

Making your organisation neuroinclusive

As an employer, making your organisation more inclusive for neurodivergent employees can have many benefits.

For example, it can:

- improve staff wellbeing
- reduce absence levels and employee turnover
- attract employees with a wider range of skills and experience
- reduce the risk of disputes and legal claims, for example about discrimination

It can also make employees feel comfortable talking about neurodivergence. This means they're more likely to get the support they need and perform their best at work.

Actively including neurodivergent employees at work is sometimes called 'neuroinclusion'.

Ways to make your organisation neuroinclusive include:

- considering support for all employees, so neurodivergent employees can get support without having to share their neurodivergence
- reviewing your recruitment process
- training and supporting managers
- raising awareness of neurodiversity
- having a neurodiversity policy

If you're a small organisation with limited resources, you might not be able to do all of these. But there's still a lot you can do. Making your organisation neuroinclusive does not have to be costly or complicated.

Considering support for all workers

There might be some things you can put in place for everyone at work. This can help neurodivergent workers get support without having to share their neurodivergence. For example:

- offering noise-cancelling headphones to all workers
- having a private, quiet space that anyone can use

Putting support in place for everyone should not replace reasonable adjustments required by law.

[Find out more about reasonable adjustments for neurodiversity](#)

Reviewing your recruitment process

You should review your recruitment process to make sure it does not exclude neurodivergent applicants.

For example, when you're advertising a job you should:

- clearly explain which skills and experience are essential for the role and which are only desirable
- offer different ways to complete the application
- mention neurodivergence when referring to disability – for example, if you're explaining that you're part of the [Disability Confident employer scheme](#)
- make it clear applicants can ask for reasonable adjustments and they do not need a diagnosis
- give examples of reasonable adjustments
- replace recruitment jargon with clear language that's specific to the role

To help make your interview process inclusive, you should:

- train interviewers in how to avoid making assumptions based upon an applicant's body language or social behaviour
- where possible, allow applicants to see the questions before the interview
- hold interviews or assessments in suitable, quiet spaces away from other distractions
- consider alternatives to interviews, such as short paid work trials or practical assessments

Most of these things:

- are easy to do
- cost very little, or nothing at all
- will help all applicants and people doing recruitment

[Find out more about recruitment](#)

Example of inclusive recruitment

A bakery is hiring a new shop assistant. An autistic applicant asks to see the interview questions in advance.

The employer considers this and agrees to provide most of the questions. One question is designed to test how someone deals with unexpected questions. The employer and applicant agree that question will not be shared before the interview.

Training and supporting managers

Managing a team with different needs and ways of learning can be challenging and rewarding.

To make sure managers have the skills to support and get the best out of a neurodiverse team, you should:

- provide training opportunities – for example, on handling reasonable adjustments and discrimination
- make sure managers know how to use your neurodiversity policy, if you have one
- encourage collaboration between managers across the organisation to share experiences and approaches
- give them the time and authority to do things that promote neurodiversity inclusion
- give them access to any resources that can help them – for example, support from HR or occupational health advice
- remind them to have regular one-to-one meetings where team members can discuss any support they need
- encourage them to regularly review their team's workload
- monitor things you put in place to make sure they're having a positive effect

A lot of these steps involve sharing information and talking about neurodiversity. Managers should not share anything they've agreed with a worker to keep confidential.

When someone's manager changes

Make sure managers understand what to do when they're handing over a worker to a new manager.

For example, they should:

- agree with the worker what to keep confidential
- where possible, have a meeting with the old manager, new manager and worker
- pass on relevant information about a worker's neurodivergence, including any adjustments they have in place – a worker might have a [record of their reasonable adjustments](#)
- share any useful tips and resources

This will help the new manager continue to support the worker.

Raising awareness of neurodiversity

Raising awareness of neurodiversity can help make talking about it feel normalised and comfortable. This can reduce problems and lead to more workers getting the support they need.

To raise awareness of neurodiversity, you can:

- include it in your organisation's mandatory training
- run awareness days and campaigns
- encourage senior workers to act as role models
- set up a staff network for neurodiversity
- let workers know what support is available through your recognised trade union
- make sure you're always considering accessibility needs
- cover the topic in induction materials

Mandatory training

Where possible, you should include neurodiversity in your organisation's mandatory training.

This can help you:

- set out your commitment to being inclusive as soon as workers start at your organisation
- provide a supportive environment for neurodivergent workers without them having to share their condition

Mandatory training on neurodiversity does not have to be long or complicated. For example, you could include it as part of other equality and inclusion training.

Awareness days and campaigns

Neurodiversity campaigns or awareness days can help educate workers.

You might be able to do these in line with national events. For example, running activities as part of [National Inclusion Week](#) or [Neurodiversity Celebration Week](#).

There might be neurodivergent workers in your organisation happy to share their experiences. For example, talking about challenges they face at work and how they overcome them.

They could share this in the way they feel most comfortable. For example, writing a blog post or presenting in a meeting.

Senior workers acting as role models

If senior workers are open about being neurodivergent, this can:

- promote an organisation-wide culture of inclusion and understanding
- be reassuring for more junior workers, who might be unsure about sharing their neurodivergence

Senior workers could also act as neurodiversity champions.

The role could include things like:

- sponsoring a staff network for neurodiversity
- following developments in law and good practice
- writing a blog or newsletter to promote equality and diversity
- challenging other senior leaders to consider issues around neurodiversity
- raising issues that need addressing at a high level
- considering wider issues that can affect neurodivergent workers

Staff networks

A neurodiversity network is a group for neurodivergent workers to:

- share experiences
- support each other
- raise issues that need addressing

A neurodiversity network might be part of a staff disability network.

Support from trade unions

Employers should make workers aware of any support their recognised trade union can offer. This might include:

- negotiating on their behalf – for example, when a new policy is being introduced
- representing them in meetings

Always consider accessibility needs

You should always consider accessibility needs in your processes and ways of working.

For example, ask workers if they have any accessibility needs ahead of meetings or training sessions.

You should encourage workers to do this so being inclusive becomes common practice.

[Find out more about accessibility at work](#)

Having a neurodiversity policy

Having a neurodiversity policy can help you introduce and manage consistent standards of inclusion. This can support workers to be more productive, motivated and creative.

A neurodiversity policy could be a separate policy. Or it could be part of another policy. For example, one that covers diversity and inclusion.

In a neurodiversity policy, an employer should:

- state the organisation's overall commitment to neurodiversity inclusion
- acknowledge their legal responsibilities related to neurodiversity
- outline what support is available – for example, any wellbeing support services or named contacts workers can go to
- make it clear that workers do not need a diagnosis to get support
- explain how they aim to create an neuroinclusive organisation – for example, through training and awareness activities
- describe how their organisation's processes are neuroinclusive – for example, their recruitment process or flexible working policy
- explain where workers can find any other relevant policies or procedures – for example, on discrimination
- say how and when they'll review the policy

You should write policies in a clear way, so that all workers can understand them. For example:

- replace jargon with clear language
- break information down using headings
- use short sentences and paragraphs

You could ask neurodivergent workers to be part of the process to create a neurodiversity policy. For example, to suggest what it should cover or give feedback on language.

Get more advice and support

If you have any questions about neurodiversity in your organisation, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).

You can also find advice about:

- [supporting disabled people at work](#)
- [equality, diversity and inclusion](#)
- [neuroinclusion at work from CIPD](#)
- [neurodiversity at work from Business in the Community](#)

Acas also provides:

- [training on equality, diversity and inclusion](#) – including on neurodiversity in the workplace
- [tailored support for your organisation](#)