

Enabling the
strengths of
Neurodiversity



“We're all unique... kind of like a fingerprint”

Catherine Harmer, a cognitive neuroscientist at the University of Oxford

What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is the concept that we all experience the world differently, we all think differently, we all have different strengths, weaknesses, traits, and preferences; there is no right or wrong. There is no ‘normal’.

This is now being reflected in research that no two people have the same brain anatomy (University of Zurich, 2018)

Most people are 'neurotypical' with typically developing brains that function and process information within an expected range and present a relatively even cognitive profile. However, it is estimated that around 15-20% of people in the UK are **neurodivergent** (ACAS, 2016) meaning that the brain functions, learns and processes information differently. Whilst neurotypical people demonstrate a range of relative even strengths and challenges, neurodivergent people will present a profile of significant difference between strengths and challenges, often termed a 'spiky profile'.

First coined by Judy Singer, an Australian Sociologist in 1998, the term 'neurodiversity' is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of cognitive differences such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and Tourette's. There are many overlaps between these neurodivergent conditions and often conditions can co-occur, for example dyspraxia and ADHD. The list is continually growing to include acquired neurodivergence such as brain trauma and mental health conditions.



“Neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race as biodiversity is for life in general. Who can say what form of wiring will be best at any given moment?”

Harvey Blume, The Atlantic 1998

Several high-profile organisations have undertaken specific initiatives to access neurodiverse talent in recent years, leading [The Harvard Business Review \(2017\)](#) to conclude that neurodiversity gives businesses a competitive advantage.

Identifying as a result:

- productivity gains,
- quality improvement,
- boost in innovative capabilities,
- increased employee engagement

Yet many individuals do not share their neurodivergence with their employer for fear of perceived (or actual) stigma and judgment. Creating a supportive culture enables people to bring their authentic selves to work and feel able to share, which is beneficial for engagement, retention, and productivity.



Top Tips



Use visual information



Back up verbal instructions and information in writing or record it



Make full use of verbal skills and other strengths



Use technology



Be mindful of the environment



Be flexible

Want to find out more?

Want to know how to harness the strengths of your existing workforce?

Want to reach the widest talent pool to access the breadth of skills?

Want to become a more inclusive employer?

Bespoke best practice guides written for organisations with clear and practical tips to remove barriers to high performance through meaningful inclusion.

Contact Enable Disability & Inclusion Consultants for a conversation about your aspirations.



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Removing barriers to high performance through meaningful inclusion

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