

# Neurodiversity Toolkit



# Welcome to your neurodiversity toolkit



**This toolkit is a resource for everyone to support awareness and understanding of neurodivergent conditions or differences. It also recognises the benefits neurodiverse people bring to the workplace and contributes to our aim to foster truly inclusive workplaces. It provides some practical guidance and signposting to additional resources to support neurodivergent people during their employment with Perth and Kinross Council.**

**This toolkit was developed by Perth Autism Support in partnership with Perth and Kinross Council and funded by the Workplace Equality Fund.**



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# What is neurodiversity



- **Neurodiversity describes the population as a whole and recognises that each person's brain is unique and works differently**
- **Neurotypical describes most of the population that expresses themselves in ways that are seen as the societal 'norm'. Neurodivergent describes the minority group that diverts neurologically from the 'norm'**
- **Neurodivergent individuals may think, feel, behave, learn, process information and experience the world differently to what is regarded as typical in society. Every neurodivergent person is different.**
- **Co-occurrence of neurodiverse conditions or neurological differences is common e.g. an individual may have autism and dyslexia**

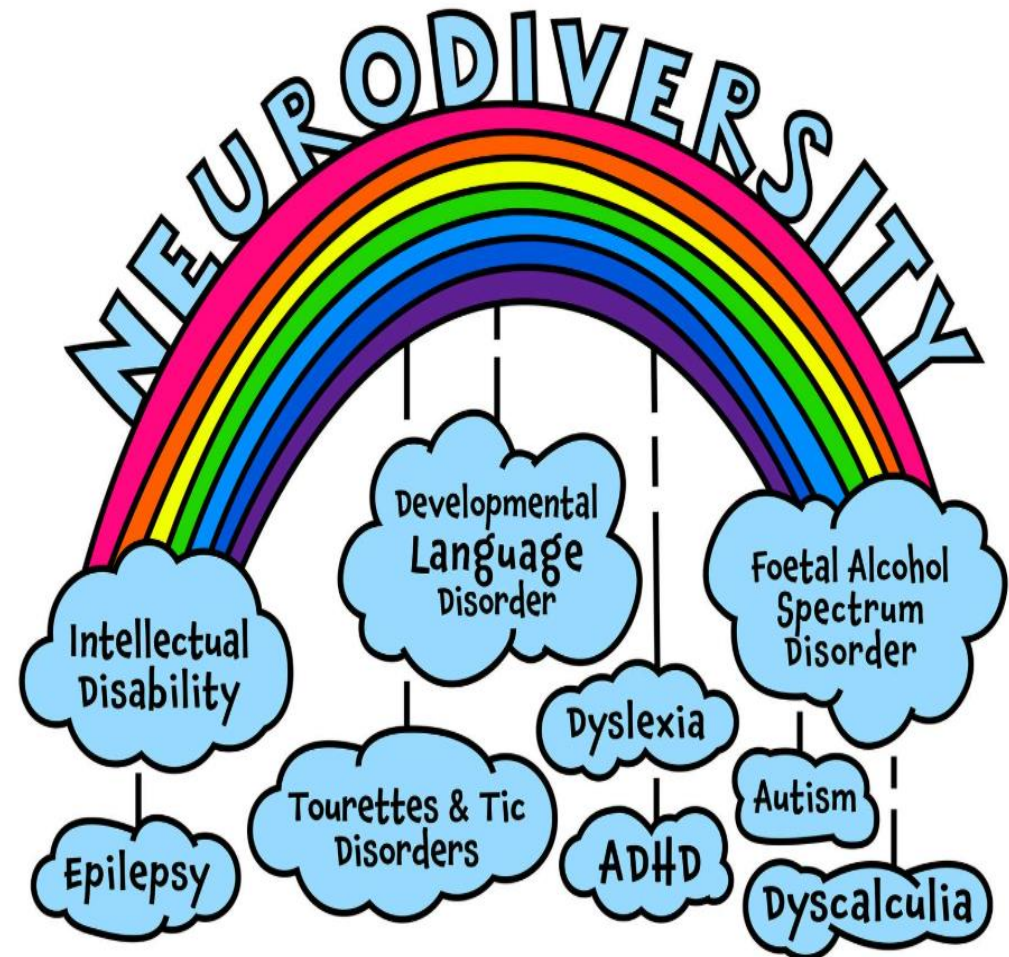
# What is neurodiversity (2)



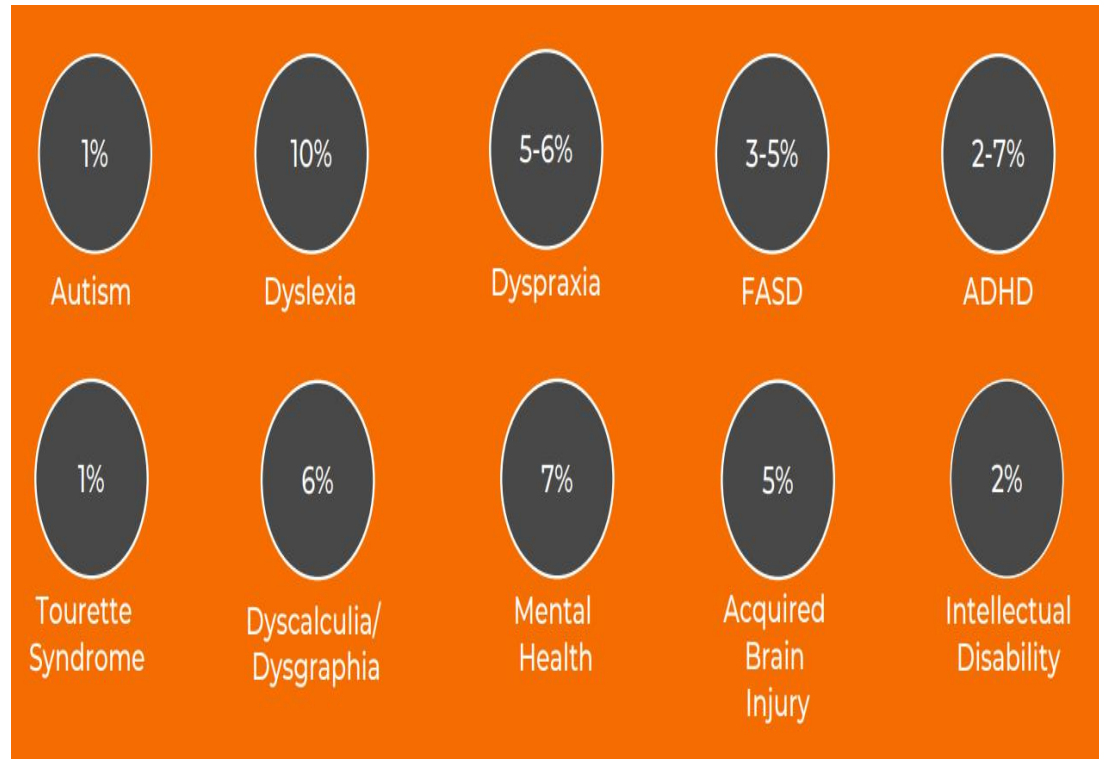
- For some individuals, neurodivergent condition(s) or neurological difference(s) may be regarded as a disability under the Equality Act (2010). So, it is important for managers to be aware of neurodivergence in the workplace and to provide support by making reasonable adjustments, where feasible.
- Be mindful that when talking about neurodivergence, it should not be seen as a label - we simply mean neurological difference or neuro-difference. Whilst some neurological differences are medically recognised as 'conditions' or 'disorders', where possible, rather than using the term 'condition' or 'disorder', consider using 'difference' i.e., referring to a person's 'neurological or neurodiverse difference', is a more positive approach.

# Neurodivergent conditions

Neurodivergence or neurological difference is a spectrum. There are a range of conditions that come under the umbrella or spectrum of neurodiverse differences, some of the most common include:



# Statistics



**%age of workforce likely to have a neurodiverse condition**

15-20% of the UK population have a neurodiverse difference or condition

Only 16% of autistic people are in full time paid employment, with one in five autistic people in the UK in any form of employment

Neurodiverse conditions or differences co-occur at high rates although individuals may not be aware they have more than one neurodivergence.



# Strengths, talents and benefits



Everyone has their own strengths and talents they bring to the workplace. Some people who have a neurological difference describe it as their 'super-power' and attribute their difference(s) to success in their career.

With the right support and understanding, people with neurodiverse differences can flourish in the work environment. Fostering a more inclusive environment also benefits the organisation by having a more productive, diverse workforce.

Regardless of their difference(s), common characteristics of neurodivergent individuals include:

- **Creative and innovative**
- **Honest and loyal**
- **Reliable, conscientious**
- **Hardworking and highly motivated**
- **Good at solving problems**
- **High levels of concentration**
- **Excellent memory**
- **Attention to detail**





## Did you know?

Many famous people attribute their success to their neurodiverse condition(s)



Jennifer Aniston



Tim Burton



Florence Welch



Greta Thunberg

### Examples include:

#### Actors

- Jennifer Aniston, (Dyslexia)
- Stephen Fry, (Bipolar disorder)
- Sir Anthony Hopkins, (Dyslexia)
- Keira Knightly, (Dyslexia)
- Daniel Radcliffe (Dyspraxia)
- Peter Sellers (Asperger's Syndrome)

#### Business entrepreneurs

- Richard Branson (Dyslexia)
- Bill Gates, Co-founder Microsoft, (ADHD & Dyslexia)
- Steve Jobs, Co-founder Apple, (Dyslexia)
- Elon Musk, Co-founder PayPal & SpaceX (Autism)

#### Film director

- Tim Burton, (Autism)

#### Musicians and Singers

- Susan Boyle, (Autism)
- Cher, (Dyscalculia & Dyslexia)
- Billie Eilish, (ADHD)
- Florence Welch, (Dyslexia & Dyspraxia)

#### Models

- Cara Delevingne, (ADHD & Dyspraxia)
- Emma Watson, (ADHD)

#### Activists

- Daryl Hannah, (Autism)
- Greta Thunberg, (Autism)



**Some people may think that they have one or more neurological difference and may identify as neurodivergent, even if they don't have a formal diagnosis**

**Neurodiverse individuals may exhibit their conditions in different ways due to their gender, race, and culture**

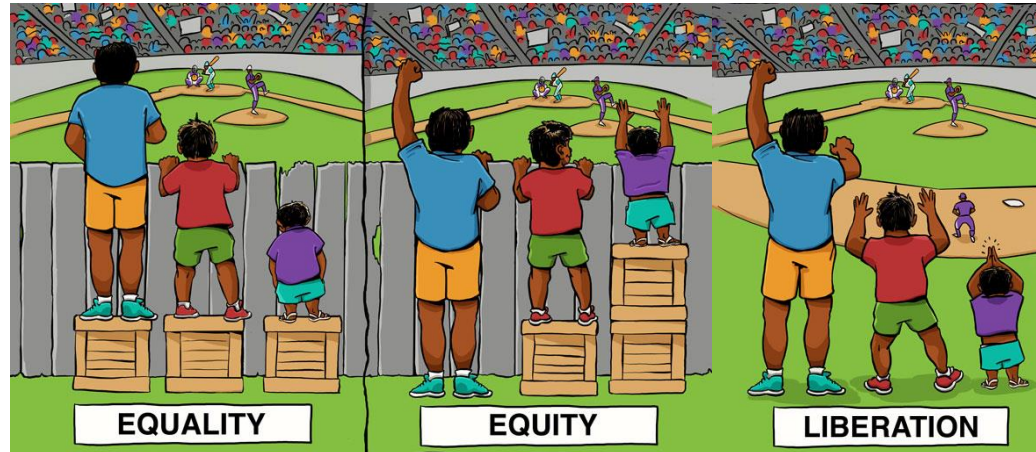
**It's not unusual for people to discover later in life that they have a neurodiverse condition, and for others to never find out that they have a condition**

# Neurodiversity and the law

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- Equality Act 2010 – *impairment has substantial and long-term impact on ability to carry out normal daily activities*
  - Neurodiverse conditions covered by Act - right to reasonable adjustments, protections against discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - Not all neurodivergent people will consider themselves to have a disability, or have a diagnosis
  - PKC has a duty of care for the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees
  - An employee is not legally required to provide evidence of a condition – how does it impact on work
  - It's good practice to consider and discuss potential support and reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce disadvantages faced by the employee
  - Adjustments that suit one neurodivergent person might not help someone else with the same condition



# Removing barriers allows everyone to fully participate



**Raising awareness of neurodiversity in the workplace means assumptions are not made, and stereotypes are not formed based on inaccurate or incomplete information**

**People don't always bring their whole background stories to work. You may not be aware of the challenges they face. When working with others, take time to build rapport and actively listen**

# Barriers to work



**Click on the link below to watch a short film about what it's like to be autistic and feel that employers don't see their ability, but rather their autism.**

**<https://youtu.be/GAehvcnFjml>**

**See the individual before the label. Avoid assuming**

**Some adjustments – help everyone**

**(e.g. providing information about what to expect at interview)**

# Supporting neurodiverse colleagues



**There is a range of supports for all employees whether neurotypical or neurodivergent, including:**

- **Policies and Frameworks e.g. Recruitment and Selection, Corporate Equalities Policy, Health and Wellbeing Framework**
- **Advice – People and Culture, Occupational Health, professional partners e.g. Perth Autism Support, Autism Initiatives**
- **Guidance – e.g. making reasonable adjustments, dyslexia awareness**
- **Wellbeing Support including regular briefings**
- **Staff Networks**
- **Health and Wellbeing Passport**
- **Training and Awareness raising sessions**
- **Your Care Employee Assistance Programme (with access to self help resources and confidential, free support)**

# Strategies and reasonable adjustments



From the point of application and throughout the employment journey, where required, it's important to get the right support in place in a timely manner as this can make a huge difference to someone feeling engaged in a job and being productive. Support tools or adjustments don't have to be complex or expensive, often there are simple and inexpensive ways to make reasonable adjustments. Some examples are:

- Assistive technology, e.g. to help with grammar/spelling, digital pen, coloured screen covers (see slide at the end with specific links)
- Working from home or adjusting the work space, e.g. away from distractions or people walking by
- Wearing earphones or ear defenders
- Turning camera off, or interacting via the chat function instead of speaking on screen when using MS Teams
- Flexibility of breaks, e.g. after a meeting or during a planned fire alarm test
- Having an action list/to do list (colour coding may help identify priorities)
- Walk and talk meetings
- Designated coach or buddy
- Reduction in hours or part time working



# More helpful strategies



## Effective Communication:

- Be direct and clear
- Use written instructions
- Avoid idiomatic expressions
- Plan directions ahead of time
- Rely on verbal communication over non-verbal cues

## Provide Clear Expectations:

- Detail deadlines and outcomes
- Confirm understanding of instructions
- Specify communication methods and frequency
- Offer detailed feedback
- Establish long-term and short-term goals
- Assist in prioritising tasks

# Key points to remember

- Be person-centered and ask the individual about what they think their support needs are
- Ask for help if you're unsure how to support someone
- Adjustments need to be put in place in good time and require time to be embedded. What works for one neurodivergent employee may not work for another
- Coaching support can help some to plan and embed adjustments into their daily practices
- Be flexible and review adjustments to check they are working and change if required



# Recruitment and neurodiversity

Applying for a job can be a nerve-racking experience for anyone. For individuals with a neurodivergent difference, it can be very stressful. Making simple changes and using available resources can improve the experience for all applicants. Some examples are detailed on the next few pages:

- Advertising - be clear on what the essential skills are for the role and use plain English. For more advice, refer to [Writing Effective Recruitment Adverts](#)
- Ensure any selection assessment is relevant to the role. Share instructions/written information in advance if possible e.g. case studies



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# Preparing for interview



- Provide or ask for as much information as possible in advance
- Consider if there are any events scheduled in/around the building on the day of interviews e.g. planned fire alarm test
- Advise or ask if required to prepare anything in advance
- Ensure questions are competency based and measure essential skills. Be aware candidates may take you literally
- Consider any requests for reasonable adjustments
- Our Getting Ready for Interview guidance can help candidates to know what to expect and prepare

# The environment



## Do's

- Provide a quiet, calm space for the candidate to wait prior to interview
- Provide an environment that minimises sensory stimuli
- Check the room e.g. distractions
- Turn off phone

## Don'ts

- Wear anything with a strong smell
- Use a room/area with loud background noise

# Interview



- Wear name badge or have name cards on table
- Advise candidates to take time to consider each question
- Avoid small talk/general questions
- Ask one question at a time
- Ask competency-based questions that ask about candidate's past experience. Related supplementary questions should be direct and focused. Our [managers resourcing toolbox](#) has guidance on using values-based recruitment that can help probe deeper to give a more in depth understand of candidates.
- Tell the candidate if they are talking too much/have or have not provided sufficient information
- Pick up on non-verbal cues
- Allow breaks, if required
- Be aware of unconscious bias



# Induction



- Maintain contact with your new employee between interview and taking up post.
- Explore what would be helpful prior to taking up role e.g. meeting the team
- Discuss reasonable adjustments. The wellbeing passport is a useful tool to help identify any adjustments that may need to be considered
- Check in regularly once employment has started to ask if any adjustments are effective or need adjusting
- [How To Plan an Induction](#)

# Local support



## **Perth Autism Support (PAS)**

**Supporting autistic children and young people reach their full potential**

- **Tel: 01738 451081**
- **[www.perthaustismsupport.org.uk](http://www.perthaustismsupport.org.uk)**

## **Number 3**

**A one stop shop supporting people who are 16+ with an Autism diagnosis**

- **Tel: 01738 449327**
- **[Perth One Stop Shop \(perthoss.org.uk\)](http://perthoss.org.uk)**

## **Perth and Kinross ADHD Support Group**

- **Tel: 01738 587261 / 07545 304904**
- **[Perth and Kinross ADHD Support Group](#)**

**[Access to Work](#) can provide advice and an assessment of workplace needs for individuals, with disabilities or long-term health conditions, who are already in work or about to start**

# Other support



- [disABILITY Staff Network](#)
- [Acas - Neurodiversity at work](#)
- [Link to PAM document](#)

# More support - tech

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- Read aloud function [Listen to your Word documents - Microsoft Support](#)
  - Immersive reader to change look, colour and contrast of documents [Use Immersive Reader in Word - Microsoft Support](#)
  - Create transcripts of Microsoft Team's meetings: [Live transcription with speaker attribution now available in Microsoft Teams meetings for English\(US\)](#)
  - Microsoft Editor to support with grammar: [Microsoft Editor checks grammar and more in documents, mail, and the web - Microsoft Support](#)
  - [Microsoft Support - Accessibility tools for neurodiversity](#)