

Dimensions Self – Assessment Report



Driving up Quality Code

How we self-assessed:

- We held several events in different parts of the country over many months to get a true picture of what everybody thinks is going well and where we need to improve
- There were hundreds of people who attended our events, including: people we support, families, commissioners, social workers, care managers, and staff in varying roles in order to discuss the five areas of the code and identify what's working and not working.



We got together in groups of 4-5 and looked at the key areas to discuss where we felt we were good at things and where we felt we needed to improve. To help our discussions we used the questions in the self-assessment tool to spark off our table debates. A lot of people came up with the same or similar ideas for each area.

We also captured stories to evidence what's working and not working in each of the 5 areas of the code, and developed an improvement plan for each section of the code and each local area in which we work.

1. Support Is Focussed On The Person

What's Working





- Outcome focussed support is embedded
- Families:
 - Families are always welcome and encouraged to share opinions. They said they feel part of the team.
 - Families are involved in the support planning process, and we are getting more consistent about involving them in recruitment and appraisals of staff
 - The Family Charter and Family Consultants
- Our Behaviour Support experts really helps people to communicate their needs
- The Personalisation Journey has helped us focus
- We are getting better at positive risk taking, this is helping people become more independent
- There is a team of people we support who are employed to carry out quality audits/Reach 2 audits
- Recruitment: Carefully matching staff to people we support and involving people we support and their families ('you choose: we employ')
- The use of Person Centred tools & thinking to ensure people have the lives they want
- Personalised rotas – staff teams for continuity
 - People choosing own staff when they want them

What's Not Working



- Do we focus so much on 'Outcomes' that we don't allow people to just 'be' or to 'chill'?
- We need to get better about reducing required paperwork
- Families should be given even more opportunities to attend and co-teach our training courses
- We need to get even more creative with interviewing and change the way we do this
- Work in partnership with other agencies to focus on the person, ensuring the person remains centre.
- Support the whole workforce to have an understanding of the family charter to use it meaningfully.
- Help people we support to have a network of people who are not paid and increasing their circle of support
- More consistently involving families & people we support in staff training
- Challenging the local authority decision making around cuts and impact on quality
- Not everyone we support has chosen where they live or who they live with

2. Care and Support focuses on people being happy and having a good quality of life

<p style="text-align: center;">What's Working</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">What's Not Working</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff, families, and people we support are involved in Person centred reviews which is helping everyone make more informed decisions • All staff supervisions focus on quality of life for the people they are supporting • When we get things wrong we use reflective tools (what's working/not working) and we are honest • Families and people we support are involved in appraisals- 360 degree feedback • Our Personalisation journey is enabling us to focus more on quality of life • We are encouraging people to have ambition for their lives, and then helping them to achieve this • We are getting better at supporting people to have romantic relationships • Many people we support are well known in their communities and have positive relationships with their neighbours • Our behaviour support team helps people we support to communicate their wants and needs • We have ambition to be positive about risk taking and are working towards making this attitude more consistent • People are supported and encouraged to have friends • People we support and their families are encouraged to nominate staff for our internal Inspiring people awards to acknowledge their contribution to the lives of people we support • We respond well to when managing performance of staff who may not share our values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people we support only engage with other people with disabilities and more work is needed to increase their networks • Some of our staff can sometimes be over-protective of the people they are supporting and don't promote their independence (i.e. doing 'for', not doing 'with') • We don't help enough people we support to find and keep paid employment • Some people we support live with people that they haven't chosen to live with • We need to challenge people when too often 'bowling/swimming/gardening' are considered to be 'meaningful activities' • Lack of meaningful involvement with their families- how many of the people we support cook a meal for their family and invite them around for a meal? • Mundane tasks are sometimes seen as 'activities', such as going to the bank or super market. This is normal life! • Not enough people we support have a significant other, intimate relationships, or are having sex, especially when they say they want to • More work is needed to help people to make a positive contribution to their communities • People are not always in control of their own finances • We want to be able to pay staff more to reward them for making a positive difference to people's lives • We need to share good practice regarding strengthening the networks of people in the community • Need to get better at reflective learning to improve things/be prepared for next time

3. The person is supported to have an ordinary and meaningful life

What's Working



- The number of people we support who are in employment/volunteering is increasing
- Autism friendly screenings help people learn new skills as a stepping stone to the typical cinema environment
- We have been supporting people to vote
- We create a culture of lifelong learning
- People are encouraged and enabled to take positive risks
- Skills and gifts are recognised and valued.
- People are supported to go to places that are not just learning disability/autism focused
- People we support recruit their staff teams based on the things they are interested in and what they want to do with their life
- We are getting better about helping people to expand their networks and make new friends
- We have seen some good success in reducing people's paid support hours and increasing natural support
- More and more people are having romantic relationships
- We strive to not let organisational 'stuff' get in the way of people living the life they choose

What's Not Working



- More needs to be done to support individuals into employment and explore voluntary opportunities
- We need to focus on supporting individuals to build relationships with 'wider' family/friends.
- Sometimes we get stumped by being risk adverse
- Person being in control of rota – working with HR to match people to hours
- Support people to have more extended & meaningful friendships & relationships
- Amount of paperwork increasing due to changes in regulations
- Many people haven't chosen where they live or who they live with
- We are continuing to embed the idea of 'just enough support'

4. A good culture is important to the organisation

What's Working



- Staff, people we support, and families at all levels were involved in development of our strategy and vision
- We have strong mechanisms to listen to people we employ and support throughout the organisation
- Involved in shift planning/planning the day
- Commitment to working with families
- Commitment to involving people we support
- Organisation adapts and changes based on feedback from people we support, families and staff
- We work in partnership with other organisations to improve quality
- Our Employee Recognition Scheme rewards good practice
- Ethos around supporting people with behaviours of concern is positive
- People we support meet regularly, locally and nationally to have their concerns addressed
- Families have their voice heard through family forums, locally and nationally
- We aim to ensure our practice is evidence based (such as a recent research project conducted with the Tizard centre)
- Recruitment processes help to ensure we get the right people working in the organisation, who share our organisational values
- We are not afraid to be challenged and encourage people to speak out.
- Our purpose is clear
- Our Family Charter and Family Consultants are helping us to get better at listening to families

What's Not Working



- We need to get better about sharing what we do in relation to feedback provided
- Staff do not always understand the external pressures the organisation faces and how these affect us and result in decision making. We need to improve our communication sometimes.
- We need to get better about pacing changes so that things are properly embedded before we introduce something new.
- We need to encourage more families and people we support to get involved in the organisation
- We do lots of lessons learned exercises and we need to make sure we consistently embed the lessons, so as not to make the same mistakes
- Sometimes, we make some assumptions about the level of involvement that family want
- There are still some traditional cultures that we need time and support to change their approach
- More opportunities for practice leadership would be welcome

5. Managers and Board members lead and run Dimensions well

What's Working



- People we support are part of the recruitment panel for all Senior Managers and Board Members (and all roles in the company)
- We have representatives from our Family Forum and People we Support forum (Council) on our Board.
- Our Board members and senior managers have one page profiles so we know who they are and can contact them
- CEO and Chair of the Board are invited to Family Forum, and always attended by Senior Executives.
- The Board meets with people we support regularly
- Executive monthly forums ensure that Senior managers meet with people we support, families, support staff, and managers in each part of the country regularly
- We are given the opportunity to get together to reflect on our practice. We have open discussions without feeling we can't share what's not working
- Our Board have provided us with an easy-read version of what they do, their role, and how they were chosen
- We get regular communication from the CEO through his blog and Discussion forum on our portal
- People we support are elected by their peers on to our Council, who meet with the whole Board several times per year
- Our Board produce minutes in accessible format after each of their meetings
- Our Executive team produce a summary of their monthly meetings and share this with the rest of the organisation

What's Not Working



- Some people still don't know who the Board and Senior Managers are
- There is lots of information on our internal 'portal' but not everyone accesses it regularly enough
- The Board and Senior Managers would like to be able to meet with the people we support, their families, and support teams even more often
- Sometimes, the reason for why something is changing isn't communicated very well or often enough