

championing a workplace that helps neurodiverse employees shine

According to the Local Government Association, it's estimated that 15% of Britons are neurodivergent but when we talk about creating accessible and inclusive workplaces, neurodivergent employees are often overlooked.

Have you ever worked with a colleague who doesn't always engage in casual office conversations but when it comes to analytical thinking, excels over most? Or maybe they aren't able to focus on a task for long periods of time but can come up with the most creative solutions to complex problems.



These qualities are associated with neurodiverse people and aren't as rare as many people may think. In fact, you may even belong to the 15% of neurodiverse people in the UK. But organisations are still failing to consider the diverse ways of thinking and doing that can benefit the workforce and the bottom line.

Let's take an in-depth look at how organisations can create workplaces that offer the support neurodiverse employees need to shine and become valued contributors to their organisations.



what is neurodiversity?



Neurodiversity, neurotypical, and neurodivergent are terms that are relatively new and they've only come to the forefront over the past few decades by professionals in academic domains such as educational psychology, disability studies, and sociology, to name a few.

Neurotypical individuals often suffer from conditions such as ADHD, autism, anxiety, OCD, and dyslexia. They are often diagnosed with intellectual or developmental disabilities or neurological disorders.

When we take into consideration the context of the workplace, these labels can often raise questions about a person's ability to collaborate and integrate into the workplace culture and bring something of value to the table.

However, it's important to remember that neurodiversity simply means that there's a difference in the way a person's brain functions. It does not mean that they're less intelligent than those who are neurotypical.

neurodiversity on a global scale



Today, it's estimated that 15–20% of the global population—approximately 1.8 billion people—is neurodiverse. While many organisations and business leaders don't consider neurodiversity to be a stand-out quality that can add value to their organisations, there are many personalities around the world who'll disagree.

From some of the greatest minds in history like Albert Einstein to tech giants like Bill Gates and activists striving to change the world like Greta Thunberg, there are leaders around the world whose neurodiversity hasn't impaired their ability to function, but in many cases may have helped them with the successes they've gained over the years.

According to the National Autistic Society, the UK has at least 700,000 autistic adults in employment and the British Dyslexia Association states that 10% of the UK population is dyslexic.

supporting neurodiverse employees



Diversity is often accepted as one of the biggest drivers of organisational progress and neurodiverse employees are leaders when it comes to thinking differently.

It shouldn't come as a surprise that organisations willing to embrace and promote neurodiverse talent are leading the way when it comes to gaining a significant advantage over their competition.

With neurodiverse individuals representing a percentage of the UK workforce, it's important that business leaders and HR personnel take the necessary steps to support neurodiverse employees in the workplace.

But how can this be done?

promote accessibility and prepare to accommodate



Before you start making any plans, find out what your neurodiverse employees need. Different neurotypical employees will require different solutions and you should work to provide tailored work environments for these individuals.

For instance, providing noise-cancelling headphones for employees with sensory sensitivities, investing in text-to-speech software, and creating spaces for those with spatial sensitivities can go a long way.

Even if you have an employee experiencing the most common neurodivergence conditions such as dyslexia, it's important to be accommodating since it doesn't just impact a person's ability to read and write; it can create a struggle for employees to meet deadlines, recall information, follow instructions, and much more.

rethink your sourcing efforts



We all have our own idea about what makes a 'good candidate'. But these preferences have stemmed from superficial norms that inadvertently put certain candidates at a distinct disadvantage.

For instance, a candidate with autism may find it difficult to make eye contact and a candidate with ADHD may appear to be distracted. This is why hiring panels should include neurodiverse individuals who can look out for these signs. It's also important to ask the right questions to assess their full range of skills and not just the skills a few people may think are important for the business.

Keep in mind that neurodivergent candidates aren't mandated to disclose their conditions at any point in the interview process. This is why organisations generally include a statement informing candidates that they're open to neurodivergent individuals so candidates feel more comfortable disclosing their condition rather than hiding.

offer the right training to everyone



Neurodiversity is critical for organisations to attract, hire, and retain talent with a unique set of skills. Offering training and awareness programmes can help businesses develop a workforce that's more empathetic and understanding of their colleagues' differences.

Training can also help managers understand the challenges that neurodiverse individuals face and figure out the best way to provide the support they need. It's also a great opportunity to create a more inclusive workplace where neurodivergent employees aren't afraid to openly discuss their challenges.

It can also help employees gain a better understanding of the benefits of neurodiversity and how it can help their workplaces. This can help neurodiverse employees voice their ideas more confidently in a safe environment that won't readily dismiss their opinions.

use inclusive language



Neurodiverse employees need to know that they're valued within the workplace and, therefore, your vision and mission statements need to reflect the inclusive culture you're trying to promote.

Any communication you're sending out, whether it's a vacancy advertisement, an employee handbook, or a HR policy, needs to reflect this.

These are strong stances that will spread the word about your inclusive workplace and give you a better chance of hiring the right people for your organisation.

seek guidance from a Kinhub expert



The Kinhub platform offers unlimited access to a host of experts specialising in a number of fields. including experts who can assist neurodiverse employees.



Meet Acey!

Speech and language pathologist

Acey Holmes is a leading consultant for employee engagement and retention, with a focus on using the neuroscience of play to improve job-life satisfaction.

Acey supports individuals and organisations by developing and facilitating interactive sessions covering the power of play at work, the neuroscience of play and helps to improve employee development and team dynamics.

As well as Acey, we have a number of expert consultants on our platform ready to help you employees, with everything from mental health support and counselling, to family planning and parental advice.

resources



<https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-libdem-group/our-press-releases/neurodiversity>

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/industrial-and-organizational-psychology/article/neurodiversity-in-the-workplace-considering-neuroatypicality-as-a-form-of-diversity/0BB6136976529939030BDF4F2DE37F14>

Our support is tailored to your employees' unique circumstances, encompassing support for single, multicultural, LGBTQ+, surrogate, adoptive, and cis families, as well as those caring for elderly family members. Supporting employees in areas ranging from fertility to menopause and everything in between, at Kinhub, we appreciate that every individual is different, with various nuances and needs.

Reach out to our team and learn more about how we can help you support your entire workforce.



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