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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Annual report

April 2024 – March 2025



Introduction

Dimensions remains committed to ensuring equity, respecting diversity and promoting inclusion for all.

At the end of November 2024, the new EDI coordinator joined which has enabled the team to pick up some overdue activity. Prior to this appointment however, there was a further period of reduced hours due to sickness and absence in the EDI team. These changes and the need to support various Business Support teams has meant that, whilst progress has been made this year, there hasn't always been as much as we had hoped for. Consideration has been given to the ongoing realistic capacity of the EDI team and the strategic priorities for 2025-26 are reflective of this.

This review of the last year highlights areas where we have made progress and identifies areas that need focus. There continues to be positive partnership working with departments across the organisation. The recent Great Place to Work survey results continue to be a testament to Dimensions' commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, evidencing that colleagues feel valued and respected.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge the potential knock-on impact of the US's approach to EDI in the workplace for the UK. What has been reassuring is that the government has remained steadfast in its commitment to inclusion and equity for all, including further enhancements around the prevention of sexual harassment at work and the new Employment Rights Bill.

“The recent Great Place to Work survey results continue to be a testament to Dimensions' commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion...”



Section 1 – valuing the diversity of colleagues

Great Place to Work EDI survey results

Again, this year it was 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 2024	Organisation wide 2023
Number of responses	2258	2457
People here are treated fairly regardless of sexual orientation	95	93
People here are treated fairly regardless of their religion, belief, non-belief	93	92
People here are treated fairly regardless of their gender	92	91
People here are treated fairly regardless of their disability	91	91
People here are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnic origin	91	90
People here are treated fairly because of their age	86	85

“...it was really pleasing to see that colleagues feel they are treated fairly in relation to their diversity.”

It may be worth noting there were slightly fewer responses this year, albeit marginally so. When reviewing the results by demographics there were mixed responses for all groups. However, some caution needs to be given to these as the numbers of respondents are relatively low.

Colleagues in the 25 years and younger age range continue to be the lowest scoring in feeling they are treated fairly in relation to their age, at 74% compared to 26-34 at 85%, 35-54 at 89% and 55 years and older at 87%.

In the disability statement, for those who said they had a disability, the response score was 75% compared to 94% for colleagues who don't. Further embedding the reasonable adjustments process and reminding colleagues of the EAP resources, workplace assessments and flexible working may assist with colleagues receiving the support they need. There was also a difference in results between colleagues who are dyslexic 86%, and 'other neurodiversity' 79%. Hopefully the work currently in progress will address this.

The area of gender and language continues to be a challenge with little engagement from colleagues on this subject. For the statement 'people here are treated fairly regardless of their gender' there was a 15% difference between men and 'another gender', and 16% between women and 'another gender'. We will continue to raise this within the Diversity Matters group and via the bulletins and blogs to try to engage with colleagues.

For people treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnic origin, Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi were the lowest scoring at 80% but with only five respondents it's not possible to explore further.

Hinduism with only 11 respondents was the lowest scoring religion.

Those preferring to self-describe their sexual orientation was 1% lower than bi-sexual at 89%. Again, this is an area that is changing, and we need to ensure we are inclusive in our language and culture.

74%

of colleagues aged 25 and under feel they are treated fairly in relation to their age

85%

of colleagues aged 26 – 34 feel they are treated fairly in relation to their age

89%

of colleagues aged 35 –54 feel they are treated fairly in relation to their age

87%

of colleagues aged 55 and older feel they are treated fairly in relation to their age

Ethnicity Pay gap report

This is the third consecutive year that Dimensions has voluntarily published its ethnicity pay gap which provides a snapshot of the situation on 5th April 2024. At this time, 80% of our workforce (5,431 of 6,747 colleagues) had shared their ethnicity which is an increase of 10% from 2023.

Ethnicity Pay Gap	2024	2023	2022
Mean (Average) hourly pay gap	7.2%	9.1%	11.8%
Median hourly pay gap	1.9%	0.0%	6.8%

This table shows there was a median hourly pay gap of 1.9% which has increased from no median pay gap in 2023. This means that the median hourly rate for white colleagues is 1.9% higher than for BAME colleagues. It is the mean pay gap which is typically considered as the measure in pay gap reporting. As more colleagues share their ethnicity, we are seeing more accurate results coming through.

The ethnicity pay gap shows the difference in hourly earnings between white colleagues and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) colleagues, shown as a percentage of white colleagues' earnings. We use the same method to calculate the gender pay gap report.

There is a mean hourly pay gap, however this has reduced by 1.9 percentage points since 2023. The mean hourly pay gap shows that the mean (i.e. average) hourly rate for white colleagues is 7.2% higher than for BAME colleagues.

The full report can be found on Dimensions website.

71%

of colleagues in 2024 were women

29%

of colleagues in 2024 were men

Gender Pay gap report

The Gender Pay gap report for 2024, which provides a snapshot of the situation on 5th April 2024, can be found on our website.

This analysis measures the difference between average female earnings compared to average male earnings. This is regardless of roles and the figures are reached using the mechanisms that are set out in the gender pay gap reporting legislation.

In 2024, 71% of colleagues were women and 29% men.

	2024	2023
Mean (Average) hourly pay gap	1.3%	1.5%
Median hourly pay gap	1.7%	0.0%
Mean (average) bonus pay gap	4%	7.1%
Median bonus pay gap	8%	9.2%
Proportion of women who received bonus pay	11.8%	68%
Proportion of men who received bonus pay	11%	72%

The Dimensions UK gender pay gap report shows that in 2024 there was a small median (i.e. the middle) hourly pay gap of 1.7%. This compares with 2023 where there was no median gender pay gap. The median, rather than mean, pay gap is the more commonly used metric when referring to pay gap information. This small change is associated with having slightly more men in the lower middle and upper middle pay quartiles this year compared to last year, and slightly fewer women in the lower quartile compared to last year.

There is still a small mean (i.e. average) hourly pay gap, however this has reduced since 2023. The mean hourly pay gap shows that the mean hourly rate for men is 1.3% higher than for women.

There is also a decrease in both our median and mean bonus pay gaps this year. Our bonus payments to colleagues relate to one-off payments for long service or achievement of qualifications. The median bonus pay gap has decreased by 1.2 percentage points this year, to 8%, and the mean (average) bonus pay gap has decreased by 3.1 percentage points, to 4%.

The gender pay gap at Dimensions compares favourably with the national median pay gap of 13.1% across all employees in 2024 (Office for National Statistics), and with typical levels within our sector.

Section 2 – Diversity of information of colleagues

In April 2024 the completion rate of colleague demographic information was 86.4% (6,210 of 7,191 colleagues). This has remained consistent throughout the year with the figure being 86.8% (6,234 of 7,180 colleagues) as of March 2025. This has been added to the business as usual (BAU) dashboard and is discussed at regional performance reviews. At the time of writing the last report, only 47% of new starters had completed this. We have amended the communication for new starters to do this and added it to colleagues’ induction checklist and are pleased to advise that there has been an increase of completions to 79%.

We have followed up on the work regarding ‘prefer not to say’ responses. These stats have remained consistent with the previous year with sexual orientation being the highest at 14.5% and gender the lowest at 8.6%. We have completed some external research including contacting Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (ENEI) who we have membership with. They advised that in their experience there isn’t a single, universally acknowledged rate or industry benchmark for ‘prefer not to say’ responses in diversity data collection and confirmed the ‘prefer not to say’ rates are proportionate in terms of the demographics, (higher for sexual orientation, lower for gender).

We continue to periodically remind colleagues of the benefit of completing this information citing examples of action that has been taken such as the reasonable adjustment passport and budget and using positive action in our recruitment practices.

We also review the demographic data and consider any implications or actions required. 32% of our support colleagues are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background, which is 1% lower than noted by Skills for Care in their report ‘The state of the adult social care sector 2024’ but is worth noting the ethnicities vary considerably with Dimensions employing a significantly higher proportion of Black African colleagues compared to Asian colleagues. Appendix 1 provides the full analysis of all demographics.

“ We...remind colleagues of the benefit of completing this information...citing examples of action that has been taken..”



Section 3 – Ethnic diversity of managers

KPI to increase ethnic diversity of first level managers to 14% (assistant locality managers, first level business support managers and locality managers)

For the last two years there has been little change in the number of first level managers who identify as being from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. 2022/23 saw an increase from 10.1% to 12.2%. There was consideration that the increase may have also been attributed to the number of colleagues completing their demographic information. This year an increase of 2% was agreed to 14%. For Dimensions group as a whole, within a two-year strategic priority. There has been a very small increase, to 12.8%. 2.4% of Discovery managers have shared that they are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background and for Dimensions the figure is 14.1%. There are obviously regional differences and as Somerset, where Discovery is based, is a predominantly white area, this will impact.

There has also been a significant decrease in the number of vacancies advertised at assistant locality manager and locality manager roles in the last year compared to the previous year (114 in 2022/23 versus 63 last year, a 45% decrease). This will have undoubtedly impacted. This is due to the TOM project's objective to increase spans of control, to not replace locality manager roles, and increase assistant locality manager off rota time.

The 2024 Skills for Care report 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce' states people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (BAME) in registered manager roles (which is the most aligned to our ALM and LM roles) is 21% which is an increase of 3% from last year.

Previously we had not used 'positive action' in the recruitment of assistant locality manager roles. In May last year we completed some analysis of the ONS data and the Skills for Care workforce analysis as well as reviewing our own demographic data for the assistant locality manager role and felt there was reasonable justification to use positive action moving forward. The principles are the same as the Disability Confident process, with anyone who voluntarily identifies as being from a BAME background within the application process, and who meets the essential criteria for the role, being invited to an interview.

32% of colleagues who are support worker/ first level Business Support who have completed their diversity information are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. This is an increase of 7% from last year. We therefore need to continue to improve our efforts to address this imbalance within our organisational hierarchy.

This year we were pleased to be able to fund eight places on the Skills for Care Moving Up programme, which is specifically for colleagues aspiring to become leaders in social care who are from a BAME background. One colleague shared her reflections – "I have been pleased to notice a significant increase in my self-confidence and leadership presence. The Moving Up programme helped me recognise the value of my lived experience and transferable skills. I now approach challenges with a more strategic mindset and communicate with greater clarity and impact, particularly when leading shifts or coordinating care delivery."

Since funding spaces in 2015, of the 44 colleagues who have completed the programme, 27% have subsequently secured promotion. Due to this positive impact, the Head of Learning and Development has agreed further funding for places for 2025-26. There is a possibility of claiming a percentage of the funding back through a reimbursement scheme, but this is dependent on the timescales of the programme and criteria for claiming.

Moving forwards, we have amended the objective to focus in 2025/26 on activity to understand the barriers colleagues and applicants who are from BAME backgrounds face when applying for first line manager roles and to implement any recommendations to remove those barriers, and to then achieve the target increase by 2027, which we feel is more realistic based on the current turnover and activity.



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 the last year there has been a slight increase of 2% in the percentage of senior managers (operations directors, regional managing directors, group executive directors and non-executive directors) identifying as being from BAME backgrounds, from 6.7% to 8.3%. Although not as high as we had aimed for, this has been achieved despite the low turnover of vacancies at this level.

At operations director level, only one colleague out of 25 has identified as being from a BAME background. Having only three vacancies in the last year, (two at operations director and one at Executive level) has undoubtedly impacted, however we will be reviewing the recruitment process to understand if there are any potential barriers or biases and this will continue to be one of the organisation's strategic priorities. Referring to the SFC report again, it states that 19% of senior roles are filled by people from BAME backgrounds, so we have some way to go to achieve this. This figure from SFC is an increase of 2% from last year.

The critical friend role, which ensures we have a diverse panel for senior recruitment, was implemented three years ago. This enables us to ensure we have diversity of thought and lived experience within the decision-making process. We have recently consulted with the colleagues who undertake this role and have drafted recommendations that ensure there is consultation and reflection of the critical friend expertise throughout the process. A proposal on this will shortly be taken to the Executive team. Recommendations include involving the critical friend end to end, being invited to ask an EDI related question and having a critical friend on the interview panel irrespective of the ethnicity of the candidates to represent the diversity of Dimensions colleagues.

We continue to have a good working relationship with our external recruitment agency who support NED and GET recruitment, and who have been proactive in ensuring we have had a diverse mix of high-quality candidates and understands our intent.

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Section 4 – Inclusive Leadership and increasing diversity at Board level

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.’ The organisation has also signed up to the National Housing Federation’s Chair Challenge around building inclusion and belonging in the boardroom.

There has been continued commitment with activity from the Board in relation to EDI. Conversations over the year have continued to ensure the Board & Committee meetings are inclusive and welcoming of diverse views, and meeting their requirements under the Code of Governance, including this featuring as an area for Members to assess in the Annual Effectiveness Reviews completed at the end of 2024. Four questions within the survey asked members and executives to say to what extent they agreed with the following statements:

- The Board demonstrates a clear and active commitment to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion in all the group’s activities.
- Meetings are accessible with the adjustments made as necessary so that all members are able to attend and participate.
- Board Membership comprises people with diverse backgrounds and attributes in line with the organisation’s stated commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Board Meetings are inclusive, encouraging contributions from all and welcoming diverse perspectives and opinions.

The Remuneration & Nomination Committee discussions on succession planning continue to consider Board composition from an EDI perspective. At their meeting in December 2024 the Committee received an update on the diversity profile, and how future recruitment activity needs to do more to encourage applications from particular groups. Below are the headlines from their report.

“ I derived enormous benefit from it [reverse mentoring]. Not only did I learn about the lived experience of a black colleague working within Dimensions, but I gained much broader insights into the challenges of a locality manager. ”

Our diversity profile has changed in the last few years:

- The average age of the group Board in 2021-22 was 59, with a 50% gender split and 33% of members from an ethnic background
- In 2022-23, it was an average age of 60, with 42% female members and ethnicity was the same (33%).

We should also highlight the diversity of lived experience of learning disabilities and autism we have across our non-executives, particularly in terms of family connections of different kinds, which numbers at least seven members across the whole group. We also have one openly gay member on the group Board.

It is noteworthy that there was no recruitment for Board Members during 2024-25. We undertook recruitment for two new Associate Committee Members at the end of the financial year. One of the aims for this recruitment was to achieve more diversity across non-executive members. The two new associate committee members bring diversity in respect of age, gender and ethnicity.

Activity from Board members has included attending the group wide Diversity Matters champions group which has been an annual activity, for the CEO and a Board member participating in the reverse mentoring programme. Their reflection – “I derived enormous benefit from it. Not only did I learn about the lived experience of a black colleague working within Dimensions, but I gained much broader insights into the challenges of a locality manager as my mentor shared with me some of her day to day experiences.”

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 and concluded in October 2024 with a mentor/mentee online celebration/reflection event. The chief quality, governance and lived experience officer joined to support the programme and co-mentor the mentors alongside one of the Aspire coaches. Their experience as a mentor, reverse mentor and lived experience as a Black woman have further positively impacted the programme. We were always mindful that there was no-one of colour with lived experience leading the programme, and wanted to ensure it was viewed as credible as possible both by mentees and mentors. We have received positive feedback about their involvement and hope they will continue with further cohorts.

This was the first year we extended the offer to operations directors (as an action to address the underrepresentation in senior roles) along with Board Members, regional managing directors and executive directors. There was participation from four operations directors, one Board member, one group director and one head of department. Each year, the impact feels greater with a real appetite to make a difference. One mentee has been supporting the work to address discrimination, and another used the critical friend role in their recruitment with a positive outcome.

Reverse mentoring

Having someone leading the programme with lived experience of being a Black woman has been positive

“Each year the impact feels greater with a real appetite to make a difference.”

We were also mindful that the same mentors have been active since the commencement of the programme so invited managers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds to volunteer for the 2025 intake. Two new mentors were recruited and completed their training successfully. The 2025 cohort of six places was selected in March 2025, and their programme will run for approximately six months. There is one Board member, one executive director, one regional managing director, two operations directors and one head of service participating. Matching has taken place and chemistry calls scheduled.

Following the programme, mentees are now invited to join an Allyship Network where best practice, concerns, questions can be shared in a safe space. This has only just been implemented so it is not possible to comment further on the impact yet.

Section 6 – Supporting colleagues with a disability

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

This is an area that due to capacity has been delayed and has therefore been rolled over into the next years activity.

In the last year there has been a slight increase in the number of colleagues sharing that they are neurodivergent, from 15.8% to 18%. (N.B. this is the percentage of the 8% of colleagues who have shared that they have a disability.) It is estimated that of the UK population, 15% are neurodivergent, so it is interesting to see that we have a slighter higher proportion working for Dimensions. Since the implementation of the reasonable adjustment passport, the majority completed relate to neurodivergent conditions, so this needs to be a priority for the organisation.

In February we carried out a short survey directed at colleagues who are neurodivergent (or consider themselves to be). We received 158 responses. In summary, questions covered were about the culture of Dimensions, what helps colleagues at work, and what the challenges are for colleagues working at Dimensions.

The next steps will be to hold some focus groups to further explore the results to gain some deeper understanding. We will then produce a fuller report with organisational recommendations.

We have already begun to collate resources and information to support colleagues and their managers. We have an eLearning module on neurodiversity, the dyslexia resources and reasonable adjustments passport as previously mentioned. We have supported colleagues to access workplace coaching funded via Access to Work, which has proved very impactful. We have also been working with the Behaviour Support team who have knowledge of autism. A recommendation for several autistic colleagues has been awareness sessions for their team, as communication can be a significant challenge. An autistic colleague from the Behaviour Support team has delivered sessions in partnership with two colleagues so far, and the feedback has been really positive. In addition, they also delivered a session to the Regional HR team, to enable them to have a better understanding of the challenges autistic colleagues can face at work, and how we can support people accordingly.

What is acknowledged is this is a partnership, not neurodivergent versus neurotypical, and there needs to be compromise and understanding from both perspectives. One of the colleagues who is autistic who helped shape the session commented after the session “I am proud of how Dimensions has responded to my challenges by supporting me, and how I was made to feel valued because my strengths are harnessed and used to contribute in a positive way to the workplace. This has major repercussions for the rest of my life, where I feel lifted and happy, thank you.”

Implement changes from the dyslexia survey and retain colleagues who are dyslexic

As with last year, of the 8% of colleagues who have completed their diversity information and shared that they have a disability, 25% of them are dyslexic.

We have further embedded the use of Read & Write software which is downloaded on all Dimensions devices for colleagues to access. Read & Write is a literacy tool that enables a user to change font size, style, backgrounds, read aloud and speech to text. We have developed quick two-minute video guides on how to use this with Iplanit, Radar (our incident recording system) and Outlook. Some IT Helpdesk colleagues have had training to become ‘champions’ and can also provide a session for a colleague to get them started.

We also have an eLearning module developed internally on dyslexia to enable colleagues to understand more about the condition and how it impacts as there was limited knowledge. To date, 126 colleagues have completed this. As we continue with the neurodiversity work, we anticipate this will increase.

‘Scan pens’ have been provided via the reasonable adjustment budget. These have proved particularly helpful for colleagues administering medication. Again, this uses text to speech technology.

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 have worked in partnership with the learning and development team and produced a guide for all colleagues on adjustments that can be made in training including completing the care certificate, eLearning and face to face training.

We are also hoping that once the process for using AI in Dimensions is agreed this will enable colleagues to use it in a way that will greatly benefit them, saving time for them and their manager and improving recording of information.

Supporting colleagues with a disability

Embed the reasonable adjustment process

Last year, in collaboration with HR Officers, the EDI team implemented a reasonable adjustment passport. This helps ensure 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 at work.

When joining Dimensions all colleagues are now asked as part of their induction if they have a disability or long-term health condition. Whilst this is generally noted on the health report that is sent to HR and the manager, sometimes disabilities such as dyslexia are not recorded (this might be because the colleague has not declared it during the recruitment process). If the colleague shares that they do, then they will be supported by their manager to complete the reasonable adjustment passport. They will also be encouraged to apply to Access to Work (AtW) for an assessment. AtW is a government funded scheme to support anyone with a disability or long-term health condition to get a job and stay in work. The scheme offers both practical help and financial support to individuals living with disabilities, whether they're related to physical or mental health.

If applied for in the first six weeks of employment, AtW will fund 100% of the costs. After this time, as a large employer Dimensions are expected to pay the first £1k plus 20% of costs up to £10k.

Colleagues applying have however been advised there is a five-six month wait time for an assessment so we are required to assess whether to implement adjustments in the meantime, which may have a cost to Dimensions. This is managed via a central budget to assess the need and adjustments considered.

Existing colleagues are also able to have a 'reasonable adjustment passport' (acknowledging that their health needs might change during employment), and this is now a question in the one-to-one form. They are also encouraged to apply for Access to Work funding.

The passport is intended to aid a conversation between a manager and the colleague to help them consider what adjustments/support they may need to fulfil the role. Adjustments are agreed and signed off by the colleague, manager and HR. In addition to supporting colleagues, the passport also helps the manager to ensure there is a clear and evidenced plan of what adjustments have been agreed.

If there is a financial cost or an application to Access to Work, the passport is sent to the EDI team who will source equipment. There is a centralised reasonable adjustment budget to cover all costs which is managed by the Head of EDI. This ensures that colleagues receive the resources they need, and this doesn't impact on individual managers budgets. Resources vary widely – some examples include, Remarkable tablets, workplace coaching and captioning minutes for deaf colleagues.

The EDI team have attended all area meetings and held two sessions for Business Support colleagues on how to use the passport, which have been well received. To date the EDI team have supported 98 colleagues with a passport of which 55 are currently live.

As there is a legal duty to provide reasonable adjustments for anyone, not just those with a formal diagnosis, the same applies to the RA process. One example is of a neurodivergent colleague who was struggling with communication both written and orally. They were awarded workplace strategy coaching and a 'Remarkable tablet' which enables a colleague to write notes on the tablet then upload them which turns them into typed text which they can then organise and use.

Reasonable adjustment passport

Ensuring colleagues get the support they need to do their job and be the best they can



Section 7 – Addressing discriminatory behaviour

Clear and transparent information and resources are in place to address discriminatory behaviour from colleagues, people we support and family members.

The discrimination from people we support toolkit continues to be rolled out by the Clinical team, and this requires embedding further. Feedback has been positive during these sessions so far, with colleagues feeling assured that Dimensions is addressing this issue.

Dimensions now has a clear zero tolerance statement, both a 'pithy' statement for display in all office spaces including registered homes and a full statement which is in the EDI policy and on the Hub and website. "At Dimensions we will not tolerate any form of abuse or discriminatory behaviour towards colleagues, people we support, family members or people we work with. We will always act and not be bystanders."

The Family Charter has been updated to be clearer of our expectations and the welcoming diversity factsheet has been updated. Further work is continuing with the families team to support managers to ensure they feel confident with addressing these situations.

Work is currently taking place to be able to record and analyse incidents of discrimination using Radar. The system does currently facilitate this, but it is embedded in incident reporting which then makes it more difficult to further analyse. The intention is to have a 'standalone' record that can then be reported on in isolation, to enable Dimensions to have a clear understanding of the scale and detail.

“At Dimensions we will not tolerate any form of abuse or discriminatory behaviour towards colleagues, people we support, family members or people we work with. We will always act and not be bystanders.”

It is with sadness and disappointment to report that two colleagues have experienced racist incidents whilst supporting people outside of their homes. Discussions have taken place around how we can support colleagues in these situations. We have reminded colleagues of the emergency contact cards that colleagues can give to the public if they have a concern about or question about the support being given. The new recording method will enable us to have clearer insight into these incidents and the frequency. Colleagues were supported by their managers and signposted to EAP for further support.

UNISON have provided training to the National Colleague Forum reps on anti-racism training with an intention that they would share this with the teams in their areas. We have an Anti-racism eLearning module sourced from ENEI for all colleagues to access.

We now have a clear zero tolerance statement and the family charter and welcoming diversity factsheets have both been updated.



Section 8– 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 the information for people we support into a new records system, managers were required to ensure people we support's demographic information was completed. Due to capacity issues for operational colleagues, there were delays in completing this, and at the end of March 2024 there were approximately 800 people we support who had incomplete data, with over 2,000 gaps of information. At the end of March 2025, 310 people we support have gaps of information, varying from one gap to no information provided. There are a total 1,069 gaps of information remaining. Reports are sent to the regional managing directors quarterly as a reminder to update this information, they then cascade this to the relevant operations directors.

Transfer of demographics into a new records system

Incomplete data on the people we support's records has reduced from 800 people to 310 in the past year

We were also aware that there may be some concerns from people we support about what we were doing with the information and why we needed this. One of the quality consultants assisted with producing a video that we shared with teams to help them to explain to the people we support the need for this information.

The data will be used by the quality reviewers to evaluate how well people we support are being supported in relation to their diversity, to ensure we have the appropriate knowledge and understanding to provide culturally sensitive support.

We have worked in partnership with the quality assurance team to support them to collect evidence. This has been achieved through developing prompts aligned to the CQC standards.

We will also be using the data to benchmark against external data to evaluate more effectively if we are reaching the diverse communities we work within.



Section 9 – Review of other work

Review of other work

In 2023-24 we began to analyse the demographic profile of colleagues involved in our HR casework (such as disciplinary, grievance and 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.

Due to the impact of the changes in roles within the HR Directorate and capacity of other colleagues to conduct the analysis, we have not made as much progress as we had hoped. We are however committed to resuming this important work as we know there is disproportionality in our sector.

For example, the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard report 2024 from Skills for Care reports that colleagues from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are 37% more likely to be involved in formal disciplinary proceedings or to experience harassment and bullying than white colleagues.

Work that has been completed to date includes:

- a review of the managers guidance when conducting investigations and to be aware of bias, conscious and unconscious,
- sourcing an eLearning module for all colleagues to access on anti-discrimination, consulting with our legal partners to understand best practice in the analysis of such data,
- implementation of the zero tolerance statement and,
- UNISON National colleague forum reps completing online Ant-racism training to roll out to their team members.

It is our intention to pick up this activity and complete by the end of the second quarter, (September 2025) using the data we have gathered from the last period of analysis. We are looking into future options of how we can complete this work as it is currently manually onerous due to the way the information is logged, and to ensure maximum confidentiality of data. We are reviewing resource possibilities both internally and externally.

Equality impact Assessment

As Dimensions is publicly funded, we are required to comply with the public sector equality duty. This means that we need to evidence that due regard is given to our policies, processes and proposals for equality where these impact colleagues or the people we support. A consultation process was implemented in 2012 where Diversity champions and National colleague forum reps are asked to review the policies in addition to any other groups that are consulted for their expertise on the content.

Whilst the process met its objective, it was time consuming and sometimes delayed publication (due to the paperwork required to sign off the EIA). There was also a risk of losing the evidence of the consultation as this was being received via emails from individuals.

A review was completed which included external research on how we could make the process more efficient for all involved but not lose the benefit of the consultation.

A process has been introduced whereby the policy is sent to the colleagues for consultation with a link to a survey monkey for feedback. Colleagues are asked to complete this even if they don't have any concerns as this provides evidence of the consultation. This information is added to a spreadsheet by the Policies, Quality and Governance Officer and fed back to the policy author for action. The outcome is recorded on the spreadsheet and the policy owner and the Head of EDI sign and date this. This has proved to be a much more efficient process which has been welcomed by policy owners and authors.

A reminder was circulated to Leadership group for the need to complete an EIA for new or changed processes that impact colleagues or people we support. This has been well received and generated thorough consideration and consultation on demographics.

“The Social Care Workforce Equality Standard report 2024...reports that colleagues from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are 37% more likely to be involved in formal disciplinary proceedings or to experience harassment and bullying than white colleagues.”

Disability Confident Leader status

The Disability Confident scheme is a UK government initiative designed to help employers become more inclusive and accessible for disabled people. It encourages organisations to think differently about disability and take proactive steps to recruit, retain and develop disabled employees.

There are three levels, Disability Confident Committed, Employer and Leader. We are pleased that we have for a second time achieved Disability Confident Leader status.

The Leader status award requires a detailed internal review that is then verified by an external organisation. This year we used Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI). The process was very thorough and has highlighted some areas of good practice as well as some recommendations that could ensure we are even more inclusive. The award is valid for three years, with the requirement to complete an internal review annually.

Previously, Discovery had achieved the Disability Confident Employer status but this year we amalgamated the two as a group submission, which also aligns with our internal recruitment processes. Examples of good practice included our mandatory EDI training for all colleagues, the reasonable adjustments process, accessible application process and providing case studies on the recruitment pages about employing people with a disability.

Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion
TIDE mark assessment

To support our understanding and strengthen our knowledge and resources for EDI we source suitable membership of organisations that can assist us in achieving our EDI ambitions. This year we have joined ENEI. As part of the package, we had 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.

The deadline for submission is the end of May 2025 and we will receive a personalised report in late summer to discuss with our account manager and consider any recommendations. If successful, we will be awarded either Bronze, Silver or Gold Tidemark that is valid for one year.

So I can be
me



Section 10 – Next steps

Next steps

There has been progress in some areas over the last year but, as ever, there is still more to do. Using the data we have from various means, including consulting with our colleagues and listening to the people we support, enables us to ensure we are focussing our attention in the right areas for our organisation. 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 all.

Increase the ethnic diversity of managers at senior levels to 10% (to include specialist roles where there is no line management responsibility – C/F (8.3%)

We have amended the objective to focus in 2025/26 on activity to understand the barriers colleagues and applicants who are from BAME backgrounds face when applying for first line manager roles and to implement any recommendations to remove those barriers, and to then achieve the target increase by 2027, which we feel is more realistic based on the current turnover and activity required.

Increasing the ethnic diversity of first level managers – ALM and above to 14% (12.2%)

We will review the findings within the Locality Manager recruitment review and consider other areas of activity required. As with the above, we will be focussing on activities to understand and remove barriers in 2025/26, with an ambition to achieve the target by March 2027.

Ensuring Dimensions is an inclusive provider of support

Be confident that Dimensions has evidence that we are able to, and are, providing culturally appropriate support by continuing our efforts to have full completions of demographic information of the people we support and using the information provided by the Quality team to evaluate our ability to provide culturally sensitive support.

Further embed our zero-tolerance statement

Implement processes to ensure that all colleagues, people we support, family members and local authorities are clear in our expectations and how we will respond to such situations.

Further 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. With the implementation of adding completions of passports to the HR dashboard, this will enable us to track activity and monitor their usage.

Support the groups strategic priority to increase the rate from the GPTW survey response ‘I can be myself here.’

Aim to increase the all-colleague result from 83% to 85% by 2027 (84% in 2025-26).

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

This will be a key area of focus for 2025-26. 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.

Undertake actions following the ENEI TIDE assessment

We will consider the feedback from the TIDE assessment and action accordingly.

Review of EDI training

With the implementation of the Discrimination toolkit, zero-tolerance statement and Reasonable adjustments passport, the mandatory training would benefit from a review. In addition, the recommendation there is a requirement for a refresher which is not currently in place.



Better Lives for More People

Dimensions supports adults with learning disabilities, autistic people, individuals with complex health or forensic needs, and those with a history of behaviours of distress.

The people we support and their families are at the heart of everything we do. We want every person we support to have a great, ordinary, active life as part of their local community.

Find out more

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