



# **Supporting Neurodivergent Employees**

A Practical Guide for Managers



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## **Introduction**

Neurodiversity is not something a person “has”, it describes natural variation across all humans. Some people’s brains function in ways that fit societal expectations (neurotypical), while others process information differently (neurodivergent), such as autistic people, people with ADHD, and people with dyslexia.

The concept of neurodiversity recognises these differences as a natural part of human variation rather than viewing them only through a deficit-based lens. In the workplace, understanding neurodiversity helps create an environment where all employees can thrive.

## **Key Terms**

The language around neurodiversity is constantly evolving. Some people may prefer terms that others do not. There is no single “correct” term that works for everyone.

In this guide, we use:

### **Neurodivergent**

A commonly used term describing people whose thinking, learning, or processing differs from what is generally considered typical.

### **Neurotypical**

Refers to individuals whose brain functions in ways that society considers typical, but it does not mean "normal."

### **Neurodivergence**

To refer to the state of being neurodivergent.

### **Neuroinclusive**

Creating a workplace where all employees, regardless of how they think or process information, are supported and empowered to succeed.

## Supporting Employees Without Requiring Disclosure

Employees are not required to disclose their neurodivergence. Rather than focusing on whether someone is neurodivergent, managers should focus on open, practical conversations that help employees work effectively.

Focus on supporting team members based on their needs, rather than requiring a formal diagnosis.

## Use these questions to facilitate communication

Instead of saying:

*"Do you have ADHD? That might explain why deadlines are difficult."*

Try this instead:

- *"Would it help to have clearer deadlines or reminders? We can adjust how tasks are structured if needed."*
- *"Would you like me to clarify or break this down further?"*
- *"How can I support you in understanding this better?"*
- *"Would a visual or written summary help?"*
- *"Do you prefer step-by-step instructions or a big-picture overview?"*
- *"Do you need more time to process before making a decision?"*

## Make workplace support visible

- Ensure workplace support is visible. Employees should not have to ask for information about adjustments, including the Access to Work scheme.
- Regularly communicate available support through team meetings, written communications, or one-to-one check-ins.

## Normalise conversations about working styles

Ask all employees about their preferred ways of working, rather than singling anyone out.

## About this Guide

This preview extract is taken from **Supporting Neurodivergent Employees: A Practical Guide for Managers**. The full version runs to 10 pages and covers:

- Supporting employees without requiring disclosure
- Avoiding assumptions and stereotypes
- Building feedback cultures and trust
- Inclusive communication and respectful workplace language
- Raising awareness of neurodiversity in the workplace

## Created by ADHD Pirates CIC

ADHD Pirates CIC is a UK-based social enterprise, founded and led by lived experience. We create practical, ADHD-friendly resources that help organisations embed neuroinclusion in realistic and sustainable ways.

Sales of our guides directly fund our community projects, including peer support groups and accessible resources for adults with ADHD.

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