



Workplace adjustments and management strategies to support neurodivergent staff

The following workplace adjustments and accommodations may be useful for a range of staff but particularly those who are neurodivergent. Any adjustment should be discussed with an individual before implementation, and reviewed regularly. The most common workplace adjustments are listed here and should provide starting points for discussion.

Work Environment

For neurodivergent people working in a busy, noisy environment, such as an open plan office, can be challenging. Consider:

- Locating the individual's desk in an area away from the main flow of 'traffic' in the office.
- Using dividers between desks or providing noise-cancelling headphones to cut out sounds.
- Lowering lighting levels, providing desk lamps or access to natural light.
- Adjusting brightness and contrast controls on monitors. Visual stress can also be reduced by coloured filters available through assistive software, or changing font and background colours.
- Adapting working hours e.g. to allow extra breaks, or to allow staff to travel at quieter times.
- Avoiding use of 'hot desking' for neurodivergent staff.

Meetings

Group meetings can be a source of discomfort or even stress for neurodivergent staff.

Consider:

- Providing in advance the agenda and any material to be read for meetings.

- Being clear about the purpose of the meeting, and sticking to the agenda and times where possible.
- Providing Fidget toys/pens for doodling.
- Ensuring breaks between meetings.
- Establishing a buddy system for large meetings or conferences.
- Identifying alternative mechanisms to allow neurodivergent staff to contribute to group discussions and decision-making.

Planning, Prioritising and Organising

Some people, both neurodivergent and neurotypical, experience difficulties in planning and organising their work, and in prioritising tasks. Consider:

- Supporting individuals to organise their desk and establish routines.
- Breaking tasks into parts and being clear about the priority of tasks given.
- Setting up a diary system, task lists and reminders/alarms.
- Setting up a system to organise paperwork e.g. using colour-coding.
- Providing structure to the working day e.g. a regular timetable of tasks and meetings, and scheduling time for planning, dealing with emails etc.
- Arranging brief, regular meetings to check progress on tasks.
- Providing time to practice tasks, and automating processes where possible.
- Providing clear, written instructions and avoiding 'corridor conversations' about work tasks.
- Encouraging use of mind mapping or similar tools for brainstorming and planning. Mind Genius is available in the applications catalogue.

Reading, writing and numeracy

Some neurodivergent staff experience difficulties with reading, writing and numeracy, particularly when under time pressures. Consider:

- Increasing time allowances for reading and written work.
- Providing in advance any material to be read for meetings.

- Encouraging the use of spell-checking, proof-reading and text-to-speech software to aid reading and writing.
- Providing templates for written work.
- Providing screen filters and/or low desk lighting to reduce glare.
- Providing a Livescribe pen or similar, for note taking during meetings.
- Using bullet points to inform, rather than lengthy passages of text where possible.
- Supporting staff to ask for information or numbers to be emailed to them, rather than taking their own notes.
- Supporting staff to develop strategies for numerical work e.g highlighting/colouring cells in spreadsheets, entering numbers in no more than 2 or 3 consecutive digits (01 31 650 46 23), enlarging the font size etc.