

# HOW TO...

## ...support neurodiversity in the workplace

Neurodiversity (ND) refers to the differences in cognitive functioning that occur in the human population. Rather than individually categorising conditions such as Dyslexia, ADHD, Dyspraxia/DCD and Autism, there is a movement towards seeing them simply as differences in the way we are wired and appreciate that each condition conveys a specific pattern of strengths as well as challenges. With roughly 15% of people being ND, there's a massive pool of untapped talent waiting to be set free!

### WHEN TO USE THIS



If members of your team identify as ND, legally you need to offer reasonable adjustments to allow them to work at their best. Most changes will improve the working environment for everyone. Given some people are undiagnosed or prefer not to disclose, celebrating stories from ND employees can encourage others to be open.

### WATCH OUTS



- Businesses already have ND employees; even if they haven't disclosed. If they can't work at their best, you're missing out on their full abilities
- Every ND person is an individual. Bear in mind the common phrase: 'If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism'

### THINGS YOU CAN DO



- Ask what would make working life easier. Often, these will be 'soft' procedural changes, costing almost nothing
- Once an employee starts, keep focusing on adjustments. This is when they'll most need the support
- Don't expect people to be a 'jack of all trades'. ND people know their strengths and their challenges
- Ensure job descriptions and tasks are clear. Provide clear deadlines and avoid the use of metaphors / figures of speech
- Consider environment. Certain office lighting may be an issue for some and coloured paper may help others with reading
- Ensure mental health wellbeing support is ND-inclusive. There are high levels of mental health challenges among this population
- Don't have a blanket policy. Always ask the individual

### LONGER TERM IDEAS



- Share stories from ND employees about their strengths and challenges in the workplace. This can help 'normalise', and encourage others to disclose
- Consider 'intersectional events' focusing on the experiences of ND people who are BAME, LGBT+ or from different social backgrounds etc
- Enter great ND individuals into awards such as those by Genius Within or The Shaw Trust Power List
- If an ND group doesn't exist, think about setting one up to ensure ND employees feel represented
- Consider your current recruitment and promotion structures to ensure they put ND people on a level playing field