Reasonable adjustments for employers: examples and further resources

About this toolkit

Creating a neuroinclusive workplace isn't just about compliance – it's about fostering an environment where every colleague and organisation can thrive. This document provides a starting point for employers to consider reasonable adjustments that support neurodivergent team members. It is not a definitive list, but rather a practical guide to spark meaningful conversations.

The most effective adjustments begin with listening to the individual. Every person's experience of neurodivergence is unique, so the best place to start is by talking with the colleague in question to understand what works for them.

Inside, you'll find examples of adjustments that can be helpful across multiple neurodivergences, as well as some that may be more specific. These suggestions have been developed in collaboration with neurodivergent people and key partner organisations specialising in neurodivergence.

Use this document as a conversation starter, a tool to build understanding and a step toward creating a workplace where diversity of thought and experience is truly valued.

What is neurodiversity and neurodivergence?

Neurodiversity is a way of saying that human brains are different to each other. This is a biological fact. Everyone thinks, learns and processes information differently – no two brains are the same.

Neuro: refers to the nervous system – brain, spinal cord and nerves

Diversity: refers to variations or differences within a group. Neurodiversity includes every human being.

Neurodivergence describes when a person's brain processes information in ways that is different or 'diverges' from what is often considered typical.

Neurodivergent is a term used to describe people whose thinking, communication or sensory experiences 'diverge' from the majority. Autistic people are neurodivergent, along with people with other forms of neurodivergence.

Reasonable adjustments for employers: examples and further resources

What are reasonable adjustments?

Under the *Equality Act 2010*, employers have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people are not disadvantaged. Neurodivergent people may or may not consider themselves disabled. However, many forms of neurodivergence, such as autism and ADHD, meet the legal definition of disability in the *Equality Act 2010* (and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* in Northern Ireland) and are protected in UK law regardless of whether they identify as disabled or not.

Reasonable adjustments are agreed changes to stop or prevent a person being put at a substantial disadvantage because they are autistic, or otherwise legally considered to be disabled, compared with someone who is not. These can include:

- changing how things are done
- making physical changes
- providing aids or support.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to all employers, but what is considered 'reasonable' can vary according to a range of factors, such as effectiveness, practicality, employer size, cost, potential disruption or health and safety.

Disclosure

Disclosure is a very personal decision. There are many factors that people take into account when considering whether they should tell their employer or not. Many people do not disclose their neurodivergence or disability to an employer. This may be due to fear of discrimination, past negative experiences, fear of job security, uncertainty about the support they will receive or just the right to have their privacy.

If your colleague shares this, it has been a big decision for them and should be treated with respect and empathy.

A colleague may be happy to disclose to a manager but may not wish for fellow colleagues to know.

Reasonable adjustments for employers: examples and further resources

National Autistic Society

Benefits of a diverse workforce

A diverse workforce brings a wide range of benefits to organisations. Here are some of the key advantages:

1. **Enhanced creativity and innovation**
   Diverse teams are more likely to challenge conventional thinking and develop innovative solutions.

2. **Better decision-making**
   Studies show that diverse groups make more informed and balanced decisions because they consider multiple viewpoints.

3. **Improved employee engagement and retention**
   Inclusive environments make employees feel valued and respected, leading to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates.

4. **Broader talent pool**
   Embracing diversity allows organisations to attract talent from a wider range of candidates.

5. **Stronger employer brand**
   Companies known for diversity and inclusion improve their reputation among customers and stakeholders.

6. **Better understanding of customers**
   A diverse workforce can better relate to and understand the needs of a diverse customer base.

7. **Increased financial performance**
   Research shows that companies with diverse leadership teams outperform their peers financially.

Access to Work

Access to Work is a government-funded grant scheme that supports people who meet the legal definition of disability (including autistic people) to start or stay in work.

gov.uk/access-to-work

A huge thank you to our neurodivergent contributors, the British Dyslexia Association and Tourettes Action, who worked with us to create this toolkit.

Start the conversation.

Make the change.

Build neuroinclusive workplaces.

Area of need	Area of consideration	Relevant neurodivergences (See key below)	Disadvantages to consider	Examples of adjustments to make
Communication and social situations	Giving instructions or information	🟢 🔴 🟣 🟡 (Autism, ADHD, Tourette syndrome, Dyslexia)	If instructions are unclear or leave much of the detail unspoken, individuals may not understand what they have been asked to do. They might struggle to grasp what is required, what is happening in their workplace and the ways they could improve. When instructions or information are given quickly ('in passing') or involve complicated steps, they may find it difficult to process and remember what is required. This can lead to situations where an employer may question their ability to perform the job effectively. It may also become difficult to hold or retain information.	**Use written information or instructions** Managers and colleagues should use clear and precise language and give clear instructions. For example, avoiding jargon. Colleagues can: • follow up verbal instructions and information with a written summary • gives feedback in writing • uses diagrams or flow charts to aid understanding. **Utilise AI tools** AI software can be helpful to record 1:1 catch ups (virtual) and generate written notes and action points.
	Contributions to team meetings, group conversations or questions	🟢 🟣 🟡 (Autism, Tourette syndrome, Dyslexia)	Not having enough time to process questions and frame a response can lead to difficulties in group conversations. Responses may appear irrelevant or confusing if the discussion has moved on, creating the impression of inattention or lack of understanding. This may lead to shutdown, which can give the impression of unwillingness or inability to contribute and may negatively impact mental health.	**Advance agendas** An advanced agenda is circulated with timings. **Regular breaks** Breaks are regular, and the break schedule is adhered to. **Hybrid/virtual options** Offer the choice to attend part of the meeting, and/or provide a update in written form. **Questions in advance** Questions are circulated in advance of meetings, so there is time to prepare. If a question is asked in the meeting, there is an option to answer at the end of the meeting or after it.
	Work social events	🟢 (Autism)	When an employer arranges regular social events and expects everyone to join in, some may find this challenging. Parts of conversation, such as small talk, turn-taking and interruptions, may be challenging. Jokes may be taken literally and can cause a feeling of humiliation when they are not understood. In the days before and after these social events, anxiety can increase significantly, impacting wellbeing and ability to work effectively.	**Optional particpation** Managers make social events optional. **Location and activity considerations** For example, held in quieter environments (eg hired room) or involving a structured activity (eg bowling), with the option to leave early or immediately after. Walking outdoors, where the focus can be on walking and not being distracted by sitting in a loud environment. Promote other social opportunities that may involve online connections rather than face-to-face, such as a book club or online games.

Key for neurodivergences

🟢 Autism   🔴 ADHD   🟣 Tourette syndrome (TS)   🟡 Dyslexia

Area of need	Area of consideration	Relevant neurodivergences (See key below)	Disadvantages to consider	Examples of adjustments to make
Communication and social situations	Social interactions required with colleagues in a shared workspace	🟢 🔴 🟣 🟡 (Autism, ADHD, TS, Dyslexia)	It can take longer to refocus on a task or switch between tasks if a person is interrupted or distracted by social chat. Tasks such as reading can be effortful, and a deeper focus is required to ensure understanding of what has been written. Workplaces can be overwhelming due to the amount of social interaction. Masking is used to fit in, which is exhausting. The stress of masking leads to exhaustion and overwhelm. Suppressing things such as tics due to anxiety about people's reactions can create rebound effects of exhaustion or increased tics.	**Hybrid/varied work space options** Options to work from home, or book a meeting room or quiet space. **Headphones** A person is able to use headphones to reduce auditory distractions or use screen-reading technology. **Use my communication preferences** Implement a communication system that allows the person to signify when they do not want to be disturbed. **Allocated drop-ins** Block out a specific time that allows for drop-ins or put in place a system that requires staff to book in advance with that colleague rather than having drop-ins at any time.
	Disturbances mid-task	🟢 🔴 🟣 🟡 (Autism, ADHD, TS, Dyslexia)	It may be difficult to focus and complete tasks if there are distractions during work activities, leading to work not being completed on time. Work may take longer to complete because of the difficult impact of disturbances in the middle of working.	**Use my communication preferences** Colleagues respect and use a person's individual communication preferences when they are working on a task. For example, using email or project management software only or respecting a 'do not disturb' on messaging apps. **Block out focused work** Scheduled periods of focused work time can be blocked in a person's calendar. During these periods, colleagues know that they are not to be disturbed and won't be looking at or responding to emails or other notifications. **Meeting or booking apps** Use meeting or booking apps to ensure people book in time to speak to a person. Add to schedules periods of time where colleagues can come to a colleague unplanned for discussions/collaborative work.

Key for neurodivergences

🟢 Autism 🔴 ADHD 🟣 Tourette syndrome (TS) 🟡 Dyslexia

Area of need	Area of consideration	Relevant neurodivergences (See key below)	Disadvantages to consider	Examples of adjustments to make
Communication and social situations	Listing and completing tasks	Autism, ADHD, Tourette syndrome, Dyslexia	All of the information provided about a new task may not be recalled the first time around, especially if given verbally. It may be hard to judge workloads and to set realistic deadlines, leading to feeling overwhelmed and the potential for deadlines to be missed.	**Written instructions/information** Colleagues provide written and verbal instructions and background information that can be used for reference to aid memory recall. Provide the context and why this task is required to be completed. **Regular check-ins** Manager can work with people to check in and ensure their workload is manageable. They don't just take 'yes' for an answer, and instead will have oversight of their calendar and capacity. **Additional time** Provide consideration for additional time to process and complete tasks.
	Prioritising emails/tasks	Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia	Emails can be overwhelming, and knowing which to prioritise, especially those that a person is copied into, is hard. An email can take longer to read and respond to, which can also lead to overwhelm.	**Provide clarity** Colleagues make it clear in their email whether it is to share relevant information or requires a response. **Mentor or buddy** Allocate a mentor or buddy who can check-in regularly and help someone prioritise their tasks or clarify the context of email chains. **Visual tools** It can help to use flow charts and project plans to map out deadlines and timescales to support prioritisation.
	Written work	Dyslexia	More time may be needed to produce written work or communicate by email, which can create a disadvantage in meeting deadlines or managing workloads.	**Adjusted deadlines** Colleagues and managers understand people may need more time for completing written tasks – and adjust deadlines and workload appropriately. **Alternative methods of communication** Use alternative formats to share information (eg bullet points, video summaries or teams calls) if appropriate. **Assistive technology** Use assistive technology such as speech-to-text technology and proofreading tools. Use headphones to reduce auditory distractions or to use screen-reading technology.

Key for neurodivergences

Autism   ADHD   Tourette syndrome (TS)   Dyslexia

Area of need	Area of consideration	Relevant neurodivergences (See key below)	Disadvantages to consider	Examples of adjustments to make
Communication and social situations	Written work continued...	🟡 (Dyslexia)		**Writing assistant software** Provide access to writing assistant software tools. **Quiet spaces** It may be helpful to have the option to work from home or book a meeting room or quiet space when needed.
	Hyperactivity	🔴 (ADHD)	Staying still or reducing the need to fidget may be difficult for prolonged periods. Staying silent in meetings can also be difficult, which may lead to either getting involved in conversations or zoning out to keep the brain stimulated.	**Movement breaks** Have movement breaks throughout the day. Allow someone to stand or move about in a meeting or do something with their hands, such as knitting or using fidget items, to keep focused. **Plan ahead** Plan ahead for longer periods of sitting still (eg a walk around the block before a meeting). **Structure of the meeting** Have a regular allocated time for discussion so the requirement to be silent and listen does not extend too long.
	Meeting new clients or colleagues	🟢🔵 (Autism, Tourette syndrome)	Judgements or assumptions from others about tics, stims and other behaviours, both in working and day-to-day life. This is upsetting and exhausting.	**Neuroinclusion training** All colleagues receive neuroinclusion/ autism / Tourette syndrome training. **Alert card** People may choose to carry a card or letter to explain that they are autistic or have Tourette syndrome and what that means for them.
	Lunch and breaktimes	🟢🔵 (Autism, Tourette syndrome)	Lunchtimes can be overwhelming when there are lots of staff using the canteen/lunch area. The noise, social interaction and congestion all add to the overwhelm or make it harder if someone is surpressing their tics. Anxiety may rise before lunch in anticipation of this stressful event, and after lunch, it takes time to recover and focus on work.	**Flexible break times** Lunch breaks can be taken at a different time from others or in a different location.

Key for neurodivergences

🟢 Autism   🔴 ADHD   🔵 Tourette syndrome (TS)   🟡 Dyslexia

Area of need	Area of consideration	Relevant neurodivergences (See key below)	Disadvantages to consider	Examples of adjustments to make
Environment	Work stations/desks	Autism, ADHD, TS, Dyslexia	**Open plan seating** Sensory inputs can be overwhelming, distracting and affect the ability to focus on tasks. Burnout can occur from the stress and effort of trying to focus while experiencing sensory overwhelm. Tics can also be triggered by an overstimulating environment. **Hot desking** Arriving at work feeling stressed can occur every day, based on not knowing if a quiet desk can be found, and it takes time to find a desk, lay out the things needed and get comfortable at the new workstation. This can lead to being flustered and embarrassed, impacting the ability to concentrate and be productive at the start of the day.	**Reduce overload around the workstation** Workstations can be moved to avoid areas that are: • busy (eg where lots of people are moving or meeting) • noisy (eg due to people talking, loud equipment or machinery) • strong-smelling (eg lunchrooms) • too bright (eg fluorescent lighting). Partitioning can be set up around a workstation in an open plan environment. **Fixed workspace** Allocate a fixed workspace, as opposed to 'hot-desking', to increase predictability and comfort. **Additional aids** Access to specialised cushions, raisable desks, etc, can help with the need to move and sensory input requirements.
	General work environment	Autism, ADHD, TS	Overwhelm can occur from sensory inputs, which are distracting and affect someone's ability to focus on tasks. Additionally, people can become burned out from the stress and effort of trying to focus while experiencing sensory overwhelm. A person's ability to work effectively in busy environments can fluctuate day to day. Tics can be triggered by overstimulating environments.	**Provide sensory tools** Provide or allow people to wear noise-cancelling headphones or noise-blocking earbuds. Provide or allow people to wear sunglasses or other tinted glasses to reduce sensory input from lighting, visual stress and eye strain. Provide or allow people to use sensory tools, such as fidget toys or a weighted blanket. **Practical dress code** Provide or allow people to wear comfortable clothing, even if it's different from the usual work dress code. **Hybrid working** Hybrid working options are considered so people can work in an environment that supports them on that day. **Quiet spaces** Provide access to a quieter space if people need time out of an environment to regulate or tic.
	Accessing the office space	TS	There may be an occasional need to use a wheelchair or walking aids for those with physical needs.	**Accessible environments** Ensure the building is accessible and offer hybrid working options.

Key for neurodivergences

🟢 Autism   🔴 ADHD   🟣 Tourette syndrome (TS)   🟡 Dyslexia

Area of need	Area of consideration	Relevant neurodivergences (See key below)	Disadvantages to consider	Examples of adjustments to make
Flexibility and predictability	New job or changes within the current role/workplace	🟢🟡	Starting a new role or coping with a major transition at workcan be overwhelming, particularly processing lots of new information, coping with new routines and knowing who to approach for support and queries. Difficulties processing information can be due to overwhelm. It can take longer to adjust due to the need to learn new routines, process information and develop coping strategies. Misunderstanding can occur around required tasks or dos and don'ts of the job.	**Transition plan** A phased start can be arranged to begin a new role (starting on reduced hours), and major transitions are introduced slowly in phases. **Clear instructions and information** Information about the role or change is provided in writing. It should be clear and concise and not assume that people will fill in any grey areas. **Additional time and support** If needed, the person is allowed more time and instruction to learn new systems and processes so that these become automatic. The person is provided with additional supervision from a manager, job coach or mentor.
	Sudden changes or unexpected tasks	🟢	If there isn't a clear plan for each day, it can lead to a feeling of stress, and then people may find it harder to adapt to sudden changes.	**Clear job role** Predictable and consistent work duties are given. **Regular check-ins** Managers schedule daily check-ins to discuss the objectives for the day. **Use my communication preferences** Managers agree with the person on a minimum notice period regarding changes to a schedule, calendar or workload.
	Transitions/journey from home to work each day	🟢	Mornings may be less productive because it's difficult to concentrate when recovering from the sensory overwhelm and stress of the commute. General wellbeing can be affected. Difficulties with tracking time can occur, and people can become distracted, which may affect timeliness.	**Recovery time** Offer a quiet space to use during the first hour of the day to recover and regulate. **Flexible working** Adjust working hours so that a person doesn't have to travel during rush hour. **Hybrid working** Offer a hybrid working pattern.

Key for neurodivergences

🟢 **Autism**   🔴 **ADHD**   🔵 **Tourette syndrome (TS)**   🟡 **Dyslexia**

Area of need	Area of consideration	Relevant neurodivergences (See key below)	Disadvantages to consider	Examples of adjustments to make
Flexibility and predictability	Working for long periods	🟢🔴🟣	Working for long periods of time can be exhausting. Concentration can be lost, and it can be difficult to process information. Breaks can allow for much-needed sensory input to optimise focus. Becoming engrossed in tasks can lead to the need to take breaks being forgotten. Fatigue can occur for those with tics who try to maintain long working periods without breaks.	**Flexible working** Consider flexible working patterns to support optimal outputs. **Regular check-ins** During larger projects or important workstreams, managers can check in more regularly if required to check someone is looking after themselves as well as maintaing progress. **Organisational tools** Timers, reminders and calendar apps can help highlight the need to take a break, have a drink, etc.
	Moving onto a new task/meeting	🔴	Those who can hyperfocus on tasks may experience a lack of awareness of time or the need to move on to other activities. Basic needs (eg eating and drinking) can also be neglected during a workday. This can have an overall impact on health and wellbeing.	**Regular check-ins** Managers can check in more regularly if required to check someone is looking after themselves as well as working through tasks. **Organisational tools** Timers, reminders and calendar apps can help highlight the need to take a break, switch tasks, have a drink, etc.
	Initiating a new task	🔴🟣	It can be more difficult to start a new task or complete a task that someone finds challenging or less motivating.	**Clear instructions and agreed deadlines** Provide clear deadlines for task completion. Ensure there is clarity on the expectations of the task – provide the 'why' as well as the 'what'. **Regular check-ins** Managers can check in more regularly if required to check someone is looking after themselves as well as checking progress. **Buddy system** Explore a buddy system or systems such as body doubling, which can provide a degree of accountability to help motivate. **Focused time** Schedule in time to allow for hyperfocus.

Key for neurodivergences

🟢 Autism 🔴 ADHD 🟣 Tourette syndrome (TS) 🟠 Dyslexia

Area of need	Area of consideration	Relevant neurodivergences (See key below)	Disadvantages to consider	Examples of adjustments to make
Flexibility and predictability	Repetitive tasks	🔴	Repetitive tasks such as data entry can be difficult and errors can be made or mistakes not picked up. This is frustrating and also draining because other tasks can be completed well.	**Supportive management** It helps to have a supportive manager who is aware what tasks a person may struggle with and provide support and external accountability. **Job carving** Job carve by having an agreement with another colleague who is very detail orientated. They can help by sense-checking or proof-reading work prior to submitting. In return for supporting them in other areas of their work.
	Fluctuating focus	🔴	Focus can fluctuate considerably based on the time of day. Often, productive hours fall outside of the usual working pattern. Work may not always be complete during working hours. A person may have a preference for working outside usual hours (eg in the evening) to make up for being less productive during the day.	**Adjusted working pattern** Create an adjusted working pattern to allow for an earlier/later start, depending on best productivity times. **Flexible working pattern** Offer flexible working alongside core hours, so people can choose when is the best time for them to work and be productive while maintaining specific business hours.

Key for neurodivergences

🟢 Autism   🔴 ADHD   🟣 Tourette syndrome (TS)   🟠 Dyslexia

Reasonable adjustments for employers: further resources

National Autistic Society

The National Autistic Society training	**autism.org.uk/training**
Employment information for autistic people	**Employment advice hub**
Neuroinclusive employer accreditation	**Inclusive Employer Award**
The British Dyslexia Association training	**bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/training**
Employment information for dyslexic people	**Employer – British Dyslexia Association**
Tourettes Action training	**tourettes-action.org.uk/160-our-training-offer**
Workplace information for people with Tourette syndrome	**TS – information for employers**
Tourettes Action: Workplace information for employees	**tourettes-action.org.uk/77-employment**
Employment information for people with ADHD	**ADHD UK – welfare pack to help ADHD in the workplace**