

# Embracing Difference-Neurodiversity in the workplace

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# What is Neurodivergence?



## What is Neurodivergence

Neurodivergence is the term for when someone's brain processes, learns, and/or behaves differently from what is considered "typical."

The term neurodivergence is used to encompass a range of consistent ways that some brains work differently than others.

- What do you think some of the most common examples of neurodivergence may be?

### Autism

Characterized by differences in social interaction and communication and thought patterns, great attention to detail, strong focus skills, creativity, and visual learning abilities.

### ADHD

Characterized by differences in managing thoughts, attention, behaviours, and emotions, out-of-the-box thinking, great problem solving, sensitive to others

### Dyslexia

typically associated with differences in written and verbal comprehension and presentation, strong narrative reasoning, great visual learning and presenting skills.

### Dyspraxia

affects co-ordination skills –balance, playing sports driving. Dyspraxia can also affect your fine motor skills, such as writing or using small objects, creative and original thinking and problem solving.

This is not an exhaustive list, but highlights some of the most common traits falling under the neurodivergence

After hearing about the different types of neurodivergence how do you think neurodivergent people may experience the workplace compared to someone who is neurotypical?

### Hiding

- Neurodivergent people may “hide” their neurodivergence or develop coping mechanisms such as masking their differences.

### Employment

- Recruitment and retainment practices may be inaccessible.

### Understanding

- Difference in how behaviour is perceived between neurodivergent and neurotypical people
- Managers and employers need to understand neurodivergence to effectively support

The workplace is often built for neurotypical people, which leads to poorer accessibility for neurodivergent people.

## Barbara's approach

Barbara Molony-Oates-Co-chair of the Royal Surrey Staff Disability and Wellness Network discusses what it feels like to be a dyslexic autistic person with ADHD going through the recruitment process, and what changes we can make to support colleagues with disability.



[NHS Barbaras Approach Article \(adobe.com\)](https://www.adobe.com/uk/pressroom/articles/nhs-barbaras-approach.html)

## Embracing Difference-The Neurodiversity Workforce Pledge

Working with the Metropolitan Police, Experts by Experience, the Greater London Authority and NHS England the Neurodiversity Workforce Pledge has been developed-this pledge will ask for commitment from London employers to create and maintain transformational changes to support Neurodivergent people in their employment.



Signatories of the pledge commit to:

- 1. Improving the understanding of neurodivergence in the workplace**
- 2. Creating internal transparency and appointing neurodivergence champions**
- 3. Creating and maintaining enabling working environments and work patterns**

The pledge contains a comprehensive list of recommendations for success, signatories will join a wider network of employers who will share best practice examples and signpost to other areas of support.

The pledge is in draft and will soon be moving towards publication. To become an early adopter, please get in contact with the London Region LDA Programme team-[england.ldateamlondon@nhs.net](mailto:england.ldateamlondon@nhs.net)

## How can you support Neurodivergence in the workplace?

### Inclusive recruitment

#### Examples:

- explicitly state that neurodivergent individuals are welcome to apply to advertised roles
- invite for reasonable adjustments to be offered to all applicants prior to interview
- Making job adverts, job descriptions and supporting information is accessible, with concise and reformatted versions available to applicants.
- ensure that all recruiting managers are aware of procedures for providing reasonable adjustments

### Improving understanding of neurodiversity

#### Examples:

- Appointing neurodiversity champions in the workplace who can offer peer-to-peer training
- building of neurodiversity staff networks.
- ensuring that all staff within their organisation have received training to improve their understanding of neurodivergence in the workplace

### Creating and maintaining enabling environments

#### Examples:

- allow for flexible working patterns (e.g. allowing staff to travel at non-peak times)
- offer adjustments to all staff proactively rather than offering reactive support (e.g. noise attenuating ear plugs, quiet office spaces and opportunities to work from home)
- ensure that all managers are equipped to accommodate adjustments staff might need in the workplace
- ensure that training packages are accessible and adaptable for all employees

### Commitment to change/training

#### Examples:

- establish clear workplace directives for accommodating reasonable adjustments, as well as introducing processes to challenge when this hasn't been followed
- include neurodiversity in equality and diversity training considerations
- include information on how to request and accommodate adjustments in mandatory and statutory training
- connect with neurodiversity networks and commit to continuous improvement

**Questions?**

