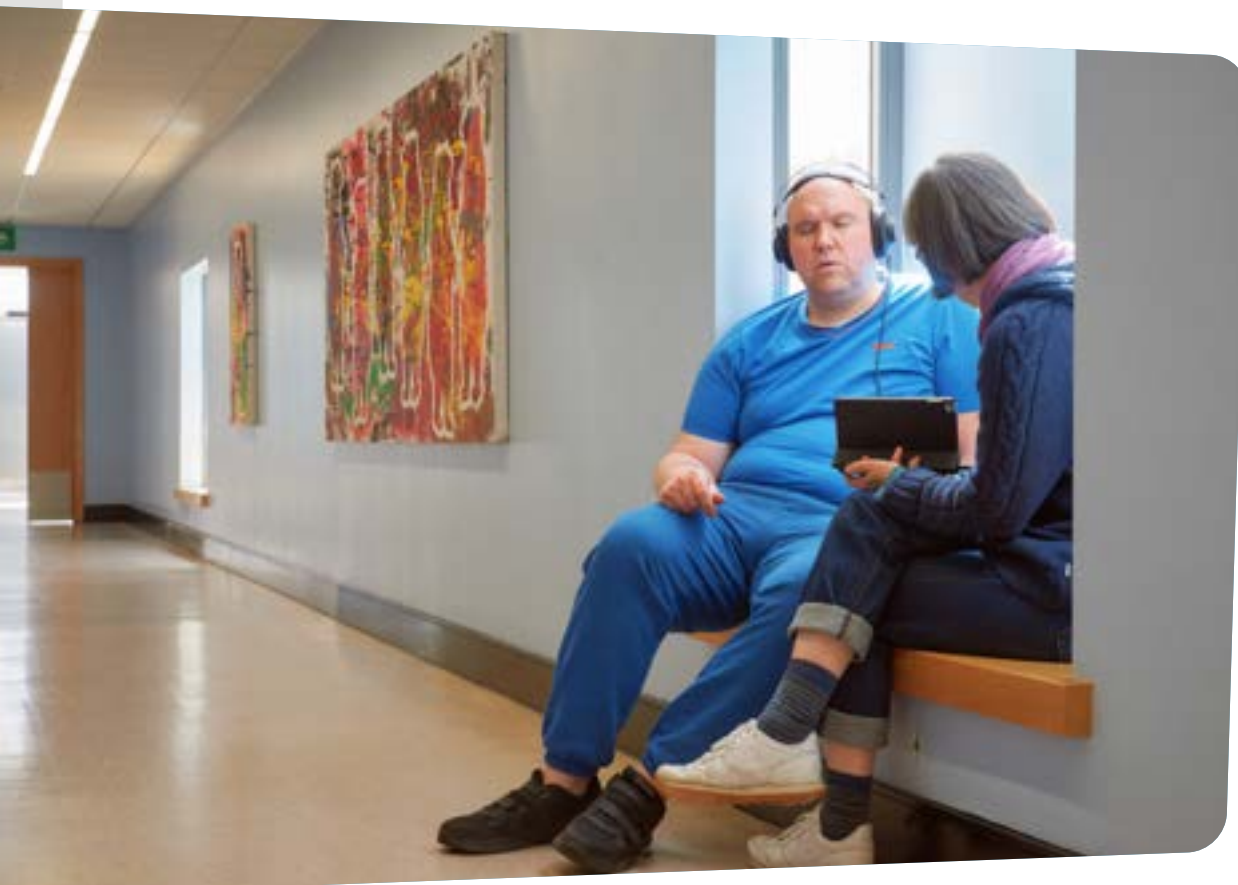


Launch of the Leading Diverse Teams pathway

Following feedback from the HR Business Partners requesting advice and support for managers who were having challenges in their teams relating to diversity, the EDI team and L&D team worked collaboratively on developing the 'Leading Diverse Teams pathway.' There was a lot of involvement from the Diversity Matters Group Champions who contributed sharing their lived experience and expertise. The pathway was launched in September 2023.

Although Managers are not accessing it regularly, it has been a valuable resource for when the situations involving HR or the

EDI team need to signpost to an accessible resource with a wealth of information. It is designed to be interactive, and colleagues consider how they feel and respond to situations. This includes awareness of the importance of belonging, real life scenarios, cultural differences in language, as well as covering the Equality Act and legal responsibilities.



Section 7 – Demographics of the people we support

We have a clear understanding of the demographics of the people we support and whether we are representative of the communities we operate within.

As part of the transfer of information of people we support from DTMS to Iplanit records, managers were required to ensure that the demographic information of the people we support was completed. Due to capacity issues, there has been delays with this happening. As of the end of March 2023, there were approximately 800 people we support whose data was incomplete. The Managing Director has given assurance that this will be completed in the near future. Once we have this data, we will then use this to review

if we have appropriate resources and information to support the needs of the people we support. We also intend to use this within the quality reviews to evaluate how well people are being supported in relation to their diversity. This will ensure we have the appropriate knowledge and understanding to provide culturally sensitive support, as well as comparing with external data and to evaluate more effectively if we are reaching the diverse communities we work within.



Section 8 – Review of HR case work

Review of HR case work

In 2023/24 we began to analyse the demographic profile of colleagues involved in our HR casework (such as disciplinary, grievance, sickness absence management cases, probationary reviews and performance capability cases).

This is one of the ways in which we can review the extent to which colleagues with different protected characteristics are proportionally and fairly represented in all aspects of organisational life.

We are pleased to now have the capacity to be able to undertake this work, as we know that there is disproportionality in our sector. For example, the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard report 2023 from Skills for Care reports that colleagues from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be involved in formal disciplinary proceedings or to experience harassment and bullying than white colleagues.

The analysis is important because if the data shows us that if there is a potential concern in Dimensions, we can take steps to make sure we fully understand the issue and take targeted action to address it.

We analysed all types of HR casework at the end of each quarter throughout the year, focusing on the characteristics of race/ethnicity, religion/belief, transgender status, sexual orientation and disability status.

Around 75 % of cases were able to be analysed (this equates to around 800 cases). For the rest, colleagues either had not provided their demographic data or had not given permission for it to be used for analysis.

The proportion of colleagues from each of the above protected characteristics who were involved in HR casework were compared to the proportion of colleagues of that protected characteristic in our workforce demographic profile. Improving the completion rate of demographic data therefore gives us more confidence in the analysis.

As we move into 2024/25, we are undertaking further analysis to make sure we fully understand the level of statistical significance and to help us determine what the most appropriate actions will be. We also intend to continue to build our analysis over time, to build up the most accurate picture and to assess the impact of actions taken.

Section 9 – Next steps

As noted in the introduction, there has been some progress in some areas but there is still more to do. There can be a tendency to want to address all the issues in the area of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion but with limited resources it is appropriate to tackle the most pressing ones identified in the Annual Review which will maximise positive impact for colleagues and the people we support.



Dimensions challenges racism from colleagues, people we support and families and is explicit in its words and actions

We have a comprehensive toolkit in place to address discrimination from people we support, and we need to further embed this. Signing up to the UNISON anti-racism charter commits Dimensions to act to address this. Colleagues have spoken about discriminatory behaviour from family members which we intend to address. Gaining a clearer understanding of the frequency of these occurrences is a priority.

Increase the ethnic diversity of managers at senior levels to 10% (to include specialist roles where there is no line management responsibility – C/F (6.9%))

A full review of the recruitment process at senior management level will be undertaken. In addition, we will continue to embed the reverse mentoring programme and consider how we can increase the impact from this.

Increasing the ethnic diversity of first level managers – ALM and above to 14% Increase by 2%.

Will review the findings within the Locality Manager recruitment review. Funding for the Skills for Care programme has been agreed and further embedding the Leading Diverse Teams pathway will help.

We will have accurate demographic information of the people we support. We understand the diverse needs of the people we support, whether we are discriminating against any groups and reflective of the communities we work within

There is commitment to achieve this with the Senior Operations team and discussions have begun on how we can ensure this is kept up to date and reportable. The Head of Business Development is currently being reverse mentored and is committed to reviewing our tender processes to ensure there are no biases and that we have the knowledge base to understand diverse needs.

Implement changes from dyslexia survey

The findings from the survey results will inform next steps. The casework tracker will provide some insight as to whether the resources have impacted. The IT and the EDI teams will work to ensure the Read and Write resource is utilised. Further work with the Learning and Development team to ensure colleagues and managers are aware of reasonable adjustments available when completing training.

Embed the reasonable adjustments process

Ensuring there is a consistent approach by managers and HR is key to ensuring colleagues with a disability receive appropriate support in a reasonable timeframe.

Resources and support are in place to retain and support neurodivergent colleagues

This will be a key area of focus for 2024/25. With an increasing request for adjustments and support for colleagues who are autistic or have ADHD we need to share knowledge and consider what Dimensions needs to do as an employer to ensure colleagues can fulfil their roles and be valued and respected for who they are.

Consider if the number of colleagues who ‘prefer not to say’ when completing their diversity data is proportionate

We will seek to gain some ‘expert’ advice as to whether this is a cause for concern, or comparable with other organisations.

Retain the Disability Confident Leader award

The renewal process for the Disability Confident Leader award is due for renewal this year.

Undertake ‘The Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion’ (enei) benchmarking assessment

As part of the new enei membership we have the opportunity to complete an externally verified assessment of our EDI practices. TIDE is enei’s self-assessment, evaluation, and benchmarking tool, which measures an organisation’s strides and strategies in fostering diversity and inclusion within the following areas:

- Workforce
- Strategy and plan
- Leadership and accountability
- Recruitment and attraction
- Training and development
- Other employment practices
- Communication and engagement
- Procurement

We will receive a personalised report to discuss with our account manager and consider any recommendations. We will then if successful, be awarded either the Bronze, Silver or Gold Tidemark that is valid for one year.

Better Lives for More People

For over 40 years, we have been supporting people with learning disabilities and autistic people to have a louder voice, choice, and control in their lives.

We design personalised support for each individual, working towards specific outcomes in the cornerstones of a good life: health, relationships, work, hobbies, and having fun.



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November 2024