

4th February 2022

*You can read a summary of this letter in bullet points on page 3.*

Dear family member,

I felt it was important to write to you as soon as possible following this week's government U-turn on mandatory vaccinations for health and social care workers in England so that I can explain what has happened and share our response. I also want to launch our new survey of family members and friends, and remind you about our Family Portal.

So regarding the first point, the government has now decided to retract the requirement for people working in social care to be vaccinated. There will be a short period of consultation before the changes are confirmed, but we fully expect the legislation to be retracted as there is cross-party support for this.

During the initial government consultation, we opposed mandatory vaccination. This was not because we don't want to do everything possible to keep your loved one safe, but because we knew that it would add further pressures on an already struggling sector. However, we have of course had to abide by the legislation and have been working hard over the last number of months to implement the rules. Now that the legislation is being retracted, however, we are no longer seeking to dismiss unvaccinated colleagues and will no longer insist on vaccination of new colleagues.

I imagine some of you will be relieved that unvaccinated support colleagues who are excellent at what they do will now no longer have to leave us in April, but I suspect many more will be anxious that unvaccinated colleagues may present an infection risk to your loved one. What I will say, therefore, is that the health and wellbeing of your loved one remains our top priority and we are not letting up on any of our infection control measures. These include the use of PPE and regular testing – in fact, all colleagues will have to take a lateral flow test before every shift from 16th February. Visitors will still have to obtain a negative lateral flow test on the day of their visit and have their temperature checked.

It is also the case that we remain very much in favour of the vaccination programme and continue to encourage all colleagues to get vaccinated and have their boosters, because the evidence is still clear that the vaccination programme works.

If you have any concerns or questions about this, please feel free to contact our helpline for families from 9.30am to 1.30pm, Monday to Friday, on 0300 303 9161 or by email at [family.helpline@dimensions-uk.org](mailto:family.helpline@dimensions-uk.org).

The second thing I want to share with you in this letter is that we are today launching our biennial survey of family members and friends of the people we support. At Discovery and across

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the Dimensions group, we value your involvement and take your views seriously. This is why we introduced the Family Pledge, and why we would really appreciate it if you could help us to improve the way we support your relative or friend by answering a few questions. You can complete the survey anonymously, but if you would like to be entered in to the prize draw for a £50 gift voucher, we will need you to provide your name and postal, or email, address at the end of the form. Your answers will be kept confidential.

A print version of the survey is attached to this letter, and you can also complete it online here: <https://dimensionsurveys.survey.fm/discovery>. There are different versions of the survey for each region so that we can analyse the results more fully. If you complete the form by hand, then it can be posted back to “Freepost DIMENSIONS” (just these two words) by Friday 25th March 2022. You may copy this form or send the link to another relative or friend if they would also like to complete it. Thank you very much for taking part.

Finally, I would like to remind you about our Family Portal. This gives you a window into the daily life of your loved one and I hope it will make it even easier for you to feel closely connected to them and fully aware of how we support them to thrive. All family members of people we support who have their daily notes recorded on iplanit can use the Family Portal. You can see your loved one’s calendar and find out what they’re up to today, next week or next month. You can also use it to take a look at their latest photos, review their detailed daily records – ranging from health information to what they had for dinner – and explore the things they are working towards as part of their Activate outcomes.

Different people will be able to see different things. For example, perhaps a person we support would like his or her whole family to have access to their photo albums, but not to his or her personal medical details. So long as the person has the capacity to choose, they make the decisions on who sees what. If a person lacks capacity to choose, then a Best Interests meeting must be held and decisions can be made from there.

Full information about the Family Portal, including guides on how to use it, is available on our website ([www.dimensions-uk.org](http://www.dimensions-uk.org)). Simply click on ‘Best practice’ and then scroll down to the first item in the ‘Features of our support’ section. If you would like to have an account set up on the Family Portal, please speak to your loved one’s locality manager who will be able to do this for you. If you need any support with using it, then please contact our Helpline for Families. Please also be aware that there is no requirement to use the Family Portal and we completely understand if you would rather not.

As you will know, my time as Dimensions Group Chief Executive is coming to end and I will shortly be passing on the reins to my very able successor, Rachael Dodgson. I will be writing one last time to you later this month with my farewells.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Scown  
Chief Executive  
Dimensions Group (including Discovery)

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Discovery Support Ltd is a charitable registered society number 12345.  
Building 1430, Arlington Business Park, Theale, Reading RG7 4SA.

## Key points from the letter

- The government has reversed its decision to make vaccination against Covid-19 necessary for all health and social workers in England from 1st April.
- The government is also ending the requirement for workers in Registered Care Homes to be vaccinated against Covid-19.
- Therefore we will no longer be dismissing unvaccinated colleagues.
- Also, vaccination will no longer be a requirement for new colleagues.
- We remain in favour of vaccination and will continue to encourage colleagues and the people we support to get vaccinated and to have their booster jab.
- We will continue to implement all of our infection control measures to keep people safe.
- If you have any questions, you can contact our helpline for families on 0300 303 9161 or by email at [family.helpline@dimensions-uk.org](mailto:family.helpline@dimensions-uk.org).
- Please take part in our survey of family members and friends by visiting this website: <https://dimensionssurveys.survey.fm/discovery> – or by completing the attached form.
- The survey is confidential and you can remain anonymous if you wish. If you do provide your contact details, you can be entered into a prize draw.
- Please also consider whether you would like to set up an account on our Family Portal so that you can know more about the support your loved one is receiving – although we completely understand if you would rather not.
- Steve Scown will write to families again later this month before he leaves and Rachael Dodgson becomes chief executive.

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## Family and friends survey 2022

### Taking your views seriously

At Discovery we value your involvement and take your views seriously. This is why we introduced the Family Pledge. Please help us improve the way we support your relative or friend by answering a few questions below. You can complete this anonymously, but if you would like to be entered in to the prize draw for a £50 gift voucher- we will need you to provide your name and postal, or email, address at the end of the form. Your answers will be kept confidential.

This form can also be completed online at <https://dimensionssurveys.survey.fm/discovery>, this saves us time and postage costs. If you complete this form by hand then it can be posted back to **Freepost DIMENSIONS** (just these two words) by **Friday 25th March 2022**. You may copy this form or send the link to another relative or friend if they would also like to complete it. Thank you for taking part.

#### Question 1: How long has your relative / friend been receiving support from Discovery?

Please tick one of the following options:

- Less than a year   
  1 - 3 years   
  4 - 5 years   
  6 - 10 years   
  10 + years   
  Don't know

#### Question 2: Which of the following service types does your relative / friend receive from Discovery? Choose one or more from the following options:

- A residential care home, registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)   
  Supported living

Other - Please say what:

#### Question 3: Has your relative or friend got a direct payment?

- Yes   
  No   
  Not sure

#### Question 4: How old is your relative or friend?

- Under 25   
  25 - 34   
  35 - 44   
  45 - 54   
  55 - 64   
  65+

#### Question 5: What relation are you to the person receiving support?

- Parent   
  Brother or sister   
  Other relative   
  Legal guardian   
  Friend   
  Other - Please specify:

#### Question 6: Overall, how would you rate the service your relative/friend receives from Discovery?

- Very poor   
  Poor   
  Acceptable   
  Good   
  Very good   
  Excellent

#### Question 7: In your opinion, is the support Discovery provides better than that which you have previously experienced?

- Yes   
  No   
  Not applic.

Please use this box for any additional comments:

**Question 8:** Overall, how satisfied are you with the way Discovery supports your involvement with your relative or friend?

Not at all					Neutral					Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 9:** How likely would you be to recommend Discovery to a friend?

Never					Neutral					Definitely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tick one box for each of the following statements.

<b>Question 10:</b> During Covid-19 Discovery has done its best to...	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Keep my loved one safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain my contact with my loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain my loved one's quality of life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Question 11:</b> Getting to know each other	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applic.
I have an information pack about Discovery containing contact details for staff and managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have seen One Page Profiles for each member of staff who provides day to day support to my relative or friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am invited to 'family and friend' events such as forums and listening events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New staff always introduce themselves to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have sent my own One Page Profile to my relative's house/service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how my One Page Profile will be used by staff to get to know me better	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Question 12:</b> Making decisions	Yes	No	Not sure	Not applic.
I have information about the Mental Capacity Act	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am as involved as I want to be in my relative or friend's day to day decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am involved in the Best Interests decision making process for major issues like surgery or moving house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Question 13:</b> Communicating	Yes	No	Not applic.
I have a good level of contact with my relative or friend's support staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If my calls are not answered immediately, they are always responded to within two working days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My concerns are acted on promptly and respectfully	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Question 14: Being involved with your relative or friend</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
I am involved in creating and reviewing my relative or friend's support plan			
I am invited to attend an annual review at a time that is convenient to me			
Plans and agreements made in meetings are carried out effectively			
When vacancies arise I am given the opportunity to be involved in recruiting new support staff for my relative or friend			
I am told of any changes to the staff team that will affect on my relative or friend			
My relative or friend is supported to send cards and presents to extended family members and friends as appropriate			

<b>Question 15: Being involved and informed about Discovery</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
I receive letters from Steve Scown, Dimensions CEO		
I have an opportunity to attend a Listening Event to share my views each year		
I have an informal opportunity to meet with staff at least once a year		
I have an informal opportunity to meet with other families at least once a year		
I know how to pass on a compliment		
I know how to nominate someone for a staff award		

<b>Question 16: Health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No but would like to</b>	<b>Offered but declined</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
I have an opportunity to contribute to my relative or friend's health plan each year				
I am told about planned health appointments in advance				
I am told about new health concerns within 24 hours				

<b>Question 17: Please rate the following</b>	<b>1</b> Not at all	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Very well
Staff understand my relative or friend's support needs										
Staff keep my relative or friend safe										
Staff respect personal possessions (e.g. clothes, money)										
Staff support my relative or friend to take part in activities										

<b>Question 18: When things go wrong</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
I know what to do if I am not happy with an aspect of my relative or friend's support service		
I know how to make a complaint		
I am confident that if I raise concerns, they are acted on		

**Question 19:** What is the most important thing we can do to support your relative or friend to stay healthy?

**Question 20:** If there is anything else you would like to tell us, please put it in the box below, continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

**About you:** Promoting equality and respecting diversity are important to us, and so we ask for demographic details to make sure we're doing well. We would appreciate it if you could complete this section, although it is **optional**. All information is confidential and stored in accordance with data protection laws.

**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**  Yes  No  Prefer not to say

**If yes please click all that apply:**  Hearing  Speech  Visual

Learning Disability  Dyslexia  Other neurodiversity (such as dyscalculia, autism)

Mobility  Mental Health  Musculoskeletal (including back, neck and shoulder)

Long-term health condition (e.g. diabetes, Multiple Sclerosis, heart condition, epilepsy)

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your gender?**  Female  Male  Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your age:**  Under 25  25 - 34  35 - 44  45 - 54

55 - 64  65+  Prefer not to say

**Your religion:**  No religion  Buddhist  Christian  Hindu

Jewish  Muslim  Sikh  Other  Prefer not to say

**Your ethnicity:**  Prefer not to say

**White**  British  English  Welsh  Scottish

Irish  European (non-British)  Non-European  Other

**Mixed heritage**  White and Black Caribbean  White and Black African  White and Asian  Other mixed background

**Asian/Asian British**  Indian  Pakistani  Bangladeshi  Other Asian

**Black/Black British**  Caribbean  African  Other Black background

**Gypsy or Traveller**  Romany Gypsy  Irish traveller  Welsh traveller  Other Gypsy or traveller group

**Chinese or other**  Chinese  Any other background

If you would like to enter the draw for a gift voucher, please provide your name and address:

Now please place your completed survey into an envelope and post to it to: **Freepost DIMENSIONS.** You only need to write these two words on the envelope Thank you very much for your time in filling out this questionnaire and helping us to improve our service to you. A short report of our findings will be available later in the year.

Jan 2022 • Survey number:

(Office use only)