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Equality Diversity & Inclusion
Annual Report April 2021 – March 2022

Dimensions has continued to push on with addressing the challenges and issues it faces with its aspiration to respect the diversity of our colleagues, promote equality and embed a culture of inclusion. This review of the last year highlights areas where we have made progress and identifies issues that need attention. There are some key points to celebrate, and it is a reflection of collaborative work across departments. The Diversity Matters champions, whose contributions are invaluable, continue to support Dimensions to learn and reflect.

Lisa Govier
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

In house Recruitment Award

In December 2021 we were successful in being awarded Silver in the In-House recruitment Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy award category. This demonstrated the creative approach we have taken to attract applicants from diverse backgrounds. We were proud to have been invited back to speak at their In-House Recruitment conference in June to present Dimensions' EDI journey, increasing ethnic diversity at management level, making reasonable adjustments for colleagues with a disability and our next steps to build on the foundations we have in place.

Great Place to Work survey results

We are proud to have achieved the GPtW award for the fourth consecutive year, ranking 25th and the highest placed social care organisation.

Within the colleague survey there was a statement "I am treated fairly regardless of my age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief". The responses to these were the highest scoring results overall, with the highest being for sexual orientation and religion and belief (92%) and the lowest being age (82%). We have already held focus groups and set actions in response to our younger colleagues' feedback and the Diversity Matters Champions have been working with the Head of Employee Engagement and Reward to take a deeper dive into the overall survey results by demographic. The Diversity Matters Champions participated in the wider survey follow up exercise to ensure we have their views as a group and also to ensure that the ideas put forward are representative of as many different demographic groups as possible.

Ethnicity pay gap report

Although the government have reported they will not be mandating ethnicity pay gap reporting at this time, as Dimensions has signed the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter, of which this is one of the calls to action, and our intent to increase the ethnic diversity at senior management levels, it is appropriate and right for us to publish this.

This report is a snapshot taken from April 2021. At this time 60 % of colleagues (3360 out of 5593) had shared their ethnicity. The complete report can be viewed on our website, but the table below shows the pay gaps by mean and median.

Mean (average) hourly pay gap	10.0 % BAME colleagues lower
Median hourly pay gap	6.2 % BAME colleagues lower
Mean (average) bonus pay gap	1.0 % BAME colleagues lower
Median bonus pay gap	-7.6 % BAME colleagues higher

The HR analyst planned to compare the data against the organisations that we have previously used to benchmark ourselves against with the People Count data but only one (Nottingham Community Homes Association) has published their ethnicity pay gap data. Their average pay gap was reported as 14 %. It will be useful to compare when more organisations publish theirs, as NCHA is a much smaller organisation than Dimensions.

As a comparison across all businesses the 2019 ONS Survey published the median hourly pay gap for those in the White ethnic group as 2.3 %, its narrowest level since 2012. It is also worth noting that ethnicity pay gap differs across regions and is largest in London (23.8 %) and smallest in Wales (1.4 %).

As we have had an increase in ethnic diversity at senior management levels since this data was reported on (April 2021), the next report, which will use date from April 2022, will hopefully see a decrease in the pay gap.

The reason it is likely that the bonus pay gap is higher for colleagues from a BAME background is due to the number who work in operations who received a higher level of Covid bonus than business support colleagues during the pandemic.

Gender pay gap report

The Gender Pay gap report for 2021 which provides a snapshot of the situation on the 5th April 2021 can be viewed on our website.

This analysis measures the difference between average female earnings compared to average male earnings regardless of roles. This is different from 'Equal Pay' which is an organisation's legal obligation to ensure that men and women are paid the same for doing the same or similar roles.

Mean (average) hourly pay gap	3.9 % (women lower)
Median hourly pay gap	2.8 % (women lower)
Mean (average) bonus pay gap	9.4 % (women lower)
Median bonus pay gap	12.1 % (women lower)

Proportion of men who received bonus pay*	93.4 %
Proportion of women who received bonus pay*	94.7 %

We are pleased that the data shows that there is only a small hourly gender pay gap at Dimensions UK. The gender pay gap at Dimensions compares favourably with the national average of 7.9 % across all sectors among full-time employees in 2021 (Office for National Statistics), and with typical levels within our sector.

With the recent appointment of a female CEO as well as having a female Managing Director and the appointment of two female Executive Directors, the 2022 Gender Pay Gap report will show a decrease in the pay gap and be more favourable towards women.

Future actions:

The landscape of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda is ever changing, and it is easy to feel the need to address every challenge and issue. With the limited resource we have it is important to retain focus on the key priorities to maximise the impact for colleagues.

Ethnicity pay gap reporting

The ethnicity pay gap report will be published and planned again for reporting in April 2022 so we will be able to benchmark our own progress as well as with our competitors.

Embed a reflection culture of addressing unconscious bias

A recommendation from last year's annual review was to adopt a principle of 'Caution-Pause-Reflect' into all decision-making processes to give us space to reflect on our decisions and ensure we are not making decisions based on unconscious biases. Due to capacity, this has not been implemented, but it is an action that could have a significant impact, and therefore one that will be addressed this year. A briefing will be circulated and where policy and practice is affected amendments will be made to these accordingly to include this action.

Review of the Diversity Matters group

Following a session facilitated by Business in the Community we intend to review the structure of the Diversity Matters group to consider how we can maximise the engagement and input and also share more widely what the group does, the impact and how colleagues can get involved.

Diversity information of colleagues

Despite our efforts with communicating the importance of colleagues completing their demographic information, there has been a decrease in the data. The May 2022 Power Bi Report indicates 4,501 (64.5 %) out of 6,983 colleagues have completed it, which is approximately 500 less than the previous year and there has been a decrease of new starters completing the information (48 %). This features as a question on the one2one form prompting completion. We have now made it clearer within the onboarding process that this is an action and added it to the induction checklist, as well as including it within the centralised induction for all colleagues; we will monitor the impact this has.

This information enables us to compare how well we are reflecting the diversity of the people we support and the communities we work within, and helps us to ensure we are an inclusive employer.

Future actions:

Continue to encourage colleagues to complete their demographic information

As highlighted in this report, colleague demographic data is critical in evidencing how inclusive Dimensions is, what progress has been made and where the focus needs to be in terms of addressing inequalities and providing resources. We will be highlighting to colleagues again the value and importance of sharing this information. Changes to the reporting of the anonymised data will enable us to see more closely where there are gaps in completions.

Improve the quality and quantity of diversity data of the people we support

We are aware that we have gaps in the diversity data of the people we support. This will be addressed as part of a project aiming to begin in early 2023.

Benchmarking of data against ONS data

To ensure we are maximising our opportunities to reflect the regions we work within, we will compare our colleague ethnicity data with the 2021 ONS data which is due to be published later this year. This will be shared with the resourcing team and managers so they can bespoke recruitment campaigns accordingly.

Section 3 – Ethnic diversity of managers

Key Performance Indicator to increase ethnic diversity of managers

We have exceeded the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to increase the ethnic diversity of our first level managers. The target was 6.9 %, which was in line with our competitors. Currently 10 % of our first line managers identify as from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. The Skills for Care report, 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce report' published in 2019, says that 17 % of senior roles are held by colleagues from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. We have set the KPI of 12 % based on our anticipated turnover and the sector average.

Increase ethnic diversity of senior managers to 4.8 %

This KPI relates to all management positions above locality manager level and first level managers in business support. In April 2021 2.4 % of senior managers (operations director, regional managing director, executive and non-executive directors) identified as being from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic backgrounds. I am pleased to advise that we have exceeded our target at 8.7 %. However at operations director level, only 4.3 % identified as being from a BAME background. We have made a number of changes to the recruitment process that have had a positive impact at executive and non-executive levels.

For all senior manager interviews where the panel is not ethnically diverse, we invite a 'critical friend' who is a colleague from a BAME background to participate as an observer on the panel. This enables the panel to have a diverse perspective contributing to the process and also challenges our unconscious biases, which we all have. As with all management positions we use positive action so candidates are able to identify themselves as BAME and will be invited to interview if they meet the essential criteria. At Board level the recruitment agency has been proactive in working collaboratively to identify talented people from diverse backgrounds.

Due to a vacancy within the learning and development team there has been a delay in the plans to develop a 'pathway' that would afford a range of opportunities to colleagues of colour to develop skills to enable them to progress within Dimensions. We intend to pick this up when the post is filled. We are also looking at external resources that would support locality manager's development and continue to gain advice and support using our Business in the Community membership. We also need to consider succession planning from locality manager to operations director, and assistant locality manager to locality manager to ensure we are identifying talent within our existing assistant locality managers and locality managers from BAME backgrounds.

Inclusive Leadership and Increasing the Diversity of our Board members

The National Housing Federation Code of Governance requires a level of accountability of Dimensions' EDI objectives and ambitions. The company secretary and EDI manager have been supporting the Board and executive team over the last year in a number of activities aimed at ensuring more diverse representation and engagement by non-executives in the EDI conversations.

We have taken steps to ensure there is greater diverse representation at Board level including using the critical friend role, reviewing the essential and desirable criteria and additional questions relating to EDI in the interview process. An associate committee member role was developed and recruited to for three Group Committees as a way of increasing and encouraging diverse perspectives within the governance arrangements but also as a learning opportunity for people who would like to develop skills leading to a full non-executive role at some point in the future within Dimensions or elsewhere in the sector. There has been an externally facilitated workshop on Inclusive leadership and unconscious bias for new members (executive and non-executive) which others were invited to attend as a refresher. The company secretary, equality, diversity and inclusion manager and senior independent director are planning a workshop for late 2022 which aims to ensure that we maximise the benefit of the diverse representation we now have, ensuring that all Board members feel comfortable and able to bring their 'whole self' perspective, knowledge and perspective, rather than just their professional knowledge and skills.

An external Governance Review is being carried out which will assess the Group's progress towards compliance with the latest Code of Governance, including progress with the EDI agenda.

The EDI annual report is now published on the website to publicise our EDI commitments and progress.

Future actions:

Increasing the ethnic diversity of managers at senior levels

We have made progress in this area at executive and non-executive levels. Our focus now needs to be on developing a talent pipeline for locality managers to progress to operations directors and provide resources and opportunities to empower colleagues to progress.

We will review the turnover for operations director positions and set a target accordingly. Further plans on this will be brought to a future HRC meeting.

Increasing the ethnic diversity of first level managers – ALM and above

We will continue with our efforts to achieve our target of 12 %. Actions will include funding places on the Skills for Care 'Moving Up' programme, consulting with colleagues to understand what their experiences are and the barriers they face, and developing a range of opportunities and resources to address these.

Reverse mentoring

The second year of reverse mentoring is currently in progress and, as with the first year, the feedback from both the mentors and mentees has been positive. To date 12 senior leaders have been reverse mentored. During this time the mentees receive supervision from a member of the learning and development team and one of the Aspire coaches. (Mentees and mentors are free to continue after this time if they agree this mutually). The mentors have participated in facilitated group reflective sessions (by the EDI manager) from which feedback has been positive.

Currently to become a mentor, colleagues need to have been on Aspire or the Skills for Care 'Moving Up' programme. Having discussed this at the National Colleague forum we are considering how we widen this opportunity to more colleagues within Dimensions. In addition, consideration needs to be given to how we ensure the impact of the reverse mentoring is realised at organisational level, and not just as personal development.

Future actions:

Embed the reverse mentoring as part of 'every day' practice for senior managers.

We need to review the impact of the last two years of reverse mentoring, review the criteria to become a reverse mentor and the expectation to be mentored.

As well as the mentees benefitting from this in isolation, we need to gain some traction with the knowledge the mentees learn to enable the organisation to progress to become more inclusive.

Section 5 – Colleagues with disabilities

Increase the number of colleagues in employment with disabilities

There has been no change in the data of how many colleagues we employ with a disability (7.8 %) or learning disability (0.6 %). We are aware that we employ people we support as quality consultants on a relief basis, so the total number of people we employ with a learning disability will be higher than reported, but those in mainstream roles remains low. The pandemic and changes in working from home have impacted on opportunities for people with learning disabilities to work in business support roles as they often require additional support which isn't always possible to achieve remotely.

We are also aware that some colleagues will not wish to identify themselves as having a disability so it will always be a challenge to gain this data. We continue to highlight the positive impact of sharing this information to enable us to provide appropriate resources.

Support for colleagues with a disability

Despite the challenges that the Access to Work process brings, our internal supported employment advisor has supported a number of colleagues to be successful in being granted funding for reasonable adjustments. This has included continued funding for personal assistants, equipment and training on how to use this.

Changes have been made to the information sought when colleagues are booked onto training to ensure adjustments are made. The supported employment advisor continues to work collaboratively with the learning and development team to assist with identifying potential barriers and challenges.

A significant achievement is that there is now a centralised reasonable adjustments process and budget to ensure that colleagues receive the appropriate equipment, and that we are transparent about our commitment to supporting colleagues with a disability. Our Business Disability Forum membership has assisted us with understanding best practice in relation to these processes and we have already received applications for equipment.

Disability Confident Leader accreditation

Disability Confident is a government scheme that helps employers attract, recruit and retain disabled staff. It provides advice and information to help organisations think differently about disability and how to make the workplace more accessible. The Disability Confident scheme has replaced the previous Guaranteed Interview scheme and Two Ticks scheme. We are pleased to have retained the Disability Confident 'Leader' status which is the highest level. It is valid for three years and assessed externally.

Our assessment was completed by the Business Disability Forum, which we are members of, and use to seek advice and access resources. The assessor provides written comprehensive feedback and recommendations, with a follow up meeting. This year, in addition to the standard questions, there was also a mandatory requirement to evidence reporting on disability, wellbeing and mental health. We received very positive feedback and specifically for using work trials, reasonable adjustments in our recruitment process and the videos and case studies on our website. These adjustments break down barriers for applicants, affording them equality of opportunity, and giving them the chance to demonstrate their ability using an inclusive approach. The videos give applicants confidence that colleagues' experiences reflect our commitment as an inclusive employer.

Dyslexia

With 10 % of the UK population identifying as being Dyslexic it is probable that approximately 600 of our colleagues are. Over the last year there has been an increase in requests for support for colleagues with Dyslexia. Some of these have been on the point of joining, but others when there are performance/disciplinary issues. The supported employment advisor has facilitated focus groups and worked with the HR business partners to identify a number of actions that would help which we will implement in the coming months. This work is an objective within the HR Delivery Plan for 22/23.

Read and Write, which is a software designed to help people with Dyslexia, has been renewed. Following feedback from colleagues we have also purchased the Read and Write training package. Ten colleagues have volunteered to be trained as champions to teach other colleagues how to use this.

All colleagues also now have access to Dyslexie-Font which is a specific Dyslexia friendly font downloaded onto all Dimensions PCs. It also provides a 'chrome extension' that enables the user to make changes to documents such as background colours, font sizes etc.

We see the work to better support colleagues with Dyslexia as key activities to support improvements in retention.

Supporting colleagues who are deaf or have hearing loss

The RNID (formerly Action on Hearing Loss) are no longer conducting the Louder than Words Accreditation. We have been advised that we can retain the accredited logo for the duration of the award which is valid until March 2024.

Although it is disappointing that there will not be a formal benchmark to assess ourselves against, we will continue to use the guidance to ensure we are inclusive for our deaf colleagues and those with hearing loss. 32 of our core policies have been translated to BSL. The majority are the 'must read' polices and the remaining were identified by the managers of colleagues who are deaf as important ones to translate. We do not currently have any additional policies identified as requiring to be translated but this is reviewed as part of the policy review process.

A schedule of deaf awareness training sessions for teams where there is a colleague or person we support who is deaf started in May and will run once a month for eight months. For departments where there is a likelihood that there will be interactions with colleagues or people we support who are deaf, eLearning is being developed which will be ready at the end of June. We are also trialling the critical friend role in support worker recruitment for a service where there is a deaf person we support to ensure there is consideration given to deaf applicants to understand the deaf cultural differences.

The EDI manager is in discussions with Safecall, the whistleblowing service, to explore the option of colleagues using SignLive or Next Generation Text service (both are interpreting services) that use an interpreter to translate the conversation. Currently a deaf colleague can only email which can be difficult if they only use BSL. The BSL Bill, which will mean BSL will be recognised as an official language in England and Wales, is due to be passed soon. Although currently there is no formal guidance on what the expectations of employers may be, we are in a positive and informed position to manage this.

Future actions:

Support for colleagues with Dyslexia

An action plan will be implemented to reduce the challenges that colleagues face. We intend to evaluate the impact of this by using a pulse survey to gain colleagues' experiences now and when the adjustments have been made.

Embed the reasonable adjustments process

We will be monitoring the requests for reasonable adjustments, and the budget spends, to review the impact the implementation of this has had. Periodic reminders to managers will be scheduled.

Ensuring opportunities to retain and recruit colleagues with learning disabilities and autism to achieve our target of 1%.

We will continue to work with managers, resourcing and HR to support them to attract and retain colleagues with a learning disability and autism and provide resources and information about the adjustments that can be made and the support that is available. We will also continue to maximise the use of the external resources, funding and expertise.
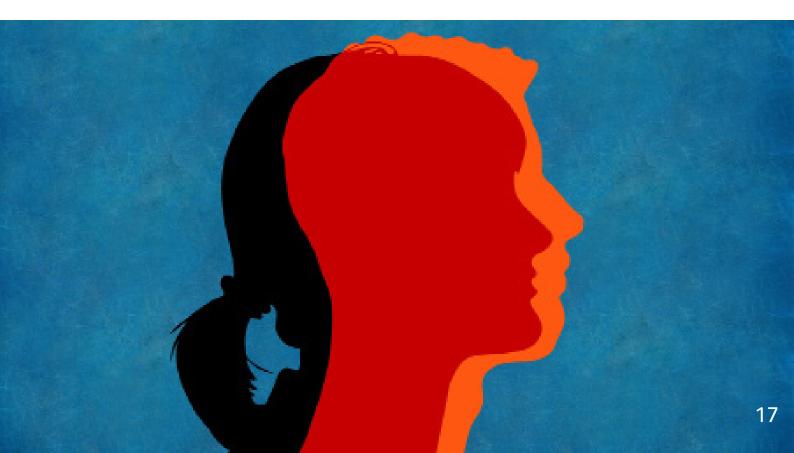
Gender identity

34 colleagues have identified as being in transition (changed or changing their gender from one to another). This equates to 0.7 % of colleagues who have completed the diversity information. This is an increase from 27 the previous year. This is really positive to see that colleagues feel comfortable and safe to disclose this information.

We are fortunate to have a colleague who is in transition join as a Diversity champion which has provided some useful and reflective insight. They have written a blog and recently produced a short podcast on gender identity which was shared within the weekly bulletin.

We have produced a gender identity guide for managers, colleagues, and for people we support and family members.

We have revised our gender reassignment eLearning to ensure it is inclusive and up to date. We have worked to ensure where a colleague has a 'preferred name' which is not their legal name, that there is a manual work around process to accommodate this. All colleagues who choose to do this are informed of the risk involved with this and this is recorded on a confidential spreadsheet held by HR.

Supporting colleagues with discriminatory behaviour from the people we support

Due to the complexity of this issue we have not made as much progress as planned.

The EDI manager raised this issue at a VODG EDI network group and was subsequently asked by VODG to co-host a session which was well attended. It was evident that other organisations experience similar issues and find this equally challenging to address.
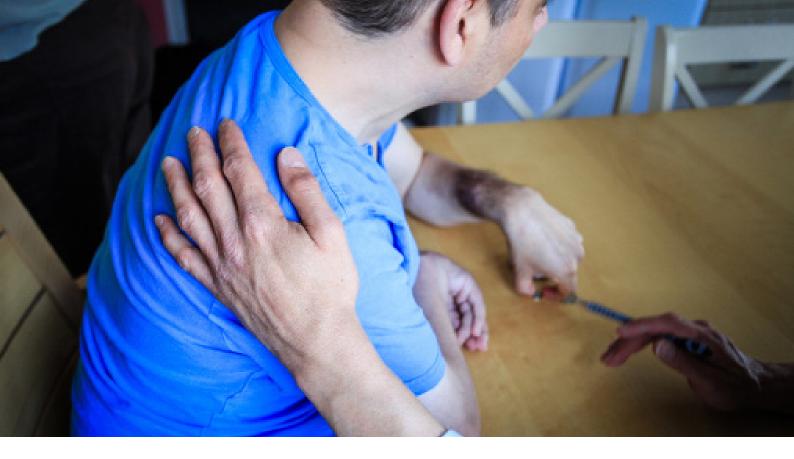
The safety cross process which records incidents and easy read guides for people we support have been developed and are available for managers and colleagues to access.
These are designed to identify any patterns that may 'trigger' a discriminatory behaviour or response.

Changes to the referrals and assessments form now identifies when a person we support has a history of discriminatory behaviour. The EDI manager is working with the clinical practitioner team to develop a plan of action.

Bullying and Harassment

Since April 2021, there have been 27 recorded allegations of bullying and harassment; three of them relating to protected characteristics. There is no definitive figure to compare if this is good or bad, however, one incident is one too many. The other side however is that there is a culture that colleagues feel they can raise this, knowing there is a robust process to support the colleague to seek a resolution. The EDI manager and Dimensions national union convenor recently met with our Unison community national officer to discuss our approach to dealing with incidents of bullying and harassment and received positive feedback.

Future actions:

Addressing discrimination from people we support

When polices are reviewed, consideration of the impact for both colleagues and people we support will be given and adjustments made if necessary. The EDI manager will work with the clinical practitioners to develop a 'tool kit' for managers to support them to manage these issues effectively so colleagues feel supported.

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Proving life can get better

Dimensions provides evidence-based, outcomes-focused support including sector leading positive behaviour support for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs. We help the people we support to be actively involved in their communities.

Contact us to find out more:

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