

## Bosses urged to do more to support neurodiverse staff

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Report shows staff turnover reduced by proactive support.

New research published today by workplace expert Acas, highlights the importance of training and proactive action to support neurodiverse staff.

Neurodiversity describes the natural differences in how people's brains process information, and how they feel and behave. Well-known types of neurodivergence include neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia.

The report emphasises the importance of training and supporting managers, so they know how to treat and support their neurodivergent staff.

The research shows that creating inclusive environments and personalised adjustments can be achieved proactively, without the need for a formal diagnosis or staff disclosure.

Acas Interim Chief Executive Dan Ellis said:

"It is estimated that between 15% and 20% of UK adults are neurodivergent. This is a potentially enormous number of workers who may not be getting the support they need.

"Our research outlines the urgent need to put support for neurodivergent people at the heart of workplace policies and training, and the huge benefits for businesses when that happens.

"Taking steps to support neurodivergent staff is often quick, easy and inexpensive, but the advantages can be widespread. We encourage employers to make sure they do everything they can to support their staff."

The independent research was conducted by Birkbeck, University of London, for Acas. The researchers combined insights from experts working in neuroinclusion, in-depth case studies and a summary of published evidence.

The research found that neuroinclusion is possible in all workplaces, whether large or small. The research documents good practice including how to manage performance in neurodiverse teams and the benefit of small changes, such as accessible written materials.

The research found that one small business which is incorporating neuroinclusion proactively, reduced its staff turnover to 8%, against a national average of 34%.

The report found that:

- proactively supporting neurodivergent staff and creating inclusive work environments where neurodivergent talents are supported can benefit everyone at work
- mandatory and regularly updated neurodiversity training is key to promoting inclusive workplaces
- line managers are pivotal in supporting neurodivergent employees so it's vital they have the necessary training to facilitate inclusion

- being proactive in making reasonable adjustments shouldn't require a diagnosis or formal disclosure from staff
- specialised adjustments may require balancing of individual and organisational needs – smaller businesses with limited resources may find external support from organisations like Acas useful

Professor Almuth McDowall at Birkbeck, University of London leads a research centre dedicated to supporting neurodivergent talent.

She said:

"It was a privilege to learn from our participants and share good practice. It is very important that neuroinclusion is part of wider conversations about workplace equity and inclusion.

"Conversations about adjustments should focus on performance optimisation to harness neurodivergent talent. Simple and centralised processes are important to reduce the burden on managers.

"Our case studies show that good practice can reduce turnover to as low as 8%. Organisations should set themselves clear targets for neuroinclusion and monitor and publish data."

The report also shows that some workplaces are taking an innovative approach to neuroinclusion.

Jodie Hill is Managing Partner at Thrive Law, a business that prioritises inclusion and support for its neurodivergent staff. She said:

"The benefits of introducing reasonable adjustments for neurodivergent staff at Thrive have been overwhelming, particularly for me as a neurodivergent leader.

"Having the adjustments in place not only helps me, but it helps my team, and my clients, understand my needs.

"By creating a neurodiverse workplace, we create a competitive advantage and a workplace that has cognitive differences. We support people's strengths and create an environment where those individuals can thrive."

[Read the full report on neurodiversity at work](#)

## Media enquiries

[Contact the Acas press office](#)

## Background notes

1. The report, written by Almuth McDowall, Julia Gawronska, Kevin Teoh and Alexandra Beauregard at Birkbeck, University of London, and published by Acas, looks at neurodiversity in UK workplaces.

2. The research looked at prevalent workplace trends, stakeholder consultations, and guidance and best practice from organisations with an interest in supporting neurodiverse staff.

3. Read more in:

- [Acas's advice about neurodiversity at work](#)
- [CIPD's report on benchmarking employee turnover](#)

4. Watch Acas's videos on:

- [what neurodiversity is](#)
- [neurodiversity at work](#)

5. Founded in 1823, Birkbeck, University of London is known for world-class research and for learning opportunities that are designed to fit around its students' busy lives, allowing them to work and build a career or pursue other interests whilst they study. Located in central London, its in-person on-campus teaching is complemented with excellent online learning opportunities and resources.