



Dimensions 2020

A strategic vision for the Dimensions Group

Introduction from the CEO



Dimensions is one of the largest not-for-profit providers of care and support services for people with learning disabilities and autism in the UK. Our scale and capacity offers us opportunities to do things we value that other organisations cannot consider. We recognise and welcome our corporate responsibility to provide leadership beyond our organisational boundaries.

Our core belief is that people with learning disabilities and people who experience autism have the same rights and responsibilities as every other citizen in the UK. Our ambition and focus on personalisation will continue as that is how we will ensure each person we support has as much choice and control as possible over their lives and the support they receive from us.

We know that people receive great service when decisions are taken by people who are close to them and who have the greatest influence over the support we provide. So we shall continue to devolve decision-making as close to the people we support and the people who work with us as we can. We know that great service also requires every employee to accept personal accountability for their contribution and performance. We recognise that we need to evolve and become a genuine learning organisation where people are empowered to make a difference in people's lives, where they take personal responsibility for their development and take pride in their achievements. We relish the challenge of asking everyone in Dimensions to discover and feel comfortable with new ways of working.

Our world is changing and so critically must Dimensions, and we are well-placed to do so. Our focus will be on building our provision of services for people with complex needs, developing and adopting best practice, building our research and development capacity, evidencing outcomes, learning from other organisations and sharing our own learning as widely as possible. This will be our primary route to increasing our profile and influence as an organisation, enabling us to develop a 'Louder Voice', to raise the issues which matter to people we support and their families and to add value to the sector beyond our boundaries.

Through the implementation of Dimensions 2020 we are confident of our commitment, capability and capacity to succeed and thrive in the difficult period ahead. In simple terms we want every person Dimensions supports to have a great life and achieve fantastic outcomes. To make this a reality we will encourage everyone to be the best they can be and strive to be exemplary in everything we do.

Steve Scown
Group Chief Executive Officer



Strategic process

Our last strategic review took place in 2012 and resulted in our *Dimensions Strategic Plan 2012-17*. However, our operating environment has altered significantly since that review and consequently, in 2014, we felt the time was right to undertake a thorough review of conditions and demands in the sector, as well as a full analysis of our own organisation and the services we provide. Initial conclusions were presented in our *Dimensions Strategic Data Analysis 2015-2020* document together with a number of questions raised by our findings, all of which was presented to our Board for their strategic planning process.

The subsequent strategic planning held six questions at its heart.

-  **What are we here for?** - our reason to exist: Vision and Mission
-  **What do we focus upon?** - which products and services and why?
-  **Where should we work?** - our geography
-  **What about the money?** - how much of a driver should this be?
-  **What about our structure?** - is this fit to deliver the strategy?
-  **What about our staff?** - what type of employer do we want to be?

The Board working with the Executive Team led an analysis and planning process that consulted with and involved internal stakeholders, particularly regional managing directors and heads of department. The opinions of a great many of the people who work with us were sought through a strategic planning session at the 2014 Managers' Conference. A key aspect of this strategic process considered the continued relevance of our Vision, Mission and Values to all of our stakeholders. Our analysis took account of our collaboration with external agencies including The Tizard Centre, University of Kent and Orenda and our learning from reviews on areas including safeguarding and housing.

During two days together, the Board, supported by the Executive Team, then analysed each of the services in our portfolio against a number of criteria – including our ability to deliver successfully, emerging market conditions, geography and fit with our Vision and Mission. The same was done for a number of services that were seen as potential opportunities for Dimensions which included entry into new types of markets, new locations, as well as new prospective developments in our services.

Following a further series of workshops, the Dimensions 2020 plan emerged which talks to who we are, how we operate today, where we want to be and, finally, how we are going to get there.

Our purpose

Affirmation of our Core Mission

This strategic review has reaffirmed the rationale for the continuing presence of Dimensions and our commitment to our core Vision, Mission and Values. The importance of our organisation to the people we support, the sector and the wider community is even more pronounced than at the time of our last Strategic Review in 2012.

Consequently our Vision remains unchanged while our Mission is revised to emphasise the importance of how Dimensions delivers our Vision of an inclusive society and our deep desire to do so. Our Values are strong statements of intent, well understood and held dear by people who work with us, and accordingly also remain unchanged. Our intent is to integrate our Values even further into everything we do and every decision we take.

Vision

An inclusive society where people have equal chances to live the life they choose..

Mission

To provide high quality personalised support for people with learning disabilities and autism, helping them to be actively engaged with, and contribute to, their communities.

Values

Ambition – we seek to help people reach their potential.

Respect – we show people respect and recognise that their unique contribution adds value to all.

Courage – we are guided by the courage of our convictions to make a difference.

Integrity – we ensure that what we do is grounded in what we believe.

Partnership – we work with others to achieve more for people.

Our 2020 goals and objectives

2020 market positioning

Our Strategic Review has led us to a position where we will undertake a fundamental repositioning of the organisation, away from the ordinary and towards the exemplary; to delivering a suite of differentiated services which will be supported by exceptional back-office and managerial teams all focused on delivering outstanding care and support which result in real-world outcomes for people.

This ambition is expressed in our statement of Strategic Intent which will sit alongside our Vision and Mission statements and defines the core of what Dimensions 2020 is setting out to achieve.

2020 strategic intent

The research-based exemplar provider delivering outcomes-focused care and support.



Exemplar

Being exemplar means ‘setting the standard for others to follow’, setting a good example for others, be they people, departments, organisations or the wider sector. This goes beyond our care and support and our ambition is for every part of Dimensions to be exemplary.



Research-based

We want to make decisions on the basis of demonstrable evidence for the likelihood of the expected outcomes. This is across the whole organisation, whether it be a decision about a method of support, or a new business opportunity.



Outcomes-focused

People we support, or could support, have to be at the very heart of everything we do and every decision we take. We will focus on truly delivering outcomes for them and improving lives. Similarly, other decisions, including those about people who work with us, will be made on the basis of the expected outcomes delivering Dimensions 2020.

2020 strategic pillars

Our Strategic Intent is the core of Dimensions 2020, and our five Strategic Pillars are the structure supporting it. They are the method by which the Strategic Intent will be framed, delivered and, ultimately, measured for success.

Personalisation

- ➔ Supporting choice and control.
- ➔ Meeting needs and encouraging ambition.
- ➔ Protecting and improving the quality and safety of our services.
- ➔ Developing research-based support focused on outcomes.

Engagement

- ➔ Building partnerships and working collaboratively.
- ➔ Developing a louder voice and promoting best practice.
- ➔ Increasing the influence of the people we support and their families.
- ➔ Adding value to the sector.

People

- ➔ Valuing and supporting the people who work with us.
- ➔ Striving to be inclusive and to respect difference.
- ➔ Building a workforce which is capable, highly motivated, engaged and the best they can be.
- ➔ Developing a flexible, responsive and accountable structure.

Development

- ➔ Growing research-based outcomes-focused support.
- ➔ Increasing services for people with complex needs.
- ➔ Helping people to have a good home
- ➔ Developing the expertise of our central services.
- ➔ Evaluating new support models and new markets.

Organisation

- ➔ Being an effective learning organisation.
- ➔ Making the best possible use of resources.
- ➔ Devolving decision making to be as close as possible to the people we support.

2020 business strategy

Personalisation

We have had a long-standing personalisation commitment with a focus on helping people have greater levels of choice and control over the support we provide, raising levels of aspiration and encouraging personal ambition.

Research-based, outcomes-focused support

We have, over the last two years, and in conjunction with the Tizard Centre at the University of Kent, been carrying out one of the most significant pieces of research into outcomes-focused support ever conducted in our sector. This has led to the development of our Dimensions Activate model which we will roll out across all our services throughout 2016 and beyond. Dimensions Activate takes personalised support to a new level, concentrating on real-world outcomes measured by quality of life indicators: and will likely represent a significant differentiator for us for the first half of Dimensions 2020.

Our strategy demands that we begin looking for the next initiative now. We will continue, therefore, to carry out our research and secure our position as the exemplar in our sector enabling as many supported people as possible to benefit from our creativity.

Protect, build and improve our core services

We will continue to provide 'non-complex' services, to build our provision and improve quality of life: introducing our outcomes-focused models across all our services. We will seek to achieve sector-leading regulatory scores and offer a suite of services differentiated by our quality offer coupled with a competitive value-for-money proposition.

We recognise that cross-subsidisation of services is not sustainable and we will eliminate the need for such financial support. We will divest ourselves of some of our services which are offering dated support solutions that we are unable to proactively change or apply our outcomes-focused models to; and those services that we conclude other organisations could provide better or more efficiently than we are able. In other words, we will seek to divest ourselves of services where we are unable to provide the exemplar service model. We will develop clear directions for our operational and commercial teams as to what type of services we will provide and under what circumstance. This will include guidance on how long we are prepared to support new services that sit outside of this guidance whilst they are repositioned.

Engagement

Having a Louder Voice

People we support, their families and friends, people who work with us and the sector, deserve a louder voice and we will work with them to establish the means for them to deliver it. As a key early deliverable of Dimensions 2020 we will develop our A Louder Voice plan and create Public Relations and External Communications teams that have promoting the voice of people we support and other stakeholders at their heart.

We will seek to promote Dimensions and the people we support, as central to national discourse on Learning Disabilities and Autism, and in so doing, to raise our profile and be seen as a sector leader. Whilst engaging, and being prepared to challenge, we will always take a positive position and avoid political stances. We will look to be outcomes-focused and, whilst not always agreeing with policy choices, we will seek to engage with and influence decisions rather than to chastise. Wherever we are able to, we will offer the sector and our commissioners solutions to their issues and always seek to support them through their own challenges with a collaborative approach.

Working in partnership

We recognise that partnerships at all levels, from the communities of people we support to inter-organisational and governmental, are going to be critical to the delivery of Dimensions 2020. As the sector exemplar we will be central to existing and new networks and to bringing like-minded organisations together to lead on new ideas and initiatives. We will enable and empower all the people who work with us to form these relationships and to take a role in defining future best practice across all our disciplines.

Similarly, we will seek to influence guidance to our partners across the sector through contributions to formal bodies, both local and national. We will build on our current involvements with VODG and NICE amongst many others.

Where formal partnerships support Dimensions 2020 we will seek these out and be prepared to work openly and transparently with others to deliver initiatives that we could not deliver alone, either through a short or long-term association. Further, we will commit to supporting our partnerships, and our partners, to achieve our collective goals and to the furtherance of the relationship, whilst ensuring that our Group, and our Vision, Mission and Strategic Intent are kept whole.

People

Valuing and supporting people who work with us

We cannot deliver exemplar services without supporting the people who work with us. We are committed to being an inclusive organisation, respecting and valuing the difference in each person who works for us. We will advance our learning and development offer to provide each and every person with the opportunity to develop themselves and/or progress their careers. In short we will support each person to deliver their best. We believe that a job in social care can be a career, and more, one that is valued by wider society. Therefore, we will seek to offer genuine career choices and opportunities, often for those who have not been privileged enough to have had similar opportunities in their past. We will put in place training and development solutions that offer much more than statutory compliance providing obtainable goals in clear packages producing the sector leaders of the future.

Within the environmental and financial constraints we experience, our employment offer will be developed to differentiate us from other providers and sectors and we will operate an attractive and competitive package of pay and benefits, offering flexibility for people that work with us, that makes Dimensions an employer of choice and somewhere that people are proud to work.

Developing cultural accountability

The final tenet of Dimensions 2020 is the necessity to develop a culture of accountability throughout all our teams and at all levels. This is driven both by our desire for decisions to be taken closer to the people we support and similar ambitions from our regulators. We will create an environment where people we work with take responsibility for their actions, and the decisions they make: where personal, team and organisational accountability is paramount. We will empower staff to support one another in real-time, to be able to challenge appropriately and own their solutions.

We will not limit this to any one part of the organisation. Each and every person who works with us shall have the right appropriately to challenge and critique at all levels and to have their voice and opinion heard. We will actively encourage this behaviour and provide both the opportunities and support to ensure this happens. We will also involve people who work with us in the development of the organisation, our services and support.

All of the people who work with us will be employed on the basis of them sharing our values, and measured against how they embody and display them. We exist for the benefit of the people we support, but we will seek to impact positively on the lives of all the people we meet along the way.

Development

Balancing our service portfolio

We will seek to provide more services to people with 'complex needs' and/or behaviour that challenges. In so doing, we will build expertise, construct appropriate operating solutions and invest in the skills and training required to deliver exemplar support. We have already successfully begun this journey with the introduction of our Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention (EIBI) model through Real Focus. These solutions will respond to our markets; we will invest only where the social and financial returns can be maximised. Further, we will not seek to balance our service portfolio through reduction of our 'non-complex' services, but via positive and sustainable growth in our 'complex' provision.

Potential new markets and services will be considered, but always in line with our Vision, Mission and Strategic Intent. We will develop our research expertise and marketing skills to conduct thorough analysis of opportunities and construct business cases clearly outlining risks and opportunities with appropriate checkpoints throughout all processes.

Our turnover attrition rate and increasingly competitive environment require us to work hard simply to stay still. We will protect ourselves against this and retain our scale economies, by looking to grow in a sustainable and appropriate manner. We will continue to tender competitively, prioritising 'complex needs' services. We will also seek merger and acquisition (M&A) opportunities, where we can apply our outcomes-focused models of support and realise broader organisational benefit. Through the M&A route we will seek to accelerate our ambition to ensure more people receive exemplar support. We will prepare an M&A Strategy which clearly identifies the reasons we would pursue an opportunity and expresses the conditions under which we would proceed with a merger.

Building an exemplar central provision

Our exemplar services will be supported by an Exemplar Central provision. Departments will be led with their own plans and initiatives developed for how they will become the very best in our sector and beyond. Central teams will be outward looking, understanding, researching and developing sector best practice and sharing their knowledge both within and outside of the Group. We will support people who work with us to achieve these aims, through development opportunities, training and other methods of support. This will generate additional areas of differentiation and value, to support our offer and our new market position.

Finally, our approach to both Estate Management and Development will undergo a thorough review and we will develop a new strategy for our housing solutions which will address how we ensure we can offer a good home to people we support.

Organisation

Devolving decision-making closer to people we support

We will give people who work with us more control over the choices they make, devolving decision-making as close to the people we support as possible. They will be empowered to do what is required to keep our customers satisfied and to develop and grow their own skills and expertise.

Similarly, our new Dimensions Activate Model empowers people we support, their family and friends, their support team, our specialists and even people's communities; indeed, all the people who know and care about them most, to assist in the process of setting standards.

Devolution of choices and decisions will be applied throughout the Group structure. Regional, business and departmental management teams will be empowered to carry-out their own business planning within the bounds of the Group's strategy: to understand and respond to the nuances of their own operating environment, its demands and opportunities.

Becoming an effective learning organisation

We will, through our research-based service provision and the research and development that we will carry out across all our disciplines, be constantly learning about and understanding our environment. Each Directorate will be delivering a research and development programme, looking for and understanding best practice in their discipline as well as trends and innovations, and bringing these into Dimensions.

We will invest in a Business Intelligence team to gather and interpret organisational data and a Marketing team to do the same externally. We will develop live data systems, wherever possible, to allow people who work with us to understand in realtime how well the organisation is running and to enable us to make quick appraisals and decisions. Similarly, this information will be used to inform decision-making so that all future business decisions are research-based.

Where in the past we have encouraged learning through single-loop processes, we will put in place double-loop learning processes so the underlying causes of actions taken can be understood and altered as appropriate. Processes for dissemination of learning both horizontally and vertically throughout the organisation will be developed to ensure each area of the business has the opportunity to learn from actions taken elsewhere, however remote.

How will we recognise success?

We will monitor our performance and progress with Dimensions 2020 through our existing performance management systems with any suitable adjustments carried out. Our Business, Delivery and Risk Plans will be developed and will set out detailed objectives and spending plans with progress reported on a regular basis. Successful implementation of this Strategic Plan will be measured primarily by creating key performance measures for, and monitoring progress against, the priorities that it identifies and it will be considered to be successful if...

Personalisation

- ➔ We have created and are delivering a research-based, outcomes-focused model of support which is being used to support a growing number of people.
- ➔ We have improved the quality of all of our services and are continuing to provide a core of 'non complex' services comprising a differentiated, value for money offer.

Engagement

- ➔ We have a 'Louder Voice' and greater sector presence and are looked to for our knowledge, expertise and opinion on a variety of subjects and disciplines.
- ➔ We have created a series of successful formal and informal partnerships that have allowed us to impact positively in ways we would not have been able to do on our own.

People

- ➔ We have a flexible, attractive employment and development offer that can compete with providers in our sector and other organisations.
- ➔ We have developed a culture of accountability, where people are empowered to speak up and challenge and to have their voices heard.

Development

- ➔ We have shifted the balance of our services so that 'complex' provision occupies a greater proportion of our work.
- ➔ We have created an Exemplar Central Team recognised as such in the sector and sought out to share their knowledge and capabilities.

Organisation

- ➔ We have placed decision making closer to the people we support and empowered people who work with us, and our managers, to lead the organisation.
- ➔ We have become a learning organisation and are using our learning to inform our decision making and support the development of the wider sector.



Proving life can get better

Dimensions provides evidence-based outcomes-focused support for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs. We help people to be actively engaged in their communities.



Find out more

www.dimensions-uk.org
0300 303 9001
enquiries@dimensions-uk.org

Find us on social media @DimensionsUK

Dimensions
Building 1430, Arlington Business Park, Theale, Reading RG7 4SA