



Creating Workplaces Where Neurodivergent People Can Thrive

The strongest foundation for good support is genuine understanding. Invest time in learning about neurodivergence - autism, ADHD, Tourette's, dyslexia, dyspraxia and more, so your approach is grounded, informed, and respectful.

Orientation & Starting Well

New environments, people, and routines can be overwhelming. Clear information and familiarisation make a huge difference.

- **Offer a pre-start visit** so the person can explore the workspace, meet key colleagues and get used to the environment at a comfortable pace.
- **Provide written guidance** on practical expectations: dress code, start/finish times, communication preferences, boundaries and professional conduct.
- **Discuss workspace adjustments** - lighting, noise, seating location, screens, desk layout, alternative communication methods, etc.
- **Identify clear points of contact**, including who to approach for HR issues, wellbeing support, task queries, or emergencies.
- **Explain the “unwritten rules”** of the workplace - break routines, lunch options, kitchen norms, social expectations.
- **Assign a buddy/mentor** for the induction period who can answer questions, demonstrate processes and provide informal support.
- **Give direct, concrete instructions** for induction tasks - avoid vague directions like “go and find out about...”.



Allocating Tasks

Neurodivergent people often benefit from clarity, structure and reduced ambiguity.

- **State expectations plainly.** Avoid indirect phrasing like “when you have a minute...” if the task is actually a priority.
- **Write down multi-step tasks,** workflows, or deadlines so nothing relies on inference or memory alone.
- **Help with prioritising.** Be explicit when one task outranks another.
- **Define success.** Describe what “finished” looks like and include deadlines where relevant.
- **Break complex work into smaller chunks** with clear milestones.
- **Check for shared understanding**—not to test the person, but to avoid accidental miscommunication.

Giving & Receiving Feedback

Open-ended or ambiguous questions can be uncomfortable and hard to interpret.

- **Ask specific questions** instead of general prompts. (“How did Task X go?” rather than “Any feedback?”)
- **Offer structured templates** to guide how feedback should be given.
- **Provide a small set of choices** where appropriate to support decision-making and communication.
- **Use clear, concrete language.** Avoid vague terms like “quite good”, “normal”, “average”, “maybe”.
- **Share feedback in writing** after discussions so expectations and next steps are unambiguous.
- **Prepare the person before a meeting.** Explain the purpose, what will be discussed, and which policies or rights may apply.
- **Allow them to bring a supporter,** advocate, or trusted colleague.



Predictability, Routines & Change

Many neurodivergent people rely on stability and may experience stress when routine breaks unexpectedly.

- **Respect individual routines**, even if they differ from typical workplace habits.
- **Don't rearrange furniture, desks, or equipment** without discussing it first.
- **Provide advance notice** of changes to staff, systems, processes, or organisational structure whenever possible.
- **Use shared calendars**, planners, and visual schedules to support predictability.
- **Reduce clutter and sensory overload** in work areas.
- **Be aware of sensory triggers** (e.g., fire alarms, loud machinery) and communicate planned noise in advance.



Top Tips for Supporting Neurodivergent People at Work

1. *Start with Understanding*

- Learn about autism, ADHD, and other neurodivergent profiles.
- Ask the individual what they find helpful—don't assume.

2. *Make Orientation Predictable*

- Offer a pre-start visit to meet people and explore the workspace.
- Provide written information: dress code, hours, expectations, communication norms.
- Explain the “unwritten rules” (breaks, kitchen etiquette, shared spaces).
- Assign a buddy for the first few weeks.

3. *Create a Supportive Workspace*

- Discuss adjustments: lighting, noise levels, seating, sensory needs, communication preferences.
- Avoid unexpected changes to the workspace—agree changes in advance.

4. *Give Clear, Direct Instructions*

- Say exactly what you need—avoid vague phrases.
- Write down multi-step tasks and deadlines.
- Break complex tasks into smaller parts.
- Confirm priorities so the person knows which task comes first.
- Define what “finished” looks like.

5. *Use Structured, Specific Feedback*

- Ask focused questions instead of “Any feedback?”
- Avoid vague language (“maybe”, “quite”, “normal”).
- Give feedback with a clear plan and follow it up in writing.
- Let the person bring a supporter to formal meetings.



6. *Support Predictability & Routine*

- Give advance warning of changes to staff, systems, or daily patterns.
- Use planners, calendars, and visual schedules.
- Keep work areas organised and low-clutter where possible.
- Consider sensory triggers and give notice of loud events (e.g., alarms, drills).

7. *Communicate with Respect*

- Offer choices rather than assumptions.
- Encourage questions without judgement.
- Remember: clarity isn't "dumbing down" - it's good practice for everyone.