Equality Diversity & Inclusion

Annual Report

Introduction

This is the first annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion review report that has been published on our website.

The report provides a review of the areas worked on, progress made and our intentions of what we intend to do next.

The pandemic has quite rightly focussed attention elsewhere which has impacted on progress and attention to the EDI agenda over the last year, but I am pleased to advise that despite this, some actions have been fulfilled and a commitment to the work in this area has continued. The diversity champions continued to meet virtually and they have assisted when capacity has allowed.

Lisa Govier
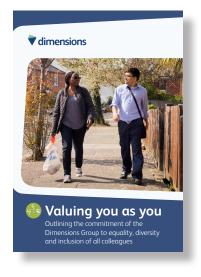**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager**

Great Place to Work survey results

We have recently been awarded the Great Place to Work accreditation, which we have now achieved for three years in a row.

The recent Great Places to Work survey results relating the equality and diversity are a testament to the actions achieved and the progress made over the last year despite the challenges it has brought. It was noted that the least satisfied colleagues were in the younger age range (up to 25 years). It is our intention to run some focus groups to understand the issues.

Dimensions values me as me

To show and celebrate the diversity of our colleagues we published a brochure and film called, 'Dimensions values me as me.'

The aim of these is to promote that Dimensions values all colleagues 'not despite their diversity but because of it.'

These were shared with all of our colleagues. They are published on our website and intranet and also shared with all new starters to Dimensions.

Resources
Film:
https://youtu.be/NSdVyZ_3q4Q
Brochure:
https://dimensions-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/ED-Brochure-2020.pdf

Future actions:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion from Induction

To be able to have an inclusive culture that respects diversity and promotes equality, it has to start when people join Dimensions. It is at the core of everything we do, our values and our practices. A message will be included in inductions of what to expect and what's expected in relation to equality and diversity to make this clear.

Great Place To Work survey results

We are going to run some focus groups so we can understand the reasons why our younger colleagues said they were unhappy.

Embed a reflection culture of addressing unconscious bias

There is evidence that just doing 'unconscious bias' training isn't enough to change behaviour. When we are busy it is easy to make decisions based on our unconscious biases.

It has been agreed to implement an approach called 'Caution-Pause-Reflect' whenever a decision is made. This will help to change behaviour as it allows time for the colleague to reflect on the decision and what has led them to this.

All of our managers will complete the Unconscious Bias Pathway so they are clear about what this means. Information about this will be sent out to colleagues. The 'Cause-Pause-Reflect' approach will be added to any relevant policies and practices.

Diversity information of colleagues

At the time of this report, May 2021, 5038 colleagues have completed their diversity information.

In the last year only 51 % of new starters have completed their diversity information. We are currently reviewing the information given out when colleagues have received a job offer and when they start their jobs to make sure more colleagues complete their diversity information.

Future actions:

Continue to encourage colleagues to complete their diversity information

This information is needed to monitor the diversity of our workforce and identify areas that need focus and resource.

Ethnicity pay gap reporting

We are seeking clarification on how much data we need to be able to accurately report this.

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

Currently there are gaps in the data we have for the people we support and very limited information on the types of disability they have. We need to ensure that the data of the people we support reflects best practice of data collection, in line with the office for national statistics dataset. We will do this through making changes to the current diversity information we record for the people we support on our systems and managers will complete this information. So the people we support can understand why we need this information, we will write an easy read guide called 'Why we ask for your personal information'.

KPI 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 are currently reviewing this KPI to reflect the sector average and set a KPI accordingly for 2021/22.

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. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager is working with the Learning and Development team to develop a 'pathway' that will give a range of opportunities to colleagues of colour to develop skills that will help them progress within Dimensions. This includes reverse mentoring, being a panel member in senior management recruitment, group coaching and providing mentors.

We have had some useful discussions with external organisations that specialise in this area within our sector. We have also changed our recruitment process to have the same principles as the Disability Confident Scheme, using positive action.

After signing up to the Race at Work Charter, we have joined Business in The Community Membership which will aid our work in the area with some expert advice.

Inclusive Leadership and Increasing the Diversity of our Board members

The National Housing Federation Code of Governance requires a level of accountability of the EDI objectives and ambitions. The Company Secretary and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager have been supporting the Board and Executive team to review the Board structure and recruitment process, looking at what changes can be made to ensure more diverse representation. This includes new positions of committee members, changes to roles, changes to adverts, and how and where they are placed. A 'critical friend' role will be included in the recruitment process to ensure that consideration is given to decisions from a diverse perspective and to give insight on potential unconscious bias.

Future actions:

Increasing the ethnic diversity of managers at senior levels

We have made significant progress in this area and we need to make sure the new principles are included in our recruitment practices as well as formalise the development opportunities for this group.

Increasing the ethnic diversity of first level managers – Assistant Locality Manager and above

We used People Count data to set a target of increasing the ethnic diversity of first level managers to 6.9 %. We have gone above this target. The Skills for Care report shows 17 % of managers in our sector are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, so we are going to increase our measure to 12 % for this year.

Reverse mentoring

The pilot of reverse mentoring for leadership group members was launched in November with Steve Scown leading by example. The feedback received so far has all been very positive from both sides. Six colleagues are currently being mentored for a period of six months. 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 reverse mentoring after this time if they both want to.

We are currently planning to train another group of colleagues. This is to ensure that we don't 'exhaust' our existing mentors. This is also considered a development opportunity for the mentors; developing relationships with senior managers they wouldn't ordinarily have the opportunity to do. We are intending to share some stories about the impact this has had with a 'why wouldn't you want to take this opportunity' message.

Future actions:

Make reverse mentoring part of 'every day' practice for senior managers

We need to build on the success of the pilot and share the tangible difference this has made to the business. We may in future wish to consider offering this to other groups as the diversity of our workforce changes.

Section 5 – Colleagues with disabilities

Target to increase the number of colleagues in employment with disabilities

We have exceeded our target to increase the number of colleagues we employ with a disability. However the number we employ who have a learning disability is still below 1 %. Although this is likely to be higher due to the challenges of completing the data, it is still likely to be a lot less than the national average of 6 %.

Our dedicated Supported Employment Advisor has made great progress in working with colleagues with a learning disability and/or autism and their managers and has supported them to complete Access to Work applications to gain additional support and funding. She has been identifying barriers that colleagues face and we have been working with departments to reduce these.

One particular area of work has been on adjustments in training. Virtual training has caused some challenges, particularly for deaf colleagues. We have worked with the Learning and Development team to develop a set of principles to follow when developing eLearning to make sure it is as accessible as possible.

Louder than Words Charter

After a robust review which required an evidenced based self-assessment we have retained our Louder than Words accreditation for another year. This demonstrates our commitment to making sure we are an inclusive employer for colleagues who are deaf or have hearing loss.

Policies translated to British Sign Language videos

Key policies, or those that were considered to be most necessary, have been translated to BSL videos. This link to the Grievance policy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AE8vIjr_lvM gives an example of how they work. These are critical in ensuring that our deaf colleagues know what to do in certain situations.

Future actions:

Making sure there are opportunities to retain and recruit colleagues with learning disabilities and autism to achieve our target of 1%.
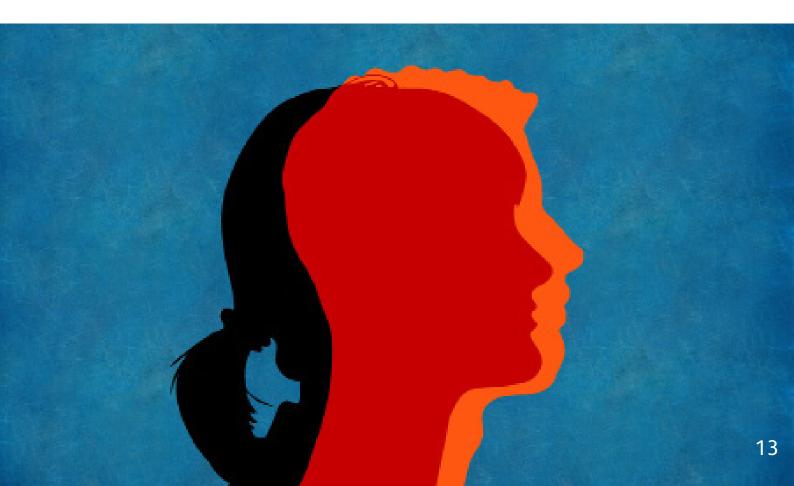
We need to make sure colleagues know about the adjustments that can be made to support people to work for us and stay working for us and to also make use of the external resources, funding and expertise that are available.

Gender identity

We are fortunate to have some colleagues who are in transition or who have transitioned whilst working for us. Currently 27 colleagues have shared that they are in transition.

With their support we have written a manager's guide, a guide for colleagues, people we support and family members. They are all available for use.

Support during COVID

With the support of our diversity champions we were able to consult over how to engage with our colleagues from BAME backgrounds to ensure the risks of COVID were considered in light of the evidence that there was greater risk to this group. This enabled risk assessments to be completed with sensitivity, ensuring that colleagues were protected and risk reduced.

Clear masks have been provided for colleagues who are deaf or have hearing loss or autism, and where people we support would benefit from colleagues wearing these. There is a need for a robust risk assessment as the protocols for use of clear masks differs to standard Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Colleagues are very appreciative of this adjustment as it has been extremely challenging for them when trying to communicate with colleagues and people we support.
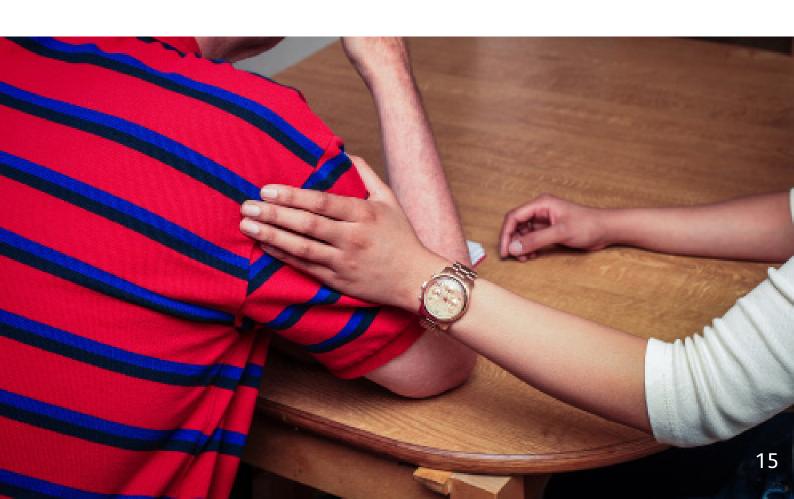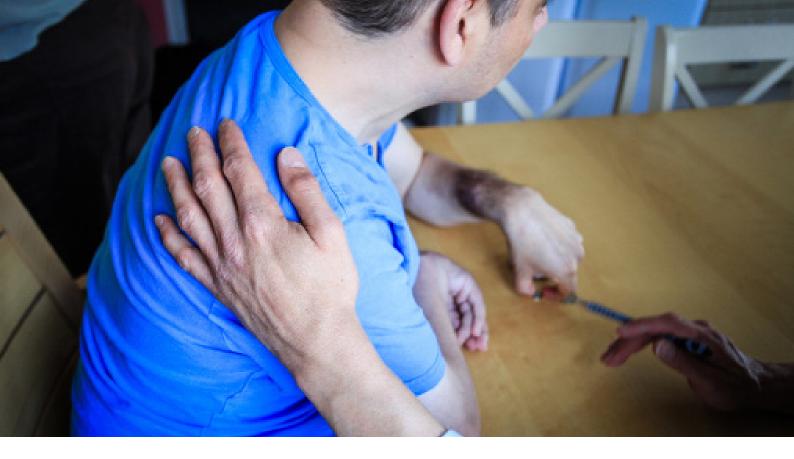
Supporting colleagues with discriminatory behaviour from the people we support

With the events of last year highlighting Black Lives Matter and the inequalities faced by people of colour has led to an increase of managers reporting discriminatory behaviour from people we support. A group of diversity champions created resources for the people we support to address some of these issues. The resources are a 'safety cross' that records incidents and easy read guides about the Equality Act and protected characteristics. We are committed to reviewing some of our policies to ensure we protect our colleagues from these situations.

Bullying and Harassment

There is now a formal process for recording incidents of bullying and harassment. Three incidents have been recorded since July 2020, and only one relating to a protected characteristic; religion.

Future actions:

Addressing discrimination from people we support

There are some challenges that this presents with protecting the rights of people we support versus protecting our colleagues. It has been agreed that when polices are reviewed, consideration of the impact for both colleagues and people we support will be given and adjustments made if necessary. The Business Development team are also considering what information is obtained at point of referrals so where behaviours of discrimination are known, appropriate support and guidance is in place.

dimensions

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:

www.dimensions-uk.org
0300 303 9001

Find us on social media @DimensionsUK

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