



Equality Diversity & Inclusion

Annual Report April 2022 – March 2023

Introduction



There has been some steady progress with the EDI agenda over the last year. The Target Operating Model (TOM) project and a vacancy in the team has impacted with some objectives being carried over to the next financial year, but there are still some achievements and areas are becoming embedded as 'business as usual' which reflects a cultural mind-set shift. This review of the last year highlights areas where we have made progress and identifies issues that need attention. Collaborative work across departments and the commitment of the Diversity champions to ensure Dimensions is an inclusive employer where diversity is valued and respected have contributed to the success of the progress this year.

Lisa Govier
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager



Future actions:

There has been some progress in some areas but there is still more to do. 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 colleagues and the people we support.



Great Place to Work survey results 2023



The overall ranking for Dimensions was 29 in the super large category and we also got special recognition for being successfully accredited for five consecutive years. We are the highest ranked dedicated social care organisation.

This is slightly down from last year when we were ranked 25th. However, there was a significant increase in the number of organisations taking part and successfully accredited this year. We are now ranked in the middle organisation compared to last year where we were ranked in the bottom half i.e. 51st percentile this year, 66th percentile last year.

Statement	Orgwide Nov 2022	Orgwide Dec 2021	Best workplaces super large
People here are treated fairly regardless of their sexual orientation.	93	92	94
People are treated fairly regardless of their religion, beliefs or non-religion, beliefs	92	92	N/A
People here are treated fairly regardless of their gender.	91	87	90
People here are treated fairly regardless of their disability.	91	91	N/A
People here are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnic origin.	90	90	N/A
People here are treated fairly regardless of their age.	83	82	86

An initial look shows that the 38 colleagues who identify as having mental health as a disability feel less positive than those with other disabilities. In the ethnicity category colleagues who are Black/Black British Caribbean are the least positive, although the number of respondents is low at 19. Colleagues who prefer to self-describe their sexual orientation

(excluding heterosexual, straight, bisexual, gay man/woman), their gender identity and Trans colleagues also score low. As with previous years the Diversity champions will work with the Head of Employee Engagement to take a deeper dive into the results and consider next steps.

Diversity Matters group

A review by Business in the Community, (the Prince’s Responsible Business Network) who support organisations to ensure their practices are fair and equitable reviewed, of how the Diversity Matters group is conducted enabled us to consider how the group can be more effective. The feedback was positive in relation to having identified champions, a clear strategy, and terms of reference. A recommendation

was to have senior sponsorship to elevate the issues and to ensure there is a clear line of communication and commitment at senior level. The Dimensions CEO has taken on this role and regularly refers to EDI in her weekly messages. The EDI manager and CEO have also been invited to join an external EDI network group which we hope will provide some shared learnings.

Ethnicity pay gap report

As with last year, Dimensions intends to publish its ethnicity pay gap. The report will be a snapshot taken from April 2022 and will be ready in May 2023.

Gender pay gap report for Dimensions and Discovery

The Gender Pay gap report for 2022 which provides a snapshot of the situation on 5th April 2022 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.

	Dimensions		Discovery
	2022	2021	2022
Mean (average) hourly pay gap	2.6 %	4.1 %	2.1 %
Median hourly pay gap	3.5 %	3.9 %	1.3 %
Mean (average) bonus pay gap	4.1 %	9.4 %	-0.9 %
Median bonus pay gap	8.5 %	12.1 %	13.7 %

	Dimensions	Discovery
Proportion of men who received bonus pay*	77 %	72 %
Proportion of women who received bonus pay*	77 %	77 %

We are pleased that the data shows that not only is there a small hourly gender pay gap for Dimensions and Discovery but that we have improved across all of the metrics within the gender pay gap report. We believe that these results are due in no small part to our genuine and proactive commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. During this period we recruited more women into executive roles and this is reflected with an increase in the percentage of women represented at the upper quartile of hourly pay.

The gender pay gap at Dimensions and Discovery compares favourably with the national average of 14.9 % across all employees in 2022 (Office for National Statistics), and with typical levels within our sector.



Changes to Equality Impact Assessment process

All policies and processes that directly impact colleagues and/or people we support are required to have an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). This requires the policies going to two groups for consultation; the Diversity Matters champions and the National Colleague forum members. Every time a policy is reviewed it goes out to consultation for a varied period, usually for two weeks. Once the consultation is completed, the policy author completes the EIA form and this goes to the EDI manager and then the policy owner for final sign off. The process often causes significant delays to the policies being published so we agreed to review the existing process and research what other organisations do.

It was agreed that Dimensions was operating a 'gold standard' that was not necessary. We have not ever been asked for a copy of an EIA relating to a policy and it was felt the time and effort required for this was too onerous and impacting on the urgency of having in-date policies published. The group director of regulatory assurance, the safeguarding and quality assurance manager and EDI manager agreed that it was reasonable to simplify the process based on the issues. It was agreed that every policy that directly impacts on colleagues and/or people we support would have an initial EIA. For any policy that is reviewed, consideration would be given if the changes warranted another EIA. This is decided by the EDI manager. If not, the existing EIA is rolled over. It is hoped that by not having to have the consultation and sign off process this will speed up the review process significantly.



Future actions:

Ethnicity pay gap reporting

The ethnicity pay gap report for April 2022 will be published so we will be able to benchmark our own status as well as with our competitors.

Section 2 – Diversity information

Diversity information of colleagues

Colleagues completing their diversity data became a management instruction in January 2023. An all colleague communication was sent, and regional managing directors (RMDs) have been made accountable in ensuring that their regional completions rates are increasing. All RMDs receive a quarterly report identifying the colleagues that haven't completed this. This has been added to the business as usual (BAU) dashboard and is discussed at regional performance reviews.

In addition, this has been added to the induction checklist and now features more prominently in the 1:1 form.

Since the initial communication went out, there has been an increase of completions by 8%. In January, 64.8% of colleagues had completed their data compared to 72.8% at the beginning of March 2023. Business in the Community (BITC) suggest that 90% is a reasonable target to achieve so we still have a way to go. It is worth noting that the data includes relief worker colleagues so this may impact on the number of completions.

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 identify where we need to focus resources and helps us to ensure we are an inclusive employer. **See Appendix 1 for colleague diversity data.**



Future actions:

Continue to encourage colleagues to complete their demographic information

Accurate colleague demographic data is critical in evidencing how inclusive Dimensions is, evaluating what progress has been made and where the focus needs to be in terms of addressing inequalities and providing resources. As a management instruction this will be reviewed at regional management reviews.

Review of diversity data of people we support

Managers will be reminded to ensure that people we support demographic data is complete so we will be able to analyse this and review if there are any actions required.

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. 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 to 12 %

There has been little change in the measure to increase the number of first level managers since reporting last year. At the end of March 2022, this was 9.4 % and at the end of March 2023, 10.1 %. This may be attributed to an increase of colleagues, and the number of people completing their demographic information. In March 2022 there were 7,087 colleagues, and 4,632 data completions. March 2023, there were 7,163 colleagues and 5,212 data completions. It could however be argued that this could have positively impacted on this target.

The 2022 Skills for Care report 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce' states that the percentage of colleagues from Black, Asian and minority Ethnic backgrounds (BAME) in all posts remains at 17 %. It was noted that there are local variations, and this is very much reflected in Dimensions. With Discovery operating in a predominantly white area, and only 2.5 % of managers identifying as from a non-white background this will have an impact.

With 25 % of colleagues who have completed their diversity information who are at support worker/first level, being from a BAME background we need to improve our efforts to address this imbalance within our organisational hierarchy.

We continue to use positive action in recruitment using the same principles as the Disability Confident process which enables anyone who voluntarily identifies as being from a BAME background within the application process, and meets the essential criteria invited to an interview.

Another four colleagues have undertaken the Skills for Care Moving Up programme this year, which is a course designed specifically for colleagues from BAME backgrounds wishing to progress to management positions in social care this year. Colleagues who have participated in the programme so far have all reflected on increasing confidence, and many have been promoted following completion.

The 2023/24 strategy will have the same KPI of 12 % and an objective with actions to ensure we can gain some traction with this objective.



Increase ethnic diversity of senior managers

This KPI relates to all management positions above locality manager level and first level managers in business support. In April 2022 7.5 % of senior managers (operations director, regional managing director, group executive directors 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 9.1 %. However, at operations director level only 4 % identified as being from a BAME background. Low turnover (0 vacancies last year) at operations director level and regional managing director level has undoubtedly impacted on this. Referring to the Skills for Care report again, it states 17 % of senior roles are filled by people from BAME backgrounds so we have some way to go to achieve this.

The critical friend role that ensures we have a diverse panel for senior recruitment, was implemented earlier last year and is embedded in the recruitment process. We have a good working relationship with the recruitment agency who has been proactive in ensuring we have had a diverse mix of high-quality candidates. This has resulted in some successful appointments both at group executive team and non-executive director 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.'

An external governance review completed in 2022 found that the Group's governance arrangements are meeting good practice, and highlighted that activity to strengthen diversity across the Group's governance structure had made progress noting that 'The Group Board has a diverse membership and has taken steps to increase further the diversity of perspective within the governance structure, including by reviewing its non-executive recruitment criteria and introducing an associate committee member role. The three recently recruited associate committee members bring a younger perspective as well increasing diversity in other respects.'

Non-executive recruitment during 2022/23 has been fewer than in the preceding years, however the principles around the recruitment process introduced previously to help diversify the governance membership have continued.

A workshop for Board members is being held in June 2023 aimed at discussing the impact of our EDI Agenda, confirming that we're meeting our requirements under the Code and consider how members are able to bring their whole selves to their role to ensure that EDI is considered in all discussions and decisions.

This workshop will enable non-executives and executives to:

- Understand the current actions and position on EDI – including the demographic of our workforce and those we support, and the key activities we already undertake to maximise EDI across the Group
- Consider the Board and all non-executives role on EDI – including why it matters, how members can contribute to being a fully inclusive organisation, and how we can measure the impact of having diversity in our governance arrangements.

The EDI manager and company secretary were each approached by the National Housing Federation EDI Network Lead to share Dimensions' EDI journey as a case study of good practice, one as a blog and one as a presentation at a network meeting.



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. The insights from the listening circle report will contribute to how this can be achieved and what the existing barriers are.

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 working with the L&D team to provide some additional resource for colleagues from BAME backgrounds wanting to progress as well as funding places on the Skills for Care Moving Up programme. Using the insights from the listening circle report will inform this work.

Having a focus of the reverse mentoring for operations directors and regional managing directors will also be a key action.

Section 4 – Colleagues from a BAME background

Reverse mentoring

The third cohort of reverse mentoring started at the end of 2022, with most mentees having their first mentoring session in January this year. The programme is coordinated collaboratively with the EDI manager and the L&D mentor and alumni lead. As with previous years, we have asked for members of the leadership group and Board to volunteer to be reverse mentored by more junior colleagues who are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. We had four volunteers this year, including the CEO and one Board member. So far, 16 colleagues have been reverse-mentored, but two have since left Dimensions.

During this time the mentees receive supervision from a member of the L&D team and an external coach who we work closely with on our development programme, Aspire. The mentors have participated in facilitated group reflective sessions (run by the EDI manager) from which feedback has been positive so far.

Whilst we recognised that the reverse mentoring opportunity was fulfilling for the individual, we wanted to gain more traction. Following feedback and evaluation of the programme we now ask all mentees to set three objectives: one personal, one departmental and one organisational. The EDI manager has also been discussing about forming an 'alumni' group for mentees and mentors after the programme is concluded. This could be mutually beneficial for both mentees and mentors.



Listening circle for colleagues from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

Dimensions is signed up to BITC Race at Work charter which has seven calls to action. In January 2023 BITC facilitated a listening circle for colleagues from BAME backgrounds to share their experiences and reflections of working for Dimensions. The intention of this session was to enable Dimensions to gain a clear understanding of the lived experiences of colleagues when at work, providing in depth insight and analysis which can be difficult for organisations to capture directly.

BITC acted as third-party facilitators that enabled colleagues to speak freely on themes important to the organisation. Listening circles can give a realistic view of workplace culture, the effectiveness of policies and practices, the strengths of a business and areas of opportunity or vulnerability. The Listening Circle was facilitated by two BITC trained advisers, with 12 colleagues who volunteered to participate. A report was compiled to highlight main findings and recommendations based on what was heard, ensuring all comments were anonymised.

There were three areas that the participants were asked to consider – career aspirations, culture and the role of leaders.

Insights from this listening circle showed that colleagues felt that, while there are examples of good work being done, there are opportunities for improvement in how Dimensions approaches diversity and inclusion. Participants felt that career progression was a big barrier for many of them and felt that they couldn't climb the ladder at Dimensions. It was evident that experiences varied and not all colleagues were aware of the positive steps that have been taken to address some of the issues raised. It was also evident there are some concerning experiences of racism towards colleagues. A meeting with the participants, EDI manager and the CEO was held in May and a plan of action agreed.

Managers have resources and tools to be able to confidently lead diverse teams

There was an identified need from the human resources team that managers do not feel confident or as informed as needed to understand and support colleagues from diverse backgrounds, be that relating to race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Conflict arises when there is a lack of understanding and biases, conscious and unconscious, appear. This resource was due to be completed by Q4 2022/23 but due to the Target Operating Model (TOM) project the Management Development Lead has had to delay this until end Q2 2023/24. The pathway is intended to be an interactive resource with real life reflections and examples that a manager can complete independently, or use with their teams, and in bite size modules. Discussions have also taken place to consider if elements of this could replace the existing mandatory eLearning for Managers which is very 'dry' and basic.

The view is there would be a much more enriched and in-depth knowledge as a starting point which would be beneficial to both providing person centred support and an inclusive culture for colleagues. The Management Development Lead has had some external advice as well as support from the EDI manager and the Diversity Matters Group champions in the design. Content includes, belonging, leading diverse teams, an inclusion mind-set, cultural awareness, your legal responsibilities and how to respond to a complaint or grievance.



Future actions:

Raise awareness of the mentoring programme and its impact to effect change

We need to consider how the knowledge gained from being reverse mentored can be shared more widely and be used to influence the change needed to address the imbalance of the diversity of our management hierarchy. Developing an alumni group for mentees and mentors to afford some reciprocal support will be considered.

Address the issues raised by colleagues in the BITC Listening Circle

The participants met with the EDI manager and CEO and we now have an action plan in place to address the issues.

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Increase the number of colleagues in employment with disabilities

There has been a slight increase in the number of people we employ with a disability from 7.8 % to 8.4 %.

Just under 34 % of colleagues who completed the disability data identified as being neurodiverse (taking dyslexia and 'other neurodiverse conditions' together.) We have seen an increase in the number of colleagues working for us who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

It has become apparent that on occasion, when a new colleague starts, the manager is not following up what has been recorded on the occupational health report. The impact of this is significant as some colleagues have faced capability hearings for disabilities that have been disclosed. Access to Work will fund 100 % of support for a colleague if the claim is made within the first six weeks of employment.

The supported employment advisor and EDI manager facilitated a session to HRBPS's and HRO's earlier in the year on reasonable adjustments and the EDI manager and the HR director are working together to ensure there is a consistent approach. This will be supported by the centralisation of the HR team as the HR officers will be integral in facilitating this.



This year it was agreed that there would be a centralised reasonable adjustment budget managed by the EDI Manager. The intention of this was to ensure that colleagues that needed resources would not be refused them due to reduced budgets. This is also intended to cover the cost of any BSL translated policies. There is a transparent decision-making process that ensures consideration of cost and impact. Items purchased included laptops, tablets, ergonomic chairs, specialist screens. In some situations, these can be claimed via Access to Work. The current wait for a review however is 12 weeks, so we are able to proceed with requests and recharge if granted.

There has been a very slight decrease in the number of people we employ with a learning disability from 0.6 % to 0.5 %. The changes to working in offices resulted in two colleagues who worked on reception being made redundant. Hybrid working makes it more difficult to support colleagues who need one to one support, but we should still continue with our ambition to recruit more people with a learning disability. As a provider of support for adults with learning disabilities we should be leading by example and consider our ambition for 1 % of our workforce to have a learning disability whenever the opportunity arises.

Improve the experience for colleagues with dyslexia

Of the 8.5 % of colleagues who have completed their diversity information who shared they have a disability, 25 % of them are dyslexic. With 10 % of the UK population thought to be dyslexic, this is a key area of focus as the actual number of colleagues who are dyslexic is highly likely to be higher. The majority of the support that is requested from the Supported Employment Advisor is related to dyslexia and ADHD.

Due to capacity, progress has been slower than planned. We now have ten trained Read and Write champions to support colleagues with getting started with using the tool and trouble shooting. There is a centralised email address for any colleague to ask for support to get started or trouble shoot. The champions either have dyslexia themselves or work on the IT helpdesk.

A focus group has been set up and members have assisted in reviewing accessibility of the new intranet as well as providing feedback on training and internal comms.

The EDI manager has worked with OPUS (the owner of the Medication policy) to revise the procedure for assessing medication competency to ensure adjustments are made to protect both the people we support and colleagues and this is reflected in the revised policy and assessment procedure.

The reasonable adjustment budget has been used to purchase items such as scan pens that are particularly helpful with checking medication spellings. 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. ,

The EDI manager and colleagues in the learning and development team are working together to address some of the challenges that colleagues face when attending training or completing eLearning. There has been positive collaboration, and this is an area we anticipate seeing an improvement in over the next year. Actions include having standardised accessibility guidance when developing eLearning, processes in place to permit colleagues to have access to materials prior to a course if required and a 'review group' to trial a course before it goes live to ensure it is accessible.



Future actions:

Support for colleagues with Dyslexia

The outstanding works in the action plan will continue to reduce the challenges colleagues face. As previously planned we intend to evaluate the impact of this by using a pulse survey to gain colleagues' experiences as well as consulting with the focus group members.

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. The HR director and EDI manager will work collaboratively to address this.

Gender identity

There has been a further increase in the number of colleagues who identify as in transition (identify as a different gender to that they were assigned to at birth) on the colleague data. Currently 43 colleagues have disclosed this information which is an increase from 34 in 2022 and 27 in 2021, which would appear to be positive, both from an inclusive recruitment perspective but also that colleagues feel safe and comfortable to share this information.

We are pleased to have an active diversity champion who is in transition who has been a trusted advisor and ambassador for the Trans community. She has facilitated webinars for colleagues to learn about what it means, correct terminology, dos and don'ts, and the impact for an individual in Transition as well as writing reflective blogs. She has also advised the Management development Lead on appropriate content for Gender Identity in the new 'Leading diverse teams' pathway.



Future actions:

Engage with colleagues who identify as another gender (not male/female) to understand their experiences
As this group were least satisfied in a number of areas in the GPTW survey it is appropriate to explore this in more detail. Guidance for colleagues in transition has been recommended and a review of the guidance for managers is needed.

Discriminatory behaviour from the people we support

As pointed out in the report last year, this is a complex area which has taken a lot of consideration in how to address and manage, as there are responsibilities to both the people we support and to colleagues.

The EDI manager and clinical practitioner team worked collaboratively, and I am pleased to advise that we now have a comprehensive toolkit in place for managers to be able to confidently and consistently address discriminatory behaviour from people we support.

The toolkit has a monitoring resource, 'hot and cold' debrief guidance, social stories, a learning conversation plan, easy read information on the Equality Act, the protected characteristics and what can happen if you display discriminatory behaviour. This has been welcomed by operational colleagues and we hope will give colleagues assurance that Dimensions will not tolerate discrimination from anyone.

The referrals, allocations and new support policy is now explicit in how we will manage referrals when discrimination is a known behaviour.

Bullying and harassment

Since April 2022, there have been 20 recorded allegations of bullying and harassment; seven less than 2021-22. Out of these, five related to protected characteristics compared to three the previous year.

Region	Number of B&H cases related to protected characteristics	Outcomes
East	3	1 x Open 2 x Resignation under investigation
South	1	Resignation under investigation
Discovery	1	Grievance not Upheld

It is concerning that there has been an increase from last year, but this could also be viewed as positive as people feel able to report it. The incidents are not recorded by any particular demographic, so it isn't clear if there is one group being targeted more.

This is an area that was raised within the Business in the Community listening event, and one that needs further consideration. (More detail in the report below).

Better Lives for More People

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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