Neurodiversity in the Workplace

A Guide for Employers

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Developed in collaboration with Lexxic

Lexxic is a consultancy that specialises in neurodiversity in the workplace. Lexxic support individuals and organisations to drive performance, engagement and retention by offering a wide range of services - from initial diagnosis, screening and workplace assessments - to follow up services like coaching, training or 1:1 support. lexxic.com

This Guide is Sponsored by Dyslexia Box

Dyslexia Box are an award winning reasonable adjustments and disability support provider. Dyslexia Box support people with a range of neurodiverse conditions including dyslexia, ADHD, autism, mental health as well as people with visual and hearing impairments. dyslexiabox.co.uk
1. Introduction

This Guide will give you an understanding of neurodiverse conditions in an employment context to enable you to support neurodiverse employees and employees who are carers, family and friends of neurodiverse individuals.

Having a diverse breadth of employees with a broad range of skills makes excellent business sense for your organisation. As a business you want to get the best out of each and every employee who works for you, including those with neurodiversity and this Guide will ensure you understand and are able to provide the specific types of support they may need.

At the end of this document there is further information to support you, including examples and organisations that can offer support, advice and guidance.

2. What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is defined as “the range of differences in individual brain function and behavioural traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population”¹. Neurodiversity is an umbrella term used to refer to dyslexia, Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), formally known as dyspraxia, dyscalculia, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC), and Tourette’s syndromes². This Guide will focus on the area of neurodiversity in general. If you require further information on specific conditions, please refer to the extra reading and further support at the end of this guide.

Individuals who are neurodiverse have a variety of difficulties and strengths. Each condition presents its own challenges and their cognitive profiles overlap, which means individuals can have co-occurring conditions. Experiencing more than one type of neurodiverse condition is common³. Several areas of neurodiversity, for example, dyslexia, DCD and dyscalculia typically include difficulties with sequencing and working memory⁴.

“Neurodiverse” is the term used to describe individuals that display a different way of perceiving the world and of handling information. People with neurodiversity may think holistically rather than logically, which can be a challenge in the workplace but also a valuable skill - the ability to “think outside the box”. Neurodiverse employees may encounter difficulty when their way of thinking conflicts with the environment⁵. The most apparent workplace challenges include poor organisation, general slowness of working, sequencing, structuring, concentration and stress.

² David Grant, Neurodiversity in Higher Education: Positive Responses to Specific Learning Differences, David Pollack (ed) (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2009).
³ Ibid
⁵ Ibid
Neurodiverse conditions are on a spectrum, ranging from individuals who experience mild or few difficulties, to those that experience severe difficulty. Many will require support to reach their full potential.

There is no cure for neurodiverse conditions, nor does their need to be – they describe a different way of thinking and seeing the world. This guide aims to help employers understand neurodiversity so that they can help employees to reach their potential in the workplace and allow them to have a successful workplace experience.

A formal diagnosis of a neurodiverse condition can be made by relevant professionals specialising in that area.

3. Facts

- Neurodiverse conditions are defined as disability under the Equality Act 2010.
- It is estimated that around 1 in 7 people (more than 15% of people in the UK) are neurodivergent.\(^6\)
- Approximately 10% of the population are dyslexic.\(^7\)
- About 3% of the population are dyspraxic.\(^8\)
- The Adult ADHD population is approximately 3.5%.\(^9\)
- It is estimated that 40% of individuals with dyspraxia also experience ADHD.\(^10\)
- Approximately 50% of individuals with dyslexia/DCD have visual difficulties (previously referred to as visual difficulties) compared to the general public (40%).\(^11\)
- 67% of dyslexic individuals request support for stress at work.\(^12\)
- Disabled people are twice as likely to be unemployed than those without a disability.\(^13\)

The National Autistic Society, the UK’s leading charity for people with ASC, state that:

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\(^13\) Scope
Around 1.1% of the UK has a diagnosis on the autism spectrum, which is more than 1 in 100. There are around 700,000 people in the UK living with ASC. If you include their families, ASC touches the lives of 2.8 million people every day.

Only 10% of adults with ASC receive employment support but 53% say they want it.\textsuperscript{14}

4. The Legislation

All neurodiverse conditions are classified as disabilities and are covered under the Equality Act 2010. This Act requires employers to make changes to help disabled people at work. These are known as “reasonable adjustments”.

It is important to remember that employees are still entitled to receive support and reasonable adjustments without a formal diagnosis.

What Types of Discrimination are Unlawful?

Direct – where someone is treated less favourably than other people because of a disability e.g. not recruiting someone because they are a wheelchair user.

Arising from Disability – where a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability and the employer cannot justify the treatment, e.g. dismissing someone because they have taken sickness absence where the absence is related to a disability and the dismissal cannot be justified.

Indirect – where people with a particular disability are unjustifiably put at a disadvantage e.g. where an employer produces information in a format which is more difficult for visually impaired people to access. Indirect discrimination may be objectively justified.

By perception – where you think someone has a disability, and you discriminate against them because of it, but they do not have that disability, this is unlawful – e.g. you do not promote someone because you think they may have cancer and you don’t want someone who will take sickness absence, and they do not have cancer.

By association – if someone spends time with people who have a disability and you discriminate because of that it is unlawful – for example, you do not promote someone because you think they will take time off for caring duties for a disabled person.

Harassment – where you act in a way that violates the dignity of another person or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person based on their disability or someone else’s disability – even if harassment is unintended.

Victimisation – where you discriminate against someone because they have used the provisions of the legislation or have helped someone else to do so.

The Equality Act 2010 also provides that employers must make reasonable adjustments where a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of the employer, or any physical feature of premises occupied by the employer, places a person at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who do not have a disability. Employers must take such steps as it is reasonable for him or her to do so in all circumstances in order to prevent that disadvantage – in other words, the employer has to make a “reasonable adjustment”. This applies in recruitment and during all stages of employment, including dismissal and after the person leaves employment. The requirement relates to all disabled employees of an employer and to any disabled applicant for employment.

enei has published an Employers’ Guide on Disability and Employment and Employers’ Guide to Reasonable Adjustments in the Workplace and these are available to Members on its website.

5. Implications of Non-Compliance with Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 outlaws’ discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of disability. This law protects people from disability discrimination throughout their working lives. The Act gives rights to people who have, or have had, a disability. ‘Disability’ covers both physical and mental impairments that have a substantial and a long-term effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A long-term effect is one which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months or the rest of the person’s life (if shorter). Treatment and aids which alleviate or remove the effect of the impairment do not mean a person is not disabled.

You could also be liable to personal injury claims from employees – not just from physical injury but also psychological injury as well as claims for disability discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. For more information, please see the enei Guide to Disability in Employment.

6. Neurodiverse conditions

Within this section we will cover the main areas of neurodiversity, offer a current definition and identify strengths and challenges associated with each condition. Neurodiverse employees demonstrate many strengths in the workplace. In a supportive work environment, with an employer that has a good understanding of their condition, a person can thrive and bring success to business. In addition, a person with a neurodiverse condition, just as a person without, can face a number of potential challenges within the workplace.

6.1 Dyslexia

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) describe dyslexia as involving difficulties which affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling and writing. Accompanying
weaknesses may be identified in areas of speed of processing, short-term memory, sequencing, auditory and/or visual perception, spoken language and motor skills.

Potential challenges:

- May struggle with tasks involving working memory.
- May struggle with literacy-based tasks, especially when required to do these at speed.
- Will struggle to find mistakes in their own or others’ work – ‘proof reading’.
- May struggle with deadlines and organisation of work load.

Potential strengths:

- A holistic approach (seeing the big picture) to dealing with the world\textsuperscript{15}. This method of thinking can provide individuals with particular strengths, which can be uniquely valuable to the workplace.
- The ability to provide fast hands-on problem solving or “thinking outside the box”. This type of holistic thinking might make them particularly good at working under pressure. If employee’s strengths can be unlocked, they may have potential to be one of the most creative, innovative thinkers in the organisation.
- Working well in management roles that involve strategic thinking and planning.

### 6.2 Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), also known as Dyspraxia

The Dyspraxia Foundation provides this definition: “Developmental dyspraxia is an impairment or immaturity of the organisation of movement. It is associated with problems of perception, language and thought.”\textsuperscript{16}

Potential strengths:

The strengths that someone with a DCD diagnosis may experience are similar to those with dyslexia. They will likely be good at ‘bigger picture thinking’ and be able to plan and focus in a strategic way. In addition, they may also:

- Have good interpersonal skills such as sensitivity, sympathy and caring.
- They may also have good attention to detail and intuition\textsuperscript{17}.

Potential challenges:

- May struggle with organisation of tasks in general but specifically with regard to fine or gross motor control, e.g., they may find tasks such as typing and controlling a mouse difficult despite frequent exposure.

\textsuperscript{15} www.nessy.com
\textsuperscript{17} Diana Bartlett, Dyslexia Difficulties in the Workplace
• May struggle with gross motor tasks and appear ‘clumsy’ such as dropping things, misjudging distances or space.
• May struggle with tasks involving working memory and handwriting may be unclear and untidy.

6.3 Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia is a condition that affects the ability to acquire arithmetical skills. Dyscalculic learners may have difficulty understanding simple number concepts, lack an intuitive grasp of numbers, and have problems learning number facts and procedures. Even if they produce a correct answer or use a correct method, they may do so mechanically and without confidence.¹⁸

Potential strengths:

• Innovative thinkers.
• Excellent trouble shooters.
• Intuitive problem solving.
• Creative in many different ways.
• Lateral thinkers.

Potential challenges:

• Difficulty with numeracy-based tasks, for example maths, estimating, and handling money.
• Likely to also experience difficulties with working memory based tasks.

6.4 ADHD

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and there are three subtypes:

• inattentive,
• hyperactive/impulsive,
• and a combination of inattentive, hyperactive/impulsive¹⁹.

The NHS gives this definition:

‘Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a behavioural disorder that includes symptoms such as inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness.’²⁰

¹⁸ The Dyslexia Association, What is Dyscalculia? <https://www.dyslexia.uk.net/specific-learning-difficulties/dyscalculia/> [accessed 2nd April 2019]
¹⁹ American Psychiatric Association, DSM-IV-TR Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 1994, Washington DC: APA
²⁰ NHS Website, Overview - Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/ [Accessed 2nd April 2019]
The symptoms of ADHD usually improve with age, but many adults who were diagnosed with the condition at a young age continue to experience problems.

People with ADHD may also have additional problems, such as sleep and anxiety disorders. ADHD is also referred to as Hyperkinetic Disorder in classification systems such as the DSM IV.

Potential Challenges:

- All three subtypes typically include difficulties with sequencing and working memory which can impact an individual’s ability to organise themselves in the workplace.
- ADHD is also associated with working memory weaknesses.
- In addition, a person may struggle to focus and be easily distracted, and/or alternatively, they can become ‘hyper focused’ to the exclusion of other tasks.

Potential strengths:

- inventiveness
- adaptability
- creativity and curiosity
- people skills
- training delivery
- practicality
- good IT skills
- strong visualisation/imagination/artistic
- determination and persistence
- motivation and ambition.

6.5 Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) formally known as Asperger’s and Autism.

ASC is a lifelong, developmental condition that impacts on an individual’s ability to understand the world around them. Specifically, this relates to communication and the perception of the world around them. Asperger’s and Autism are still used under certain classification systems.

Potential challenges:

- Difficulties with social communication and social interactions – ASC people may find it hard to join in conversations or make friends.

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• Females and males may present differently, and although females may have friendships they may prefer one to one friendship or to be on the edges of groups or teamwork.
• Repetitive behaviour, routines and activities – such as fixed daily routines and repetitive body movements.

Potential strengths:

Employees demonstrate many strengths in the workplace. In a supportive job and with a good understanding of ASC a person can thrive and bring success to any business. Here are some examples of the unique strengths a person with ASC may have:

• A natural ability to recognise patterns or trends within data sets very quickly.
• High attention to detail and excellent problem-solving skills.
• Excellent memory for facts or dates.
• Reliability, high retention and loyalty.
• They may show a preference for a start, middle and end to tasks. A completer finisher.
• Extremely good logical, methodical and analytical abilities.
• Highly committed and honest.
• Low absence rate.
• Different ways of thinking.
• Tendency towards perfectionism and an interest in doing things the ‘right’ way.
• High levels of education.
• High levels of focus precision and accuracy in an area of interest.

6.6 Tourette Syndrome

Tourettes Action give this definition of the condition: ‘Tourette Syndrome is an inherited, neurological condition, the key features of which are tics, involuntary sounds and movements. Up to 85% of people with the condition will also experience co-occurring features and conditions.’\(^{23}\)

Potential Challenges:

• Find auditory processing difficult.
• Tics can be exacerbated when the individual is stressed or under pressure.
• Tics may change over time and so support will need to be reviewed for the individual.
• May need support to interact with others as they may be embarrassed by their tics.

Potential Strengths:

• Can ‘hyper focus’ so may be able to focus on one task for an extended period of time, however caution should be exercised here.

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The individual may know already what supports them best in situations, use their knowledge to help you understand.

6.7 Potential strengths and challenges of neurodiverse conditions

Employers should not assume particular associated strengths or difficulties. To unlock a neurodiverse individual’s full potential, it is advisable to understand their specific strengths and weaknesses as you would with any employee.

Although an individual with a neurodiverse condition might exhibit the ability to think holistically, if their workplace does not expect or cater for this way of viewing the world, associated difficulties can arise. For example, an individual who is thinking holistically (understanding the gist/general meaning) may find an excellent solution to a problem, but if asked to write a report detailing the idea, they may have difficulties. The report may be poorly structured, lack coherency or appear unfinished/careless. A preference for thinking holistically can sabotage an individual’s implementation of their working memory. Working memory is the brain’s ability to retain and focus on the information relevant to the mental task at hand; it dictates the amount of information that can be held to complete a task.

6.8 Acquired Neurodiversity

It is important to recognise that the neurodiverse conditions discussed in this guide are developmental, i.e. present from birth. However, neurotypical individuals may experience brain changes as a result of a medical condition, such as a stroke, or head injury, which can result in a manifestation of characteristics such as those present in neurodiverse conditions. In such situations, the individual would be said to have “acquired neurodiversity”, for example, “acquired dyslexia”; sometimes known as “alexia”.

Individuals with acquired neurodiversity experiencing changes to their abilities and therefore new difficulties, could benefit from a number of the associated adjustments described in sections 6 and 7 below. In addition, individuals who have been through a traumatic experience such as a head injury or serious medical condition are likely to have increased anxiety and and may be uncertain about what they will be able to manage as they return to work, and so it is important that they know they can access help and to ensure their difficulties are supported adequately from the outset.

7. Reasonable Adjustments to encourage and support neurodiversity in your organisation

Many individuals with neurodiversity will be highly skilled, qualified and extremely employable. These employees may be able to bring a unique set of skills that are currently lacking in the organisation. However, you may miss out on these skills if you fail to make reasonable adjustments. This section provides practical guidance to promote acceptance and encourage neurodiversity.

enei has a separate Employer Guide on Reasonable Adjustments in the Workplace which is available to Members from its website.

7.1 Recruitment

Neurodiverse conditions generally are considered “hidden disabilities” and are often difficult to identify during the recruitment process. On the application form or during the recruitment process, organisations should include a section on disabilities and detailing the support on offer. This will encourage candidates to confidently apply for roles and understand that their future potential employer will offer support.

During the application process employers should show an open and positive attitude to diversity and ask candidates if they require any reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process if they have disclosed a neurodiverse condition.

7.1.1 Disclosure

It is important that your employees and potential employees feel able to, and comfortable with, disclosing information about their neurodiversity. Ways of making an employee comfortable can be anything from letting them know they can do this in your meeting with them, showing them the support you offer, letting them know you are involved in awareness campaigns or asking employees who already have support in place to be ambassadors. Disclosure encourages a discussion about employee’s strengths and difficulties; it allows employees to talk about any strategies they currently use and any areas where help is needed. It may also be that the current strategies a candidate uses are enough to support them through the recruitment process. It begins the process of accessing funding and IT support. It can alleviate workplace-related anxiety and can help raise general awareness about neurodiverse conditions.

enei has an Employer Guide to Equality Monitoring which Members can access via the website.

7.1.2 The Job advert – good practice advice

It is worth noting that while this guidance will prove useful for those with neurodiverse conditions, it can be considered good practice in placing job adverts in general, not just for the benefit of those with a neurodiverse condition.
• Job adverts are sometimes written in a confusing way; they are not always concise and in plain English. Employers should use short, clear and concise sentences.
• The advert should list essential skills, avoiding jargon or unnecessary information and be clearly presented, e.g. state if the role requires good verbal or written communication skills, rather than just asking for good communication skills.
• Focus on the exact abilities and experience necessary.
• Try to use pronouns like “we” and “you”. Sentences should use the active voice e.g. “Our administration team supports the smooth running of the organisation”.
• Avoid passive sentences such as “The smooth running of the organisation is supported by the administration team”.
• In the application pack explain reasonable adjustments for the interview and offer the ability to arrange additional reasonable adjustments.

7.1.3 Interview

The interview process may not be the best way to assess the ability of a candidate with a neurodiversity condition, especially those conditions that have short-term (working) memory and sequencing difficulties, difficulties with organisation, listening and speed of response to questions. Differences in speech may be noticeable e.g. pronunciation/speech disorder (impediment). There may be problems speaking succinctly, and they may participate less, interrupt the interviewer or find maintaining eye contact difficult.

In order to help support a candidate who has a neurodiversity condition, the following can be helpful:
• Be aware of these difficulties and, if possible, avoid using them as criteria for the advertised post.
• Think about what you need the person to be able to do in the role on a day to day basis. If excellent communication skills are not a high priority, then consider whether you are looking for these over other necessary skills in the interview.
• Where possible, consider a work trial instead of an interview.
• Interview questions can be adapted; base questions on experience rather than hypothetical situations.
• Be patient and allow extra time to process and respond to questions.
• Limit questions to those that relate to the actual job the candidate will be doing.
• Invite candidate to bring their own notes for reference to the interview.

7.1.4 Assessments and selection

If possible, avoid written tests and use role-based assessments.

Additional arrangements may be different for each individual. Possible adjustments include:
• 25% extra time
• a reader
• a scribe
• use of a computer to write test answers
• use of assistive technology (e.g. text to speech software)
• test breaks
• use of a separate room.

7.2 Raising Colleagues’ Awareness of Neurodiversity

A lack of awareness among managers, supervisors and colleagues can cause problems in the workplace as an employee may be reluctant to disclose their neurodiversity. To managers they may appear lazy or incompetent or even rude. Colleagues might think they are uncooperative/disagreeable or withdrawn and aggressive. Improved awareness of neurodiversity and specific conditions through training and individual support can help alleviate these problems.

Lexxic can offer awareness training for staff within your organisation within a range of mediums, including specific on-line awareness training via Neurotalent Unlocked.

The BDA has introduced a dyslexia quality mark for organisations, which examines the dyslexia friendly nature of an organisation, verifies dyslexia friendly quality and makes recommendations.

In addition, the UK Government offers the Disability Confident Scheme to help and support organisations to become more disability aware and promote that to others.

8. Reasonable Adjustments and support for neurodiverse individuals in the workplace

The difficulties and suggested reasonable adjustments listed below may map on to specific neurodiverse conditions more than they do with others. However, it is more useful to consider the potential adjustments in terms of areas of difficulty rather than related specifically to a particular diagnosis as an individual may have co-occurring conditions, and similar difficulties occur across conditions. Reasonable adjustments can be easy to provide and are often free.

8.1 Difficulties with Organisation and Time Management

8.1.1 Difficulties

Difficulties with organisation and time management can be associated with all neurodiverse conditions, however these are often seen in individuals with dyslexia and DCD. Difficulties in this area may be evident in a range of tasks, for example, employees may miss appointments, mix up times/place of meeting, miss deadlines, fail to prioritise, have inefficient working methods, appear chaotic and disorganised, have a messy desk, lose

things, bring the wrong documents to meetings and may have problems dealing with a varied workload. This is due to difficulties in auditory short-term memory and sequencing.

8.1.2 Reasonable Adjustments that can assist:

- Provide storage solutions – e.g. desk trays/boxes for certain papers, pots to keep stationery organised and tidy. It can help if these are colour coded as well.
- Arrange access to a one-to-one specialist workplace coach.
- Schedule regular one-to-one meetings with line manager to plan workload.
- Help to set mini deadlines, prioritise, order or list tasks.
- Provide schedules of work in advance, highlighting deadlines, and encourage use of visual weekly/yearly planners and daily/weekly/yearly routines.
- Use/issue smartphones to synchronise documents/calendar etc.
- Support use of online calendar (Google/Outlook) utilising reminder alerts or timers (time to move on to next task).
- Provide tools to help organise paper work, such as subject dividers or tickler files (a tickler file is a date organised filing system). Colour coding can be done with highlighters or coloured folders.
- Suggest colour coding for in-trays and out-trays.
- Offer technology to organise electronic documents e.g. One note.
- Encourage planning with SMART objectives.

8.2 Difficulties with Working Memory

8.2.1 Difficulties

This area of difficulty should be thought of as difficulties with short term memory, rather than long term memory, and is often associated with dyslexia, DCD and ADHD. This can impact on daily activities such as forgetting telephone numbers, messages, instructions or directions. Also, problems filing, using a directory, carrying out instructions or following work protocol in the correct order or in a logical way may be observed. Often issues with memory will mean the individual requires information presented several times.

There may be problems with recalling what is said in meetings, minute taking, multi-tasking, listening and reply/formulation and speaking succinctly. Individuals may participate less or interrupt and may miss certain nuances in conversation.

8.2.2 Reasonable Adjustments that may assist

- Demonstrate new tasks (multisensory, hands-on learning and repetition), tell them, show them, then ask them to do the task; also provide the task written down for reference.
- Break tasks down into smaller more manageable chunks.
- Try to provide laminated instructions to help with memory (and keep these near office equipment).
- Give both verbal and written instructions.
- Provide an alphabet flash card (filing/directory).
• Consider their preferred method of communication and try to utilise this as much as possible.
• A reminder note book to note down their own bullet points/diagrams/checklist on how to do particular activities.
• Provide templates for taking telephone messages.
• Issue a digital recorder (minute taking/note-taking), or other devices to support note taking e.g. a Smart pen, and allow meetings, where possible, to be recorded.
• Open meetings with an overview and at the end provide a summary of key/main points.
• Provide written documents prior to meetings/training and encourage familiarisation before the session.
• If you are presenting to employees with neurodiversity, consider offering your own notes for their reference.

8.3 Literacy difficulties

8.3.1 Difficulties
These are typically associated with dyslexia, although individuals with DCD may sometimes experience difficulties with spelling or handwriting. Auditory processing and working memory support the tasks and skills required in reading, spelling and writing. Therefore, when there is a working memory difficulty, as there frequently is in neurodiverse conditions, this results in poor letter/sound knowledge, and difficulty in blending, separating and sequencing sounds within words – for example, spelling words with a missing syllable such as “emidetly” for “immediately” or confusing the word “pacific” with “specific”.

Individuals may have overcome more basic reading difficulties but reading accuracy and comprehension can be affected, for example reading large reports combines basic difficulties of sequencing and working memory, which reduces reading efficiency, making it difficult to extract specific meaning.

Employees may also have difficulty with reading due to visual difficulties (previously referred to as visual stress) - text may appear distorted or to move around the page, words or numbers may be misread, keeping place can be difficult, white “rivers” between the words can distract and white backgrounds can cause glare for the reader. These difficulties can cause headaches or heavy uncomfortable eyes. Harsh florescent lighting can make these problems worse. Individuals may have difficulty obtaining correct data from graphs and charts, the cash register, ruler or tape measure, and inputting data into a computer database. Spelling and punctuation errors are likely to be evident, including forgetting what a word should look like.

Spoken language difficulties can mean problems pronouncing words, word finding difficulties, and problems structuring ideas verbally. Individuals may provide listeners with long-winded repetitive speeches.
8.3.2 Reasonable Adjustments: Difficulties with writing, spelling and organisation of thoughts into written format.

- Encourage your employees to plan written work ahead of time.
- Encourage construction of ideas using spider diagrams, mind-maps, and lists, talking it through and obtaining an overview.
- Mind mapping software, e.g. MindView, can help organise and plan ideas.
- Provide a list of appropriate acronyms, abbreviations and subject-specific vocabulary/key words.
- Provide templates for emails, letters and reports.
- Suggest use of mnemonics for regular activities e.g. for taking phone messages, use Person calling, Explanation for call and Telephone number - PET
- Support different methods of producing written documents; mind maps, flow charts, pictures and diagrams.
- Provide Voice recognition software to convert speech into text (e.g. Dragon Naturally Speaking).
- Provide Text to speech software (e.g. Texthelp Read and Write Gold) to help identify grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors.
- Provide Access to one-to-one software training to raise confidence in using technology.
- Ensure use of a spell checker and provide a grammar reference book.
- Provide the employee with a notebook to create their own dictionary of correctly spelled words they use regularly.
- Avoid asking the employee to write on white board or flip chart without prior agreement.

8.3.4 Reasonable Adjustments: Difficulties with reading

- Provide Text to Speech software to read documents (e.g. Texthelp Read and Write Gold).
- Provide a scanner for documents to use with Text to Speech software.
- Provide extra time to read and process large documents.
- Avoid requesting your employee to read aloud without prior agreement.
- Be patient and allow extra time to process and respond to questions.
- Avoid asking your employee to present in front of colleagues without preparation - this includes making presentations.
- Should they be required to make presentations, then provide training in using PowerPoint or your preferred software.
- Encourage planning and preparation using mind mapping software such as MindView.
- Ensure appropriate lighting (avoid florescent strip lighting and glare from windows).
- Provide coloured overlays for reading documents. These overlays are also available for computer screens and as reading rulers.
- Suggest changing the background colour when reading documents on computers.
- Encourage employees, when reading, to track words with a pen or reading ruler.
- Reading aloud to self may help some people.
- Offer regular breaks.
8.3.5 Production of Documents

These suggestions will be useful for an individual with dyslexia, however they can be used as ‘best practice guidance’ and help ensure consistency when producing written documents within an organisation.

Presentation:
- Large (12-14) Sans Serif (without flicks or kicks) font, such as Arial.
- No underlining, italics or block capitals.
- Line spacing – at least 1.5.
- Avoid the use of a white background - off white/pastel is better.

Format:
- Boxes can help separate sections.
- Use colour coding.
- Space out sections.
- Use bullet points or numbering instead of blocks of text.

Style:
- Avoid long dense paragraphs.
- Include only one point per sentence.
- Break up long numbers into chunks of twos or threes.
- Use visual aids in documents and presentations.
- Try less linear presentation of text e.g. table or Mind maps.

Tables/Graphs:
- Use colours to divide contents.
- Include sharp colour coded lines (table columns/rows; graphs: horizontal/vertical).
- Highlight headings.

8.4 Difficulties with Social Skills and Communication

8.4.1 Difficulties

Difficulties with social skills are mostly likely to present in an individual with an ASC or similar diagnosis. Difficulties include problems organising behaviour and own space (e.g. sitting too close or talking too loudly, not taking turns in conversation). Individuals may feel anxious in groups or unfamiliar surroundings.\(^{26}\) Some may also experience difficulties with understanding humour and sarcasm or take comments or requests literally. Others may have poor listening skills, may miss non-verbal cues and consequently appear rude or tactless. Finally, an individual might sometimes have difficulties controlling their emotions.

8.4.2 Communication Difficulties

Employees can often find it difficult to identify and interpret social cues and may not display typical social behaviour. This manifests in different ways but can affect, for example, the person’s ability to work with others, follow or give instructions, interact with clients and build working relationships.

A common area of difficulty for individuals is understanding whether a comment or topic of conversation is appropriate in a specific context. Having trouble understanding other people’s thoughts and feelings and interpreting non-verbal gestures and hints contributes to this difficulty. Employees can find eye contact difficult and can also occasionally take instruction literally.

Employees might not communicate or act in the way they are expected to in the workplace. This can range from not engaging in small talk, to trying too hard to fit in, to not reacting appropriately to a colleague’s sad news, to seemingly over reacting to a desk change. These difficulties can be thought of as the “unwritten rules” of the workplace. Individuals with ASC can be exceptionally logical. Many of the unwritten rules of the workplace are not logical to a person with ASC.

For example:

John (a work colleague) has put on weight. Ali (an employee with ASC) tells John that he has put on weight and this is unhealthy as it could lead to heart disease. Ali feels this is logical and will be helpful for John. John is offended by Ali’s comments and feels that Ali has been rude to him.

8.4.3 Reasonable Adjustments: Communication

- Awareness training for managers and colleagues on ASC in the workplace is a vital reasonable adjustment. An Employment Tribunal for a person with ASC may consider whether a business has put in place awareness training for managers and colleagues on ASC in the work place may be something employers wish to consider. This can help others understand how best to communicate with the individual with ASC and how they may communicate with them. For information on awareness training, please see www.neurotalentunlocked.com.

- Difficulty in the identification and interpretation of social cues, body language and facial expressions can lead to significant difficulty in understanding others if they do not communicate their wishes or concerns directly. As a general recommendation, staff must ensure that they are clear and forthright when interacting with employees with ASC using direct communication rather than relying on non-verbal gestures and hints.

- Precise communication is the absolute foundation and key to managing an employee with ASC who will experience communication difficulties as part of their diagnosis.

For example:

Don’t say: ‘Have a play around with that spreadsheet and get back to me at some point’.

Do say: ‘Input 100 entries to that spreadsheet by 4pm today please’.
Many people without ASC struggle to be direct in their communication but you can be direct and polite.

- Many employees with ASC may talk too much in the workplace and do not know when it’s appropriate to stop. Some employees will have a special interest that they love talking about and this can impact them massively in the workplace, for example, leading to isolation.

For example:

Don’t just start edging away, ignoring the person or avoiding them.

Do say: ‘It’s been nice talking to you but now I am getting back to my work’.

- Most employees with ASC are very methodical and logical and as a result of this can take what colleagues say literally. This can result in misunderstandings and a breakdown in trust. Many employees with ASC will take on face value the things we say. So always do what you say you are going to do and carry it through. If you cannot completely fulfil a promise to the individual, then do not make the promise in the first place.

Employees with ASC an also take instruction literally or misunderstand common sayings. Expressions such as ‘Take a seat’ in a meeting can be confusing. A clearer expression, such as ‘You can sit here’ is less confusing.

Expressions such as ‘It’s raining cats and dogs’ can be seen as strange to someone with ASC.

- Many employees with ASC will find eye contact difficult. Try having your 1:1 meeting sitting alongside the employee working on a document on the computer to structure your discussion.
- Training for the person with ASC or a communication difficulty on the unwritten rules of the workplace and advising on everyday expressions is also a vital reasonable adjustment and can be provided by specialist organisations in the form of a workplace coach.
- Many employees with communication difficulties emphasise that constructive feedback is very important for them to learn about what is and is not appropriate to say.

8.4.5 Further Reasonable Adjustments that may assist:

- Attend a social skills/teamwork workshop
- If appropriate, practice role-play with your employee, this can be done with the support of a work place coach or coaching strategies taught to the employee.
- Use cues – e.g. the employee could have some standard statements/questions to ask in workplace conversations, such as, “let me know your opinion on this”.
- Consider workspace location: Is their current position the best place for the employee to manage their difficulties?

• If the role involves presentations, offer practice or support around developing confidence in this area. Alternatively, it may be reasonable for that individual not to undertake presentations as part of their role.

• Provide self-awareness and employee awareness (training) via coaching support or online training.

**8.5 Difficulties with Concentration, Attention and Hyperactivity**

**8.5.1 Difficulties**

These difficulties are likely to impact upon an individual with ADHD, however some individuals with dyslexia may have difficulty with concentration, especially in noisier environments. Employees may have difficulty maintaining focus on a task or during a conversation, for example in a meeting. Alternatively, they can become ‘hyper focused’ on a piece of work or a task or experience confusion when switching their attention between different tasks. Individuals could be easily distracted by their environment (e.g. people chatting; their desk is near the photocopier or fax machine). They may lose their train of thought when writing or speaking and when making a point. They may go off on a tangent or display excessive talking or interruption of others. Their behaviour can seem impulsive or that they are risk-taking. An individual can have great ideas, but have difficulty following tasks through to the end. Difficulties with concentrating for verbal instructions and appearing not to listen when spoken to are common as well as losing things required for a task.

**8.5.2 Reasonable Adjustments that may assist:**

• Consider the location of the workspace of the individual – e.g. away from distractions such as noisy equipment, office traffic, and clutter. Consider their preference for music/quiet.

• Allow flexible hours (they may wish to be in the office at quieter times).

• If possible, set one task at a time and break tasks down into chunks.

• Encourage writing bullet points to summarise points to discuss during a telephone call or in a meeting.

• Allow reasonable breaks if needed.

• Provide noise cancelling headphones.

• Provide screening with office furniture around the workspace.

• Encourage use of a “do not disturb” sign.

• Suggest using mindfulness meditation techniques.

• Support the employee to identify other sources of distraction and consider how these might be minimised.

If an employee is hyper-focused or has a single focus within their role consider their ability to multitask and anything that could impact on this, for example, their anxiety levels and sensory distractions. They may be able to multitask more effectively when the workplace is less busy and there are fewer environmental distractions. When an employee’s anxiety levels are raised, their focus becomes narrower and they are more likely to miss out on information. However, single focus can be viewed as a strength and managers may find it useful to assist
the employee to prioritise their work throughout the week so they can facilitate this. Another adjustment could be that individuals are enabled to focus on a specific piece of work at each time, then prompted to move on to their next task either by a colleague or manager or an electronic timer.

8.6 Difficulties with sense of direction and coordination

8.6.1 Difficulties

Individuals with DCD will have difficulty with coordination and execution of movement as well as experiencing difficulties with their sense of direction. Additionally, some difficulties with sense of direction will be experienced by those with a dyslexic diagnosis due to the impact on their working memory. These difficulties may present themselves with difficulties in managing time and map reading, and individuals may find it difficult to orientate themselves in large (particularly unfamiliar) offices or get lost on the way to new places. Individuals may misjudge spatial distances e.g. distance from a delivery truck. They are often found to be late for work, meetings or appointments or may misjudge time taken to complete tasks. Individuals may also appear untidy or have an untidy personal presentation/poor posture.

Difficulties can occur with handling the body's movement in relation to surroundings and itself. Gross motor difficulties might include general clumsiness, poor balance, bumping into objects and people, issues when cooking, riding a bike and driving. Fine motor problems might be poor e.g. slow handwriting, note taking is challenging, and difficulty using office equipment such as keyboard, mouse, stapler, calculator or telephone.

8.6.2 Reasonable Adjustments

- Encourage use of Google maps (provides verbal and visual destination instructions on smartphones).
- Enable time spent in an empty office getting used to the geography of the building.
- Encourage use of computer for recording/taking notes or photocopy your presentation/meeting notes for the individual.
- Use angle board when working to help with posture and position.
- Offer computerised form completion.
- Consider the workspace used for completing a coordination task - this may be more successful if the individual is sitting or leaning.
- Tape can be used to build up handles on tools/equipment to support grip.
- Ensure workspace is free from trip hazards.
- Ensure seating is appropriate.
- Issue ergonomic keyboard, large screen and wireless mouse.
- Encourage use of keyboard shortcuts.
- Offer the use of the telephone rather than written communication.
- Strategies suggested above regarding organisation and time management may also be of benefit here.
8.7 Experiencing Stress and Anxiety

It should be noted that all individuals with neurodiverse conditions can experience stress and anxiety and may in fact be at increased risk due to the extra impact their condition can have. For example, the prevalence rate for those with ASC and anxiety is higher than the general population. (Kent and Simonoff, 2017)  

8.7.1 Difficulties

Individuals often need to put in extra time and effort to reach the performance levels of colleagues in many work tasks, which can cause great stress and anxiety. Many employees may have compensated well for their difficulties and may not appear to have any issues until they become under particular strain or illness. By levelling out the playing field and offering reasonable adjustments, employers can help to reduce levels of stress and anxiety. Other feelings employees may report include confusion, lack of confidence, frustration and depression. All of these can be addressed with support from employers. Organisations could provide wellbeing workshops – e.g. yoga or mindfulness. In addition, this type of support is available for individuals online or through smartphone apps for little or no cost.

8.7.2 Anxiety: Reasonable adjustments

- A job coach can help individuals understand why working with other people can create anxiety.
- Create a routine and a structure for the employee. This can be especially important when the employee starts their role. It’s helpful to structure in break and lunch times.
- Have weekly 1:1 meetings at the same time each week. It may be useful to have more 1:1s than you would with other staff, and this will save you time in the long run. A 1:1 on Monday morning with clear outcomes to be achieved by Friday at 4pm could immensely reduce the anxiety. These targets could even be broken down into daily or hourly targets.
- Manage the employee’s weeks with a visual timetable.
- If the employee drives into work, provide them with a reserved parking slot.
- Sometimes change will be necessary; provide notice of this, for example, visually on a timetable, then the person can take the time to become aware of the change and manage it.


• Consider whether the employee has access to other Occupational Health support, e.g. talking therapy such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can give them strategies to manage anxiety or stress.

8.8 Sensory Difficulties
Many individuals with ASC experience hypersensitivity (or oversensitivity) to sensory inputs and this can have a significant impact on daily activities in the workplace. Some are hypersensitive to sound and identify this as a major source of anxiety in the workplace. Others can also have difficulty processing large amounts of visual information at once.

8.8.1 Sensory: Reasonable adjustments
The impact of sensory processing difficulties can be significant and must not be overlooked. Examples of reasonable adjustments are:

• An employee could be allocated a specific workspace for all shifts, e.g. an allocated desk. The employee should be given choice of the location for the workspace, with the aim of minimising distractions from the sensory environment (e.g. not too close to the fridges or underneath a speaker).
• An employee may request that the sound level of music (or other background noise) is reduced during their working hours.
• If an employee is mainly on the computer, they should be allowed to work in a quiet room with minimal distractions.

9. Identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments
The reasonable adjustments mentioned here are extensive. The adjustments you will make for your employee will depend on their individual needs. Ensure that adjustments are put in place and check that they are working. Don’t try to make all adjustments at once - they can be built up gradually.

This is not an exhaustive list of difficulties and adjustments. These can vary from role to role, but those listed are some of the most common difficulties and adjustments. As mentioned throughout the guide, employees with neurodiverse conditions will have an array of strengths and potential difficulties. However, with the right understanding of their condition, an employee will excel in the workplace.

In order to identify the most appropriate strategies for a particular individual, it would be necessary to complete a workplace needs assessment with a suitably qualified practitioner. This would provide a report with tailored recommendations specifically to support that individual’s particular areas of difficulty with application to their specific role. For further support or tailored advice for your employee or work place please visit www.lexxic.com
10. Six benefits of Reasonable Adjustments

- Help unlock the strengths of your workforce.
- Improve efficiency and the service you offer to customers and clients.
- Encourage employees to access training.
- Increase motivation and maintain loyalty of employees.
- Reduce stress, employee turnover and sick leave.
- Adjustments made for some employees will often benefit all employees.

11. Top tips for employers

- Understanding. Provide employment-specific awareness training on the condition. Understanding is key.
- Clear communication. Be clear in your communication and ultra-precise.
- Be consistent. Always do what you promise.
- Communication style. Find out your employee’s preferred method of communication.
- Stay in regular contact. Book in and maintain regular 1:1 meetings.
- Allow extra time. Give time to process information – especially change.
- Provide structure. Routine is key.
- Provide timescales. Give deadlines.
- Provide boundaries. Be clear about the unwritten rules of the workplace.
- Reasonable adjustments. Be creative in your thinking for adjustments.
- Train. Train managers and teams.

12. What Else Can an Employer Do?

The Government Access to Work Scheme provides advice and information to individuals and employers and also may fund specialist assistance and equipment. It is open to those with a disability, in work or applying for a job. Applications need to be made by the individuals concerned via the DirectGov website or by phone call. A workplace needs assessment considers how neurodiverse conditions are affecting performance in a specific job. Along with training needs, it will identify ways in which an employer can give help and support. A workplace needs assessment can be obtained free of charge via the government’s Access to Work (ATW) scheme or paid for privately. The private assessments are often viewed as better, as they include recommendations about reasonable adjustments, training programmes for a specialist coach and a list of IT recommendations. When arranging an assessment ensure the assessor has the correct experience of working in the workplace with neurodiverse conditions; not just dyslexia, but also others such as, ADHD, dyspraxia and ASC.

Once the assessment has been arranged, prepare for the assessment by noting down the difficulties the individual is experiencing at work.

For organisations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland please refer to your own schemes for specific information.

13. Sources of Support

There are many organisations which help with recruitment, ongoing support and advice if you have, or are thinking of recruiting, an employee with a neurodiverse condition. Some of the most common forms of support include a workplace assessment, consultancy, job coaching and awareness training.

Funding for part of these aspects of support or all aspects of this support can be given by Access to Work. Access to Work is the government’s funding department for reasonable adjustments.

The information below lists organisations which can provide you with further advice and support.

Lexxic Ltd

Lexxic Ltd provide services to individuals and organisations within the area of neurodiversity and wellbeing. We provide coaching, diagnostics, screenings and workplace needs assessments to support neurodiverse individuals in the work place and their employers. These are done by our team of psychologists and psychologists in training on accredited BPS routes and focus on the support an individual will need to achieve their full potential in the workplace.

Our sister organisation Neurotalent Unlocked has developed skills-based training and awareness training for individuals, line managers and HR professionals. These modules are all CPD accredited. The modules are story based and offer the perspective from the individual level while considering the organisational and team needs. All the modules are online so can be accessed anytime and have downloadable support documents.

Line Manager and HR Awareness Modules:

These modules offer guidance and support to Line Managers and HR professionals who are working with individuals with a Neurodiversity. They offer advice and strategies to help you obtain support for your employees around assessment and strategies that can be utilised in the work place. The modules cover Autism Spectrum Conditions, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia and are presented using real life case studies to help guide you through supporting your employees.
Strategy Modules for Employees

These modules offer strategies, tips and techniques for individuals with a Neurodiversity across several skill areas including improving your reading and improving your writing, organising your work load and listening, concentrating and note taking. They are presented using the stories of real-life individuals who have developed strategies to help them succeed in the work place. If you are interested in these modules, please contact the Lexxic team who will be happy to help. If you are a corporate member of enei then a discount can be offered. Please contact Lexxic at enquiry@lexxic.com or on 0845 643 2754.

Our website: www.lexxic.com

Neurotalent Unlocked: www.neurotalentunlocked.com

Access to Work

https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work

0345 268 8489

Access to Work provide employment grants to pay for practical support if you have a disability, or a physical or mental health condition.

ADHD Foundation

http://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/

British Association for Supported Employment (BASE)

http://base-uk.org/

01204 880733

BASE is the national trade association for the supported employment sector.

British Dyslexia Association

http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/

0333 405 4555

UK national organisation, offering a wide range of information for parents, dyslexic adults and teachers

Clear Kit

http://www.clearkit.co.uk/

0845 293 0963

Clear Kit is an online resource for the complete advice package on recruitment and disability.
Disability Action Alliance

http://disabilityactionalliance.org.uk/

The Disability Action Alliance is a cross sector network of organisations committed to making a difference to the lives of disabled people.

Do-It Profiler

http://doitprofiler.com/
020 33 22 55 36

Do-IT Profiler is a computerised modular assessment system for understanding and identifying SpLD (specific learning difficulties).

Dyslexia Action

www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk
0207- 391- 2030

Dyslexia Action provide support, assessments and tuition through their national Learning Centres, and through online distance learning and in schools across the UK

Dyspraxia Foundation

https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk
01223 967897

Dyspraxia Foundation is a registered charity that supports individuals and families affected by developmental Dyspraxia. They have a public helpline and provide advice to individuals, teachers and professionals.

Mental Health Foundation

https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/
020 7803 1100

The Mental Health Foundation promote good mental health for all and provide mental health awareness training for the workplace.

Mind

www.mind.org

Mental Health Information, advice and support for individuals

Remploy

http://www.remploy.co.uk

Remploy have been the UK’s leading provider of disability employment since 1946 and have helped over 2,500 businesses employ disabled people.
Applications for smart phones for Mindfulness

Calm  https://www.calm.com/
7-day free trial then approx. £37 per year subscription

Buddhify  https://buddhify.com/
Free to download

Headspace  https://www.headspace.com/
Free trial and then subscription applies.
14. **Appendix 1 - Myths and Facts**

Myth: Dyslexic people have a low level of intelligence.
Fact: Dyslexic individuals tend to have average or above average intelligence.

Myth: Dyslexic people read backwards.
Fact: Some, not all, dyslexic people flip or miss letters/numbers/punctuation/words. Although binocular instability/visual difficulties (previously referred to as visual stress) often co-occurs with dyslexia.

Myth: Dyslexia means difficulty with reading.
Fact: While a person with dyslexia may have difficulties with reading, they can also have difficulties with writing, spelling, speaking, organisation, sequencing, concentration and social skills.

Myth: Individuals with neurodiverse conditions have a poor quality of life
Fact: Neurodiverse people are just like those who are neurotypical and aim for a high degree of quality of life. It is society that disables people not the disability.

Myth: There is a cure for neurodiversity.
Fact: Neurodiversity is not an illness, it is a different way of viewing the world. An environment can be adjusted to suit a neurodiverse individual’s way of thinking. Individuals can also learn strategies for living in a non-neurodiverse world.

Myth: Children grow out of ADHD
Fact: ADHD does not go away, it is a different way of thinking. Some adults may not experience the hyperactivity element. Sometimes ADHD isn’t identified until adulthood.

Myth: People with dyspraxia are just clumsy
Fact: Not all people with dyspraxia are clumsy. Individuals with dyspraxia move through and perceive space differently to others, but can also often perceive and move through time (e.g. seem to have no concept of time) and thought (appear illogical) in a different way to others.
11.1 Adjustments Case Study 1

Adam works as an analyst in a Market Research company. He is highly intelligent and very strong at analysis, problem solving and verbal communication, but he finds reading and assimilating information a slow and exhausting process. He also finds it very challenging to be efficient with tasks in order to complete them within tight timeframes which can make planning and time management difficult. He out himself forward for a promotion, involving a thorough assessment process which required a number of high-pressure tasks. He was ultimately unsuccessful, and this severely dented his confidence, and his motivation was affected too. This prompted Adam to seek support from HR who arranged for a workplace needs assessment.

Following this, Adam was provided with assistive technology, both to support with note-taking – a Livescribe smartpen - enabling him to write down, listen back and organise notes and instructions, and with reading – Read and Write Gold text-to-speech software – supporting him to take in written information. Adam’s line manager supported him by explaining things verbally to Adam where possible, providing best practice examples of documents and helping him to make templates to support Adam’s efficiency when writing. Adam learned how to format his documents in order to support him to read and take in the information. He was also supported to create a work planner for his tasks to do and encouraged to break his tasks down into manageable chunks. He also undertook coaching to help him with managing pressure and building up his confidence, and to implement further strategies for managing his workload and his time.

11.2 Adjustments Case Study 2

Michael works in a call centre as an advisor. He is friendly, enthusiastic and has lots of energy. He enjoys being around people and finds himself easily distracted by the desire to join in with conversations or finds his focus is otherwise diverted from the task at hand. Michael is easily bored, and at times, his brain just wants to “switch off”. Michael’s manager picked up on his difficulties, and specifically noticed that Michael was making errors on calls, not explaining things fully to customers, and was losing focus while on the phone, resulting in longer call times and customers becoming frustrated. Michael was called in to a meeting with his manager to discuss his performance, and give feedback following a complaint his manager had received from a customer regarding Michael’s conduct. Michael had chosen not to disclose to his employer that he has ADHD but following the meeting he realised it would be best for him to explain his neurodiversity to his employer.

Michael’s manager arranged for a workplace needs assessment. Subsequently, Michael was provided with two-sided noise-cancelling headphones to mitigate the noise in the office, supporting him to focus on and listen to callers. This also enabled him to listen to white
noise while he was completing admin tasks, blocking out the stimulation of the office noise. He was also allocated a desk in a quieter area of the office away from where colleagues tended to congregate which also helped to minimise the distractions. He was also encouraged to take regular breaks to help him maintain his concentration. Michael was supported to create easy to follow checklists and flowcharts to support him to stay on track on phone calls. Michael's line manager also completed awareness training with Lexxic to support his knowledge of ADHD and neurodiversity so he would be better equipped to support Michael.

11.3 Adjustments Case Study 3

Rachel works in head office at a large bank in London; she has autism spectrum condition. Rachel particularly struggles with change and disruptions to her routine, and has pronounced sensory sensitivities regarding noise and touch, as well as social difficulties and anxieties. Rachel had already agreed with her line manager to start and finish work earlier than the usual expected hours to support Rachel to take public transport before the morning and evening rush hours. This meant a calmer commute for her, less likely to exacerbate her sensory sensitivities and facilitated her to have a routine. Rachel was enjoying her job, and feeling good about work, and highly supported, however, announcement of a planned office refurbishment which would result in a much larger and more open plan workspace, and a team restructure, meant that Rachel's working environment was about to change quite significantly, causing substantial anxiety for Rachel.

Rachel’s manager supported Rachel by having conversations with her about the changes to the team, and showing her the new office space, where she would sit, and assisting her to plan ahead. In addition, Rachel and her line manager organised for Rachel's neighbouring colleagues in the original office to sit near her in the new space (with their agreement), and for Rachel to have a desk in a quiet corner away from the majority of the noise in the office. Rachel was also encouraged to use a small open access meeting room to take quiet breaks or complete work on occasions where the sensory stimulation of the office became too much. Rachel also undertook coaching on communication, social interaction and dealing with change to further support her to manage these challenges going forward.

11.3 Adjustments Case Study 4

Paul works in HR for a Medical company. He mostly works on recruitment and on-boarding tasks. He has fantastic interpersonal skills and he is very calm under pressure. The nature of his role means that he works on a number of projects simultaneously, but he finds multitasking challenging and can struggle to keep track of what he needs to do. Although he has a number of templates to support him to structure the documents he needs to write, he can still struggle to organise his ideas, and he has difficulties with spelling, and his concentration drops easily, such that he makes silly little mistakes. He received feedback
regarding lack of attention to detail and advising he check for errors more thoroughly, but Paul needed additional support to enable him to do this.

Paul’s manager implemented a daily 10-minute morning catch up with Paul, to help him to plan and keep on track of his tasks, improving efficiency overall and giving Paul and his manager confidence in what would be achieved. Paul was supported to create a list to work through for checking his work, as well as text-to-speech software to help with this. He also received mind-mapping software, and training using this, to enable him to organise his ideas and work tasks. Paul was given an additional computer screen, to support him to cross-check documents alongside other information. Paul also completed coaching with Lexxic to support him with proofreading and checking for errors, and organisation, both of his time, and written documents, and also for managing distractions and supporting concentration.