**NEURODIVERSITY WORKPLACE RECOMMENDATION SUPPORT TOOL**

Rather than focussing on the labels Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs), Asperger Syndrome, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia and Tourette’s Syndrome, this support tool looks at various presentations across neurodiversity and the adjustments that may be helpful. **There is no need to have a label to implement adjustments.**

Being neurodivergent will often amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010, even if the person does not consider themselves to be disabled. This is because it impacts the individual on a daily basis with functional tasks and will impact for over 12 months and is a long-term disability.

**Neurodivergence is not ill health** and does not ordinarily require OH input, the line manager can identify what challenges the employee faces in the workplace and what can be done to support them. The Trust also has a support page for staff with neurodivergence which staff can access:<https://staffhub.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/working-with-us/neurodivergence.htm>

The line manager can go through this document with the staff member identifying any challenges the staff member feels they face and discussing if they feel the recommended adjustments will be supportive. It may be useful to do this in multiple sessions so as not to overwhelm. Not all adjustments will be suitable for all work areas, however this tool can also prompt further discussion and any other agreed adjustments can be added.

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| **INITIAL EXAMPLES WHICH MAY BE HELPFUL (tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Assistive technology such as voice/text software or dual monitors, with training on how to implement. |  |  |  |
| Flexible hours and remote working options (to reduce sensory overwhelm of commuting or shared office spaces). |  |  |  |
| Environmental flexibility (e.g., a dedicated desk in a quiet space or using quiet spaces for focused tasks such as booking a meeting room for report writing |  |  |  |
| Coaching to devise specific strategies for managing executive functions and psychosocial issues |  |  |  |

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| **CHALLENGE: CONCENTRATION AND FOCUS, EASILY DISTRACTED, PROCRASTINATION, FATIGUE.****(tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Allow short breaks throughout the day. Negotiate taking regular breaks. This may mean working slightly longer core hours to accommodate this e.g., 8.30-5.30 rather than 9-5 would give the staff member four 15 min breaks to take during the day when the staff member needs them**.** |  |  |  |
| Focus on one job at a time rather than multi-tasking when the staff member may be distracted often |  |  |  |
| Set a regular timer on phone or PC to bring staff member back to focus should the staff member tend to go off track – can be visual or auditory. This needs to be intrusive enough for the staff member to notice it |  |  |  |
| Use a “do not disturb” sign/function on the staff members telephone and email, when specific tasks require intense concentration. |  |  |  |
| Encourage co-workers not to disturb the staff member unless absolutely necessary. |  |  |  |
| Explore possibility of staff member working somewhere that is quiet and away from distractions, for example away from doors, busy phones, loud machinery. |  |  |  |
| Understanding any sensory issues, e.g., open plan offices have lots of noise and lights, which may be minimised using desk partitions, telephones that light up when ringing, noise-cancelling headphones, desk low-lights etc. |  |  |  |
| Work from home occasionally or flexibility in hours, to reduce distraction, stress and fatigue. |  |  |  |
| Relaxation techniques to be used – time allocated to practice these |  |  |  |

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| **CHALLENGE: HYPERACTIVITY (tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| If the staff member needs to move a lot, perhaps a chair that has a wide range of movement (balance chair) or a rise and fall desk allowing the staff member to stand to work when they need to |  |  |  |
| Movement breaks can help control this – using stairs rather than lift, walking in office rather than internal phone/email |  |  |  |
| Stress ball or fidget device – it’s a quiet outlet for the need to move rather than something that taps. |  |  |  |
| Be aware that the staff members need to move may be someone else’s distraction. If they need to pace up and down while thinking at work encourage them to do it in a corridor rather than a shared office. |  |  |  |
| **CHALLENGE:** **ARITHMETIC (tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Provide a handheld or talking calculator, or use the calculator function on TextHelp software. |  |  |  |
| Advise the staff member to say the numbers out loud or write them down |  |  |  |
| Allow more time than usual for any tasks that involve arithmetic |  |  |  |
| Provide written rather than verbal instructions |  |  |  |
| If possible, mathematical data to be represented in a visual way e.g. graphs, charts and infographics |  |  |  |
| If possible provide facilities for speed dialling of telephone numbers |  |  |  |
| Discuss with IT if there are any appropriate reasonable adjustments for using security codes for doors and computer log in etc |  |  |  |

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| **CHALLENGE: SOCIAL INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION (tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Ask for a workplace mentor – maybe line manager, colleague, buddy arrangement. Someone who can help the staff member build awareness of how they communicate and any other issues with social cues. They can help defuse difficult social situations before they become too large. |  |  |  |
| Allowing breaks from the office /dept when needed (micro-breaks) can help control heightened emotion and avoid outbursts. |  |  |  |
| Understanding that the staff members eye contact, speech, and body language may not be the same as other co-workers. |  |  |  |
| Provide clear and specific information and instructions about what is expected of the staff member e.g., when going for interviews, completing work tasks etc. |  |  |  |
| Understanding that the staff member may find hypothetical or abstract questions difficult and that they may also interpret language quite literally. |  |  |  |
| Avoid asking questions that are too open e.g., “Tell me a bit about yourself”. |  |  |  |
| Be aware if the staff member has a tendency to talk too much or focus on one particular topic at length, that it is okay to let the staff member know when they member are doing this. This should be done with discretion and confidentially. |  |  |  |
| Provide an explanation of any unwritten rules of the workplace. |  |  |  |
| Empower colleagues to let you know how they would like to communicate and work. |  |  |  |

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| **CHALLENGE:** **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Provide verbal as well as written instructions. |  |  |  |
| Use alternatives to written information such as voice mail if appropriate |  |  |  |
| Use/ask for screen reading software and scanners. |  |  |  |
| A Reading Pen may be useful for unfamiliar words. |  |  |  |
| Provision of info on coloured paper & set up computer screen with a coloured background. |  |  |  |
| Keep operating instructions next to office equipment i.e photocopiers and scanners. |  |  |  |
| **CHALLENGE:** **SPOKEN COMMUNICATION (tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Instructions to be given one at a time, slowly and clearly, and in a quiet location. |  |  |  |
| Certain tasks to be demonstrated and/or supervised. |  |  |  |
| Use of a digital recorder. |  |  |  |
| Back up verbal instructions and information with notes or diagrams |  |  |  |

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| **CHALLENGE:** **ORGANISATION AND PLANNING (tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Provision of a workspace that is quiet and free from distractions such as doors, phones and loud machinery if operationally feasible. |  |  |  |
| To work from home occasionally. |  |  |  |
| Provide a workspace that is well lit, neat and tidy |  |  |  |
| Provide a wall planner that visually highlights appointments, deadlines and tasks. |  |  |  |
| Reminders of important deadlines and regular reviews of priorities and projects |  |  |  |
| Provide timetables, mnemonics and mind maps if these help with prioritising work and meeting deadlines. |  |  |  |
| Provide colour code items in the staff members workspace. |  |  |  |
| Provide a personal digital organiser. |  |  |  |
| Use computer features such as calendars, alerts and alarms. |  |  |  |
| Create a daily “To Do” list. |  |  |  |
| Work to be broken up into manageable chunks. |  |  |  |
| Build planning time into each day. |  |  |  |
| Allow extra time for tasks and projects, for unforeseen circumstances |  |  |  |
| Provide templates for detailed work, such as reports. |  |  |  |

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| **CHALLENGE: MEMORY (tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Use mnemonic devices and acronyms |  |  |  |
| Use diagrams and flowcharts to organise information |  |  |  |
| Use multi-sensory learning techniques such as reading material onto a tape machine and then playing it back whilst re-reading |  |  |  |
| Use appropriate computer software such as program menus and help features. |  |  |  |
| Incoming telephone calls to be kept to a minimum if operationally feasible. |  |  |  |
| Before making a telephone call, jot down the key points the staff member needs to cover. |  |  |  |
| **CHALLENGE: SENSE OF DIRECTION (tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Encourage to try to use the same route each time |  |  |  |
| Provide visual representation of a route, and visible landmarks. |  |  |  |
| Provide detailed maps and/or GPS system. |  |  |  |

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| **CHALLENGE: WORKING AT A COMPUTER( tick the ones you feel will be helpful)** |
| **Examples of adjustments**  | **Helpful?** | **Date**  | **Review Date** |
| Change background colour of screen. |  |  |  |
| Use an anti-glare screen filter\* |  |  |  |
| Take frequent breaks, at least every hour\* |  |  |  |
| If possible avoid working on a computer all day. Alternate computer work with other tasks\* |  |  |  |
| Provide an ergonomic keyboard (see DSE assessment link below)\* |  |  |  |
| Change or slow down the mouse. Keyboard short cuts used as an alt to the mouse? |  |  |  |
| Check <https://mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk/> for details on adjusting computer settings |  |  |  |
| **\*DSE ASSESSMENT** |
| A DSE / Workstation assessment is a self-assessment. Ask the staff member to complete the DSE self assessment: If any problems are highlighted then there is a requirement to action these changes: Support is available on these pages with regards to improving set up, ordering a new chair and details of any other equipment that may be required.<https://staffhub.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/working-with-us/display-screen-equipment.htm> <https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/> <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.htm> |

**FURTHER RESOURCES CAN ALSO BE FOUND VIA THESE LINKS:**

<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/>

<https://www.autism.org.uk/>

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

<https://dyspraxiauk.com/>

<https://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/articles/supporting-neurodivergent-colleagues-nhs>

<https://www.geniuswithin.org/what-is-neurodiversity/>

<https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/knowledge-hub/toolkits/neurodiversity-toolkit/>

<https://mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk/>

**WELLBEING AT WORK ACTION PLAN:**

<https://staffhub.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/working-with-us/Health%20and%20Welbeing/Wellbeing%20at%20Work%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

**STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT**

<https://staffhub.liverpoolft.nhs.uk/working-with-us/Occupational%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing/Stress%20Risk%20Assessment.pdf>

The SRA should be undertaken with reference to the HSE Management Standards. This assessment needs to be completed by both the staff member and the line manager. This should be done in a confidential one to one meeting. An action plan from the risk assessment should be agreed and implemented at the earliest opportunity. Stress Risk Assessments are dynamic in nature and may need to change regularly. Therefore, this should be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Further information regarding Stress Risk Assessments and the HSE Management Standards can be found via the links below:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/overview.htm> ‘<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm>