

Award Winning Talent & Career Coaching at Dimensions

Business Culture Awards 2017
Winner

Context

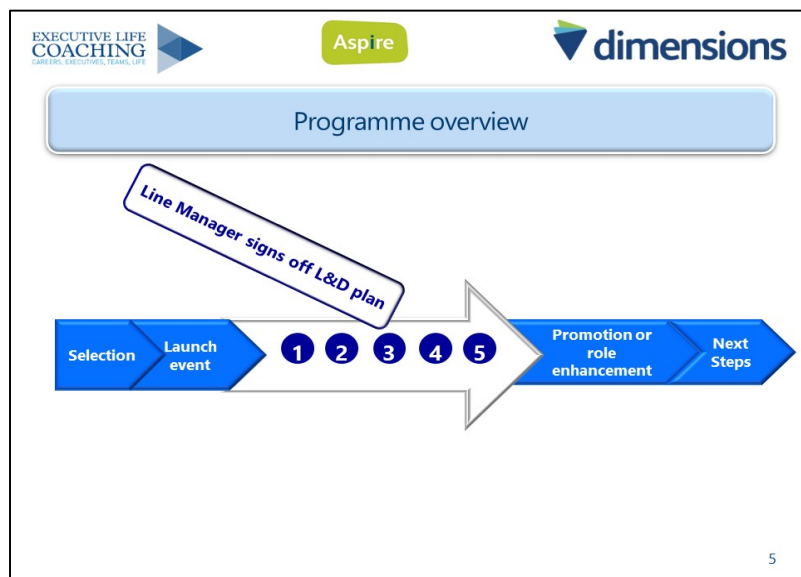


Dimensions UK is a not-for-profit organisation which supports adults with learning disabilities, autism, and complex needs to live rewarding lives in their local communities.

Staff retention in the social care sector is not only critical for day-to-day operations, it also facilitates lasting, trusting relationships with the people Dimensions support and is a badge of quality. In 2014 a Dimensions staff survey indicated two thirds of the workforce felt there were few opportunities for career progression. This was endorsed by their Investors in People assessment, which highlighted career development as an improvement area.

With no structured programme to help people develop their careers, Dimensions chose Executive Life Coaching to co-create and deliver their Aspire Career Development programme. The programme piloted in 2015 and with 58 new participants joining in April 2018, over 300 people have participated, coached by a team of 3, including and managed by Angela Sabin.

What is involved in Aspire



After attending a launch event, participants have 5, 90-minute career coaching sessions in which they each identify and progress towards their next career step. Their goals could be related to promotion, taking a different career direction within Dimensions or perhaps enriching their current role.

Supporting participants to enrich their roles is just one innovative aspect of this programme. Aspire enables participants to purposefully replicate times in their working lives when they have felt most alive and energised by their work, then participate in organisational projects or enhance their current role accordingly. This culture of enrichment means not one participant has

ever commented 'I'm not doing that, as it's not in my job description'. Instead they say, "Let's add this to my role because I absolutely love doing it".

In addition to goal setting, coaching helps participants to prepare and implement a learning and development plan to enable them to fulfil their career plans. One challenge we overcame was maximising the budget, given the geographical spread of participants. The coaching team at Exec Life have a proven track record, backed by research, of coaching using video calls. This enabled us to conduct four sessions a day, with clients from different locations, and save travel expenses. Initially, some were sceptical about this innovative approach, yet the results achieved persuaded people across Dimensions that this worked. Another innovative approach has been the use of a L&D plan which is purposely designed to ensure 70% of development is encompassed into daily work. This development is supplemented by 'off the job' development such as workshops. Our bespoke client centred approach enables us to utilise L&D plans to highlight appropriate workshop topics. For example, having courageous conversations or learning mentoring skills have been two of the most requested workshops. Our flexibility reflects the person-centred approach Dimensions take when providing support and this has co-created a culture between Executive Life Coaching and Dimensions, reflecting their ethos, culture, and values. Participants often remark on how the person-centred 'feel' to the Aspire programme matches the way they work. We have co-created a 'hotline' to quickly identify intersections between Regional, National, and functional projects, with areas of passionate interest or learning needs of individual participants.

The person-centred approach has also created flexible opportunities for participants, right from attending their launch event, through to how they complete supporting materials and how long they are on the programme. They are empowered to make their Aspire journey a good fit for them, based on individual needs. We believe this is one of the reasons we see such a significant increase in engagement and motivation.

<i>What was Aspire meant to achieve?</i>	<i>What has Aspire achieved?</i>
Reduce staff turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5.6% average annual turnover rate of participants compared to 15.9% for Dimensions overall and 27% for the Social Care sector. ■ Saving staff turnover cost c £50k ■ 87% feel Dimensions is a better place to work than other organisations in the sector.
Create a platform for promotion and role enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 52% report career growth within the first 6 months of their programme.
Match Dimensions' values with how people do their work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 100% say the work they do relates to Dimensions values
Reflect the desirability of working at Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 88% feel Dimensions offers good opportunities for career growth
Increase confidence there are career opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 92% are confident they can progress their career at Dimensions ■ 15% increase in positive response from the re-run of staff survey.

Increased staff engagement

- 94% report they feel more connected to their work as a result of the programme
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Increased motivation

- 94% report more motivation as a result of participating in Aspire
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Deliver a return on Investment

- Demonstrable ROI is at least 2:1
-

**Results
beyond
measure**

The data is important, yet only part of the success story. We hear frequently about moving, profound, life-enhancing results for individuals – not just those on the programme itself, but the people that Dimensions supports. Just 2 examples: “I used my new-found confidence to challenge medical professionals – resulting in saving the sight of the person I support.”

“I’ve been teaching Makaton. As a result, the person I support is now using verbal communication for the first time. The other day he even asked his Mum if she wanted a cup of tea. She couldn’t believe it – he’d never done that before”. To hear this client, describe this and other benefits, [click](#) to watch the video below:



And to [hear from](#) just one more participant:

**Reference**

“Initially, there were some in our organisation who were sceptical about whether [Angela’s] proposal would deliver what it needed to. Any doubts from the individual clients were quickly dispelled when the programme started. The feedback was simply outstanding - I remember one colleague citing Angela as someone who had helped transform her thinking entirely. This was typical of other clients on the programme”. Simon Gosney, Head of Learning and Development, Dimensions. Mobile: 0770 297 3011, Office: 0300 303 9135 Ext: 1152
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