

## Facts for Families: Welcoming diversity

What does Diversity mean for Dimensions - not only for our colleagues but also for you as family members and carers and the people we support?

Diversity is about each one of us. Diversity is what makes us unique and different. We may be similar, but we are never the same. For Dimensions this means being an organisation where difference and being different are welcomed and appreciated. We believe it is very important to respect each other and recognise everyone's contribution is unique.

To make sure this happens we wish to:

- Encourage Equality.
- Celebrate Diversity.
- Make sure the people we support, our colleagues and people in wider society are included in every way possible.

**Diversity** is all about difference – such as skin colours, languages, religions, abilities and much more.

**Equality** means people being treated fairly so everyone has the same opportunities and are respected for who they are.

**Inclusion** is about valuing the difference of each and every one of us.



## Tackling prejudice

As parents, relatives or as friends we have all seen how prejudice and discrimination can hurt our loved ones. Disabled people from all backgrounds experience this. Examples of this might be:

- Thoughtless behaviour.
- Others having low expectations about someone's abilities.
- Outright cruelty and hatred.

At Dimensions we created and continue to lead the campaign '#ImWithSam'. This has been a project to stop autism and learning disability hate crime.

A lot of hard work has been done to include disabled people in all areas of life, family, education, and the community. As a result, laws have been changed. We believe everyone has something to offer if they are given a chance.

The diversity of our employees is just as important. Some of our staff may look or sound different to you. You may never have seen anyone like them. They may seem unusual or strange to you. Their way of dressing might be very different to the way you dress.

Regardless of this, we employ them based on their ability to:

- Demonstrate our values.
- Do the job.
- Be part of a team.
- Successfully support your loved ones.

You can find helpful information and a video which gives more details on the importance of diversity on our website at <https://dimensions-uk.org/about/who-we-are/equality-and-diversity>

Some of our colleagues might also have been treated badly. This personal experience can help them appreciate and better understand the people we support and contribute to our organisation. So, remember to please be kind when you meet our staff.



## Equality Act 2010

As an employer and a service provider, we must obey the UK law called the Equality Act 2010 and this is one of the other reasons why we need to help everyone understand what Diversity means.

This law sets out the rules about how people, and organisations like ours cannot treat people unfairly or discriminate against someone because of any of the following:

- Race/ethnicity
- Ability/disability
- Gender/sex
- Pregnancy or for women who have just had a baby
- Religion/faith
- Age
- Sexual orientation (lesbian, gay or bisexual people)
- Marriage/civil partnership
- Gender reassignment (ie someone identifies as a different gender/sex – male or female, to the one they were given at birth).

*These are known as protected characteristics.*

This means that we cannot choose one member of staff over another, because they are younger or older, white or black, male or female. There are some exceptions. These are called **genuine occupational requirements**. These can be discussed when setting up the support for your loved one.

For example we can advertise for someone who is fluent in British Sign Language if this is the only way someone we support can communicate. The ability to understand and be understood in the person we support's first language is important.





## Respecting your own culture and values

We understand that you and your loved ones have your own culture and values. Our support plan will ensure that the diversity of a person we support is considered, respected and valued in all areas of their life.

For example, a person's religious needs around food and meal preparation are respected and followed.

Further information on diversity and the Equality Act can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

HM Government's guides to the Equality Act 2010:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-guidance>

The Government Equalities Office easy read guide: The Equality Act, making equality real

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/85012/easy-read.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85012/easy-read.pdf)

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