



Helping You Thrive – Celebrating Neurodivergent Talent at Work

A Toolkit for Employers


**Bank of
Ireland**

auticon



Introduction – The Bank of Ireland journey and the aim of this toolkit.

At Bank of Ireland, our purpose is helping you thrive and fostering an inclusive culture is an important part of Bank of Ireland's commitment to helping all colleagues to thrive. Our colleagues are reflective of our customer base and we know that by creating an inclusive workplace that has a wider positive impact on our customers and society.

We have taken significant strides in our own journey to become a more neuroinclusive employer and we want to share learnings and insights from our journey alongside our partners at **auticon**.

This toolkit aims to empower other organisations, big or small, with practical resources, strategies, and insights for hiring and supporting neurodivergent talent.

The toolkit includes 10 resources to support you in your journey to becoming a neuroinclusive organisation.

Our goal is to drive societal change, creating more inclusive workplaces while ensuring neurodivergent talent is given fair opportunities to thrive.

The Benefits of fostering a Neuroinclusive workplace

1



Attracting a Broader Talent Pool

Neurodivergent individuals bring invaluable perspectives, creativity, and problem-solving skills to the workplace. By making the workplace more accessible and inclusive, you tap into a previously underrepresented group that can significantly contribute to the diversity and innovation of your team.

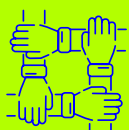
2



Better employee engagement and retention

An inclusive environment includes easy access to the right supports and accommodations and a better understanding of the unique talents and challenges of neurodivergence. This increases job satisfaction and retention. In an inclusive environment, neurodivergent employees are more likely to stay with the company long-term.

3



Enhanced Team Performance

Neurodiversity is not just about individual benefit – it's also about collective growth. A team that includes a variety of cognitive styles tends to be more flexible, adaptive, and innovative. With diverse problem-solving approaches, neurodivergent individuals can help to enhance team creativity, decision-making, and performance.

4



Stronger Organisational Reputation

A company that prioritises neuroinclusion sends a message to the broader market that it values diversity in all its forms. This can boost your employer brand, attracting not only neurodivergent talent but also a wider range of candidates who value diversity and inclusivity.

Conclusion: The Long-Term Value of Neuroinclusion

Neuroinclusive practices may require initial adjustments, but the long-term benefits far outweigh the effort. By ensuring that neurodivergent individuals have equal access to opportunities and are fully supported during their career you create a more inclusive, productive, and innovative workplace. This commitment sends a strong message that your organisation values diversity in all its forms and recognises the unique strengths that neurodivergent individuals bring to the table.

Ultimately, a neuroinclusive approach doesn't just support individuals—it supports the collective success of your organisation.



Terminology

Using respectful and inclusive language is crucial when discussing neurodivergence. Here are some key terms:

“

Neurodiversity, like all forms of diversity, is a source of great strength and value within a genuinely inclusive workplace.

“

The typical types of neurological differences that come under the umbrella of ‘neurodiversity’ as a term include, ADHD, Autism/ASD, Dyscalculia, Dyslexia, OCD, Dyspraxia.

Definitions

“Neurodivergence” can be understood as a naturally occurring difference in cognitive function, however it is one that is seen less commonly across the human population.

“Neuroinclusion” refers to having an approach that welcomes and accommodates differences in how the brain works and presupposes an understanding of differences and needs.

‘Neurodivergent’ means to diverge from dominant cultural standards of neurocognitive functioning.

“Neurodevelopmental” is the medical umbrella term for a range of neurodivergent conditions.



It's important to remember that language can evolve, and individuals may have preferences on how they are described. Always aim to use terms that empower rather than stigmatise and always be led by the individual themselves when it comes to the terms that they are most comfortable with.

Do	Don't
Say “is autistic”, “is dyslexic”, “is neurodivergent”	Use terms such as “disease”, “disorder”, “deficit”, or “impairments”
Say “experiences” ADHD	“Suffering” or “affected by” ADHD
Difficulty/differences are acceptable	“High” or “low functioning”
Support needs	“Is mildly/severely autistic”

Dispelling Common Myths

 **Myth:** All neurodivergent individuals are disabled.

 **Fact:** Neurodivergence is usually recognised under disability law, meaning that many neurodivergent people may be entitled to reasonable accommodations in the workplace. However, there is no single way that neurodivergent people relate to the concept of disability, socially. Some identify as disabled and understand their neurodivergence as a disability. Others do not consider themselves disabled, even though they may still experience disabling barriers in society or the workplace. Still others explicitly reject the label of disability. In practice, it is reasonable (and often necessary) for employers to treat neurodivergence as a disability to provide appropriate support and protections. However, when addressing neurodivergent communities more broadly, it is best to use inclusive language that reflects this diversity of perspectives. For example, referring to “disabled people and neurodivergent people” acknowledges those who do not identify with the disability label, while still recognising the relevance of legal protections.

 **Myth:** Neurodivergent individuals are unable to collaborate effectively.

 **Fact:** Neurodivergent employees often excel in teamwork when provided with the right environment, clear communication, and understanding colleagues.

 **Myth:** Making accommodations for neurodivergent employees is a burden.

 **Fact:** Accommodations are often simple and cost-effective, such as flexible working hours, quiet spaces, or providing written instructions instead of verbal ones.

 **Myth:** Neurodivergent individuals are not suited for leadership.

 **Fact:** Neurodivergent individuals often bring unique problem-solving and leadership styles that benefit teams and organisations.

 **Myth:** You require an official diagnosis to be considered neurodivergent.

 **Fact:** Neurodivergent employees are free to self-diagnose, they are neurodivergent and do not require an official diagnosis.

Strategy:

Introducing the Three-Pillared Approach to becoming neuroinclusive

1



Infrastructure

Setting up the correct systems, policies, and procedures ensures that neurodivergent employees feel supported from the very beginning. This infrastructure should be flexible enough to accommodate the individual needs of all employees.

2



Awareness and Education

Education is key to challenging misconceptions and creating a culture of understanding. Training initiatives should be tailored to different groups (e.g., leadership, team members, HR) to foster empathy, awareness, and action. Materials should use different form of presentation such as text/visuals, powerpoint, video etc.

3



Embedding Change

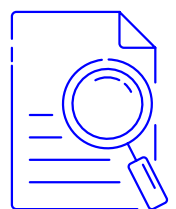
Cultural transformation requires more than just policies; it needs to be woven into the fabric of the organisation. Neuroinclusion should be reflected in everyday practices, such as team-building activities, feedback processes, and recognition.

Policy:

A Cornerstone of Infrastructure

A robust Neurodiversity Policy signals your organisation's commitment to inclusion and provides a clear framework for support and accountability. It should outline:

- Your commitment to inclusivity and diversity.
- Procedures for requesting accommodations.
- The rights and responsibilities of neurodivergent employees.
- Guidance for managers on how to support neurodivergent colleagues to align to other points.
- Contact points for support and resources.



Why is a policy important?

A clear policy ensures that both employees and managers understand their roles and responsibilities in fostering an inclusive environment. It also provides transparency around support, expectations, and procedures for addressing concerns.

[Click to view – Resource 1 | Neuroinclusion Policy Template](#)



Recruitment and Onboarding: Key Considerations

The recruitment and onboarding processes are critical touchpoints for ensuring neurodivergent talent feels welcome and supported. Unfortunately this process isn't always equally accessible or welcoming for everyone. Neurodivergent people often experience recruitment and onboarding processes that are not designed with their unique needs in mind.

By committing to viewing recruitment and onboarding through a neurodivergent lens, we're not just creating a more inclusive workplace we're fostering a broader talent pool, improving retention rates, and creating an environment where everyone, regardless of how their brain works, can thrive.

Why These Processes Are Crucial

Both recruitment and onboarding play pivotal roles in setting the tone for an employee's experience at your company. Neurodivergent individuals may face distinct challenges that go unnoticed in traditional processes. Without considering their needs, you risk losing out on top talent and failing to create a truly inclusive workplace.

1

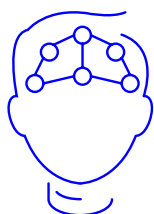
Recruitment Challenges for Neurodivergent Candidates



Traditional recruitment processes often include assessments, interviews, and application forms that are not designed with neurodivergent applicants in mind. For instance, an ADHD person may struggle with long application forms or written assessments that fail to allow for creativity or flexibility in answering questions. Likewise, an autistic person may find face-to-face interviews overwhelming, especially in environments that are too noisy or socially intense.

2

Onboarding Struggles



Even after hiring, the onboarding process can pose challenges. If the training process is overwhelming or not broken down into manageable steps, neurodivergent employees may find it difficult to follow. Overly complex instructions, a lack of clear structure, or insufficient support can cause frustration or confusion, which undermines the success of the onboarding experience.

By failing to adapt these processes, you create barriers that not only harm the individual but also result in the organisation missing out on their full potential contribution.

The absence of neuroinclusive practices can lead to disengagement, missed deadlines, or even workplace conflicts, as employees may feel their ability to contribute to their full potential is restricted.

Implementing Neuroinclusive Practices in Recruitment and Onboarding

1 Revise Job Descriptions and Applications



Job descriptions should be clear and straightforward, avoiding unnecessary jargon. Use inclusive language that welcomes neurodivergent candidates. Additionally, consider offering multiple ways to apply (e.g., video, email, or a simple questionnaire), allowing applicants to showcase their skills in a manner that suits them best.

2 Offer Alternative Interview Formats



Not all candidates perform best in traditional interview settings. Offer alternative options such as virtual interviews, interviews that focus on specific skills, or even work samples. Allow candidates to request reasonable accommodations ahead of time, like extra time for assessments or a quiet room for interviews.

3 Provide Clear Onboarding Processes



Neurodivergent employees often benefit from a structured, predictable onboarding process. This might include breaking training into smaller chunks, providing written instructions alongside verbal ones, or offering a mentor or buddy system for support. Allow employees to ask for accommodations that make them feel comfortable and engaged.

4 Create a Neuroinclusive Culture



Foster an environment where neurodivergent individuals feel comfortable asking for accommodations and support. Regular check-ins, open feedback channels, and training for managers on neurodivergent needs can help make sure everyone has a clear understanding of the process and expectations.

5 Measure Success and Continuously Improve



Regularly assess the effectiveness of your recruitment and onboarding processes. Gather feedback from neurodivergent employees to identify where improvements can be made. By continually refining your processes, you ensure a dynamic, adaptive environment where all employees can thrive.

Actions to take

- 1 Job Descriptions:** Avoid job descriptions that are too lengthy and overloaded with information. Include only the necessary details. Only list the necessary qualifications/experience under essential criteria. Avoid using company jargon and acronyms. Include a clear and visible reasonable accommodations requests process.
- 2 Interview Process:** Create interview formats that accommodate neurodivergent candidates. Consider offering interviews in alternative formats (e.g., written assessments or virtual meetings) and ensuring interviewers are trained in neurodiversity awareness.
- 3 Onboarding:** Create universally supportive onboarding processes that include clear schedules, structured tasks and accessible materials, while also encouraging and accommodating individual accommodation requests.

[Click to view – Resource 2 | Guide to Neuroinclusive hiring Adverts and Interviews](#)



[Click to view – Resource 3 | Neuroinclusive Hiring Charter](#)



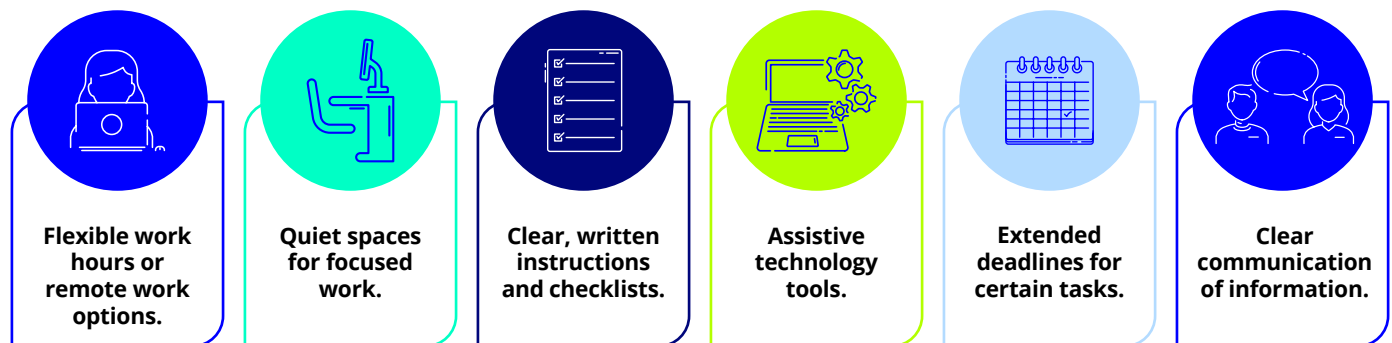
Reasonable Accommodations:

What are they and why do they matter?

A reasonable accommodation can be defined as some modification to the tasks, the structure of a job or the workplace, or provision of special equipment or facilities, which allows an employee to overcome barriers and enjoy equal employment opportunities.

These are not “special treatment” but rather necessary adjustments that ensure fairness in the workplace.

Common accommodations include:



[Click to view – Resource 4 | List of Common Accommodations](#)



[Click to view – Resource 5 | Neuroinclusive Physical Environment Checklist](#)



[Click to view – Resource 6 | Neuroinclusive Event Guidelines](#)



Accommodations can support the employee by helping to remove any barriers that interact with the person's ability to complete their job. Sometimes an individual may not know exactly what accommodations would support them, and so, a trial-and-error approach may be necessary to discover what workplace supports are suitable and effective. There is merit in agreeing this with the employee and trialling accommodations with a review at a set time i.e. 2 weeks, 3 months etc. Reasonable accommodations should be personalised to make them functional for the employee and their role so a collaborative approach to identifying what is working and what isn't, is important, as well as scheduling frequent check-ins (e.g., monthly to begin), to ensure any support implemented remains relevant and effective. It is best practice and not legally required for the presence of a formal diagnosis to make reasonable accommodations. Not every neurodivergent employee will require additional support. However, if an employee discloses a neurodivergent identity, or if you observe that they may be finding aspects of their role challenging (even without a disclosure) it is good practice, and legally advisable, to initiate a supportive conversation. This meeting should focus on understanding whether any accommodations or changes could help them carry out their role more effectively. If neurodivergence has not been disclosed, there is no need to frame the conversation around it; instead, centre the discussion on workplace support, task demands, and potential avenues to reduce barriers or improve clarity. Regular check-ins can also help ensure that support remains appropriate as responsibilities and working conditions evolve over time.

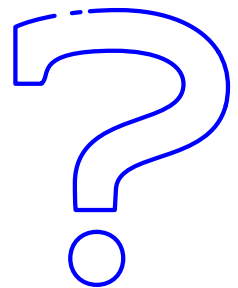


The Social Model of Disability

The provision of reasonable accommodations for disabled employees is rooted in the social model of disability. This model holds that disability arises not from an individual's differences, but from societal structures and environments that create barriers. By identifying and removing these barriers, the social model aims to create equitable conditions in which all individuals can thrive.

What is an inclusion passport?

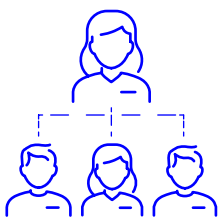
An 'inclusion passport' is a tool that aims to remove barriers that employees may face due to their personal circumstances, including but not limited to health conditions, disabilities, caring responsibilities, and other personal circumstances. This also includes neurodivergent people. It's a living document that forms a framework for regular conversations about the employee's needs with their manager. It's a passport so it belongs to the employee and moves with them as they move through the organisation, reducing the need to have repetitive conversations with different managers.



The passport can help employees feel more included in the workplace by providing a space for them to share their unique needs, preferences, and working styles with their colleagues and managers.

The inclusion passport ensures that an employee and their manager have a living record of any agreed workplace accommodations for any reason.

The passport is typically shared with colleagues and people managers to help them better understand how to work with the colleague in a way that is most productive and inclusive.



Remember: The cost of such accommodations is often minimal compared to the substantial benefits, including improved team morale, enhanced performance, and individual development. Very simple changes that can have a significant impact on the individual and the team as a whole.

[Click to view – Resource 7 | Inclusion Passport](#) 

Career Equity:

Supporting Neurodivergent Employees in their Career Growth

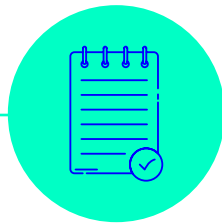
Traditional career progression pathways may not suit everyone and can sometimes present additional barriers for neurodivergent employees; not due to a lack of ambition or ability, but because these systems often rely on norms that don't account for differing communication styles, learning preferences, or workplace experiences.

While many neurodivergent individuals are highly self-aware and capable advocates for their development, research shows that some may be more likely to downplay their strengths or face difficulties accessing recognition within conventional frameworks.

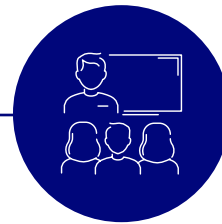
To support equitable progression, it's important to create regular opportunities for meaningful feedback, accessible professional development, and inclusive networking, all designed with neurodivergent needs and preferences in mind.



Regular check-ins to discuss career aspirations.



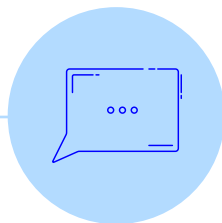
Development plans that are tailored to individual strengths and needs.



Access to leadership training and resources in varied formats for neurodivergent employees.



Flexibility and support to try different ways of working and learn from mistakes.



Clear feedback processes that support development and growth.



Opportunities for networking and mentoring in alternative formats than always in-person.

Awareness and Education:

Building an Informed Workforce

Ongoing education and training are crucial for building a neuroinclusive culture. Different employee groups require different levels of training:

- Managers should be trained to support neurodivergent individuals, including how to handle disclosures and create accommodations.
- Colleagues should receive basic training on neurodiversity to foster empathy and understanding.

The HR community should be well versed in the rights of neurodivergent colleagues to accommodations and the scope of support available.

[Click to view – Resource 8 | Positive Conversations: Managing Disclosure and Discussing Accommodations](#)

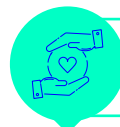


Embedding in the Culture: Sustaining Change

To create a truly neuroinclusive workplace, change needs to be embedded into the organisation's culture. This can be achieved through:



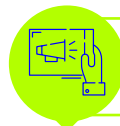
- **Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):** A neurodiversity ERG can be a space for support, collaboration, and advocacy.



- **Ambassadors:** Appointing employees as neuropositive ambassadors can help others feel supported and seen.



- **Drop-in Clinics:** Regular sessions where employees can discuss their needs and receive advice.



- **CSR Initiatives:** Engage with external organisations that support neurodivergent individuals and contribute to community efforts.



- **Data Collection and Feedback:** Regular surveys and feedback loops will allow the organisation to continuously improve its neurodiversity practices.

[Click to view – Resource 9 | Neuroinclusive Ambassadors](#) 

Third-Party Resources

External resources can provide additional support, including:

- **Government Funding:** The government offer financial assistance for companies that hire and support neurodivergent individuals.
- **Non-profits and Advocacy Groups:** Organisations like the Aslam, ADHD Ireland, and Dyslexia Ireland offer resources and support. [As I Am | Ireland's Autism Charity](#)
- [ADHD Ireland | Our Mission is to make life better for people affected by ADHD](#)
- [Dyslexia Ireland | Supporting Children & Adults with Dyslexia](#)
- **Consultants and Trainers:** Professionals specialising in neurodiversity can provide tailored training and guidance. [Home - auticon Ireland](#)

auticon is a global consultancy and social enterprise focused on closing the employment gap for neurodivergent adults. They employ autistic professionals in IT and data roles and support businesses to become authentically neuroinclusive.

auticon consultants work within client teams, delivering high-quality technical expertise while challenging misconceptions about neurodivergence. **auticon** also offers neuroinclusion services, including:

- IT Consultancy in areas like data science, AI, and cyber security
- Training on neurodiversity through workshops and eLearning
- Advisory Services, including policy reviews and the NIMA assessment
- Coaching, offering personalised support and drop-in clinics for staff

[Click to view – Resource 10 | Government Funding Summary Document](#) 



Conclusion

Embracing neurodivergent talent is not just the right thing to do; it is a step towards creating innovative, inclusive, and successful organisations.

Let's celebrate neurodiversity – because when everyone thrives, we all succeed.

Click to view the Resources included in this toolkit

[Resource 1 | Neuroinclusion Policy Template](#)

[Resource 2 | Guide to Neuroinclusive Hiring, Adverts and Interviews](#)

[Resource 3 | Neuroinclusive Hiring Charter](#)

[Resource 4 | List of Common Accommodations](#)

[Resource 5 | Neuroinclusive Physical Environment Checklist](#)

[Resource 6 | Neuroinclusive Event Guidelines](#)

[Resource 7 | Inclusion Passport](#)

[Resource 8 | Positive Conversations: Managing Disclosure and Discussing Accommodations](#)

[Resource 9 | Neuroinclusive Ambassadors](#)

[Resource 10 | Government Funding Summary Document](#)

Neuroinclusion Policy Template

Resource 1

Note

This wording and formatting of this neuroinclusion policy document has been developed by Bank of Ireland with subject matter guidance from auticon, a company specialising in neuroinclusion services. While auticon has provided advisory support in the development of this resource, BOI retains full responsibility for its content and implementation. For further information on auticon's Neuroinclusion Services, please visit [auticon.com](https://www.auticon.com)

Introduction - Why do we have a Neuroinclusion Policy?

Fostering an inclusive culture is an important part of (insert company)'s commitment to enabling all colleagues to thrive. Our colleagues are reflective of our customer base and we know that by creating an inclusive workplace that has a wider positive impact on our customers and society.

With our Neuroinclusion policy and associated supports, we aim to foster the right environment and culture for neurodivergent colleagues to have rewarding and lasting careers at **(Insert Company)**. We want all colleagues to feel supported and proud to work at **(Insert Company)**. We all have a role to play in creating an inclusive workplace for all colleagues to thrive.

For the purposes of this policy we will be taking a person-led approach and will focus on the needs of the individual and not the constraints of diagnoses or labels.

This Neuroinclusion Policy is aligned to **(Insert Company)**'s Purpose and Values. Our Values represent who we are and who we want to be when we are at our best. We want everyone in the organisation to understand how this policy connects with our Purpose and Values and to think about how it helps guide their behaviour and the work they do every day.

As our understanding of how to support people with neurodevelopmental conditions in the workplace develops, this policy and our approach will be dynamic and continue to be updated as our learning grows.

“Neurodiversity, like all forms of diversity, is a source of great strength and value within a genuinely inclusive workplace”

“The typical types of neurological differences that come under the umbrella of 'neurodiversity' as a term include, ADHD, Autism/ ASD, Dyscalculia, Dyslexia, OCD, Dyspraxia. You can find a factsheet on each of these on the neuroinclusion hub on the company intranet.”

Definitions

“**Neurodiversity**” is a collective term for innate differences in the human brain. We are all neurodiverse and means we all have different strengths and needs. At **(Insert Company)** we believe that these differences are to be embraced and encouraged.

“**Neuroinclusion**” refers to having an approach that welcomes and accommodates differences in how the brain works and presupposes an understanding of differences and needs.

“**Neurodivergent**” refers to specific experiences (e.g autism, ADHD) which diverge from dominant societal norms neurocognitive functioning.

“**Neurodevelopmental**” is a medical term used to define conditions which are present in early childhood that impact aspect of learning, memory and cognition (e.g autism, ADHD, Dyslexia)

Who does it apply to?

This policy applies to all colleagues and agency workers of **(Insert Company)** including its subsidiaries. An inclusive workplace in which all colleagues can thrive can be achieved through the commitment of all colleagues across the Company.

1. Awareness and Education

We are seeking to enable all of our colleagues and teams to have more confident conversations about neurodiversity and to operate in a way that is fully inclusive of neurodivergent colleagues, including providing tools to support this. The NeuroAware certification for all colleagues is currently available on our LMS.

It seeks to:

1. Increase awareness and understanding of the power of neurodiversity
2. Lower fear of neurodiversity and increase enthusiasm
3. Help others to understand shared characteristics
4. Show lived experiences of life as a neurodivergent person in the workplace

2. Inclusive Language

The language we use at **(Insert Company)**

The term “Neuroinclusion” is becoming more common and we have used it in the name of our policy as it emphasises our approach to welcoming and celebrating all colleagues. It links to our commitment to a truly inclusive culture at **(Insert company)**.

We recognise that Neurodiversity is a deeply personal subject that is the foundation of many people’s identities. This means that we should be led by the individual and use language that makes the individual most comfortable.

For clarity, this policy has had to adopt a fixed way of talking about neurodiversity. However, you don’t have to. You should try to be flexible when talking about neurodiversity. For example, if a colleague says that they don’t like the word “neurodiverse”, try to remember that and avoid using it in relation to your colleague. This is important part of making the individual feel included.

Similarly, we have opted not to use words such as “neurotypical” to refer to people who are not neurodivergent, as this implies that there is a “typical” form of cognitive functioning, which there is not. However, this term is used by many within the neurodivergent community and elsewhere.

As we seek to better educate and support our colleagues on neuroinclusion, it is important that we use the right language. However, what is acceptable to one person may be wrong for another.

For example, instead of saying someone is “neurodivergent”, some people use alternatives such as:

- Neurodiverse
- Neurominority
- Neuroatypical
- ND

Similarly, you may hear these words for people who are not neurodiverse, such as:

- Neurotypical
- Neuromajority
- NT

3. Implementing Supports - Accommodations

Making workplace accommodations for colleagues who need them is an essential part of **(Insert Company)’s** commitment to helping our colleagues to thrive. The law recognises and upholds the rights of neurodivergent individuals to be treated fairly and without discrimination, promoting a diverse and inclusive working environment.*

Although the legislation refers to people with disabilities, this policy applies to all colleagues of **(Insert Company)**, not just those with a visible need, or a formal diagnosis. The aim of this policy is to enable all colleagues to discuss any barriers that they feel are impacting them in their job so that the company can consider any reasonable supports it may be able to be put in place to assist the colleague.

Reasonable workplace accommodations are designed to remove or reduce any barriers that colleagues may face and create a workplace where everyone can do their job to the best of their ability and achieve their full potential.

Each individual colleague is unique and so support needs must be identified and implemented on the basis of personal evaluation and individual consultation, not assumptions or stereotypes. People managers will collaborate with individual colleagues to comprehend their specific circumstances, understand any barriers they may be facing, and explore practical and sustainable options to eliminate these barriers while considering the business’s needs and priorities. Our commitment is to foster an environment where every colleague feels valued and supported, and we understand that accommodations should align with both individual needs and the overall sustainability of our business.

How are accommodations identified?

There are a number of existing supports for ensuring appropriate workplace accommodations are in place to enable our colleagues to thrive. There are triggers built into the colleague lifecycle to assist **(Insert Company)** in identifying accommodations, however a colleague may also approach their people manager or HR at any point in order to discuss their own circumstances. Any such conversations will be handled sensitively and confidentially as appropriate. Ultimately any accommodations that can reasonably be put in place will be agreed between the colleague and their people manager.

To assist with making a decision in relation what accommodations are needed and can be put in place, colleagues may be referred to our occupational health advisors or our specialist providers in neuroinclusion to ensure that the correct supports are being considered and the people manager may also need to take into account the needs and resources of the business.

*ROI – Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021

Pre employment screening

All external candidates offered a role with **(Insert Company)**, are required to complete a medical assessment process conducted by our occupational health providers. As part of this screening process, our occupational health providers, in consultation with the colleague, may make recommendations regarding any workplace accommodations required to enable the colleague to perform the job to the best of their abilities. Depending on the circumstances, the occupational health provider may refer the colleague to a third party accessibility, workplace needs, ergonomic expert or to Health and Safety for completion of a vulnerable employee risk assessment or workstation assessment. The supports identified will be to help set the colleague up for success from day 1. The hiring manager will be made aware of recommended accommodation.

Onboarding

In advance of a new colleague's start date, in line with our Onboarding process, their new people manager will call them to welcome them to the team. The people manager should use this phone call as an opportunity to discuss any specific workplace accommodations that may be required by enquiring with the colleague or with reference to any assessment reports prepared as part of onboarding. The company's onboarding experience is designed to provide colleagues with the tools and supports required from day 1 and to enable success through a consistent company wide approach.

Workstation assessments

The Workstation Assessment process is designed to proactively implement preventative accommodations for colleagues, aiming to prevent any potential harm or discomfort resulting from an improperly organised work station. This ensures a workspace that functions well for the colleague, promoting both their physical well-being and overall job satisfaction. If there are issues identified from the assessment both the colleague and their People Manager will receive an email with the relevant question(s) highlighted for resolution. The colleague and their People Manager should discuss and agree how best to close these issues. The workstation assessment must be completed by all colleagues at the start of their employment and every two years thereafter.

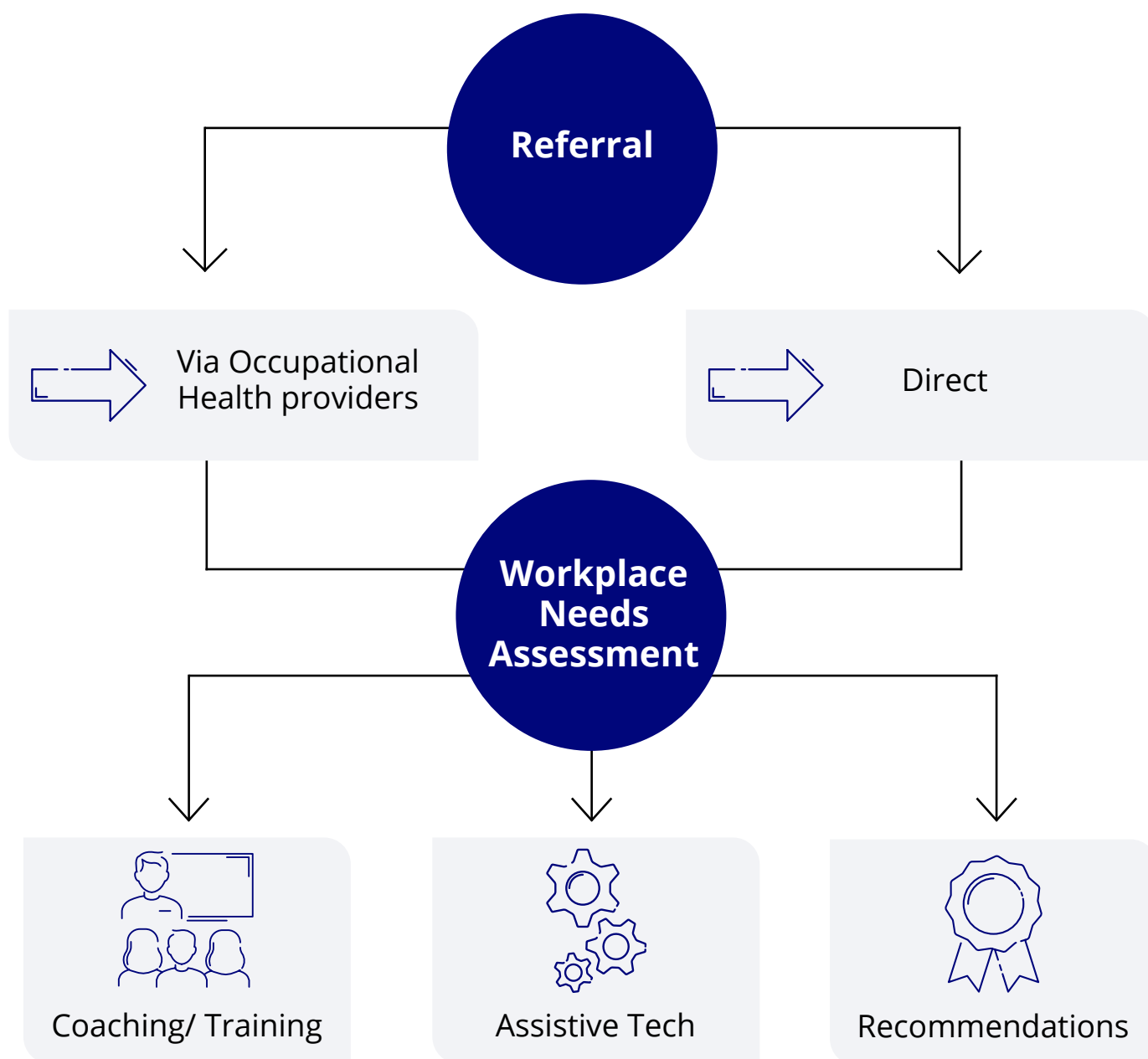
Occupational Health Providers

Sometimes a colleague will be referred to our occupational health provider for support in assessing the challenges they are facing at work. The occupational health providers may make recommendations for specific accommodations to be made to support them in reaching their full potential. At times the colleague may be referred on to our specialist providers in neuroinclusion.

Neurodiversity Specialist Providers

We have specialist partners in workplace needs assessments relating to neurodiversity. They are experts at identifying the correct support measures for individuals based on their unique situations. They work alongside our occupational health providers but also take direct referrals for workplace needs assessments.

Referral Process Map



Reasonable accommodations will be implemented as quickly as possible, once identified and agreed with the colleague's people manager.

4. Inclusion Passport

The inclusion passport is an important tool for discussing and understanding the needs of the colleague as we enable all colleagues to thrive.

It is a tool that aims to remove barriers that colleagues may face due to their personal circumstances, including but not limited to health conditions, disabilities, caring responsibilities, and other personal circumstances. The passport can help colleagues feel more included in the workplace by providing a space for them to share their unique needs, preferences, and working styles with their colleagues and people manager. See Resource 4 below for examples of common accommodations provided.

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Colleagues are encouraged to use the passport in a “test and learn” manner - trying accommodations to see if they work while keeping it under review.

The reason this document is called a passport is that it can be shared with a new manager or a new team member easily and avoids the need for the colleague to continually explain their personal circumstances and needs.

While the passport can take whatever form suits best, we have designed a template with prompts for what it might include.

5. Case Study

James, a graphic designer, has always felt a sense of isolation in his workplace due to his difficulty understanding social cues and maintaining eye contact.

His people manager, Simone has noticed that James consistently delivers high-quality design work but struggles with team dynamics and stakeholder interactions.

During a regular 121 meeting with James, Simone talks through the inclusion passport with James. She explains that his work is very valuable and she is interested in supporting him to have a way of working that enables him to thrive. That may mean making accommodations to the ways he works currently.

James explains to Simone that he has experienced these challenges in every role he has worked in. He didn't think there was anything he could do about it. Simone probes more to understand examples of the challenges faced and understand that James needs very clear instructions on tasks and works better through written communication where possible.

Simone and James fill out the inclusion passport together. They list the changes that can be made to the ways they work together and overcome challenges. Simone arranges for a team charter session with her team where she emphasises the value in clear and written instructions for tasks, as well as providing a full agenda in advance of any meeting.

With the accommodations in place, James experiences improved collaboration with his team. His unique skills are better integrated into the creative process, leading to more innovative design solutions. With the right accommodations in place, James experiences increased focus and productivity. He feels supported and understood. The team benefits from a more cohesive work environment, where diverse strengths are acknowledged and leveraged.

6. Colleague Responsibilities

At **(Insert Company)** we embrace and celebrate one another's differences. All colleagues have a responsibility to help maintain an inclusive and respectful working environment.

Colleagues are responsible for;



Embracing diversity



Contributing to a psychologically safe environment



Understanding this policy and other supports available



Being an advocate



Completing all colleague training on learning exchange



Being respectful



Treating disclosure and personal information sensitively



Reporting concerns or issues relating to the implementation of this policy

7. Discrimination and Harassment

(Insert Company) operates a zero tolerance approach to discrimination or harassment of any kind. We seek to understand and appreciate each other's differences. Each colleague has a responsibility to promote positive and supportive culture for all. See our Dignity at Work Policy for more detail. Colleagues will not be subject to unfavourable treatment if they choose to disclose a neurodivergent condition.

All reasonable steps will be taken by **(Insert Company)** to ensure that policies, practices and culture do not discriminate against neurodivergent colleagues either directly or indirectly.

8. Disclosure

We hope that the launch of this policy and associated supports will lead to colleagues feeling comfortable in discussing their needs with their people manager and other colleagues.

It is up to each individual colleague what information about their circumstances, challenges or diagnosis they wish to provide and disclosure of such information will be received with sensitivity and confidentiality. At **(Insert Company)** we focus on the individual colleague and what they need in order to thrive. Focusing on labels can lead to stereotyping and assumptions rather than seeing the individual with unique abilities, challenges and circumstances. In addition, there may be colleagues who are unaware that they are neurodivergent and others who choose not to use any of the labels. There may be other colleagues who are not neurodivergent but still encounter some of the same barriers for other reasons, including other disabilities.

Sometimes the adjustment requested appears as something small or just a part of being at work. It's important to remember colleagues who are neurodivergent conditions can experience a greater impact of these challenges. The colleague is raising it because it's important to them.

When discussing environments or accommodations it is more helpful to talk about how these affect work and processes, rather than whether a colleague has a condition.

9. Inclusion – an Intersectionality Perspective

Intersectionality is a term coined by Professor Kimberley Crenshaw to describe how race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics “intersect” with one another and overlap. This can result in a convergence of stereotypes and impact on the person even more.

In the context of neurodiversity, intersectionality emphasises the diverse experiences of neurodivergent individuals shaped by crossing and converging factors like race, gender, and socioeconomic status, highlighting the need for inclusive support that addresses these intersections.

Neurodivergent individuals often face additional challenges in the workplace due to their race, gender identity, sexual identity or co-occurring conditions such as mental health concerns.

At **(Insert Company)** we seek to understand and support the whole person. There is no "one size fits all" as each of us has our own particular set of challenges at work. We seek to demonstrate this by:

- Designing our processes as individual-led
- Providing a range of different supports
- Not making assumptions about colleagues but truly listening to their lived experience
- Educating teams about unconscious bias and its effects on workplace dynamics.
- Provide culturally competent support and accommodations tailored to the needs of diverse racial and ethnic groups.

For more information on considerations for intersectionality see our [Neuroinclusion hub](#).

10. Internal Supports

If you have any questions you should look to speak with your people manager in the first instance. Further supports are outlined below.

For general queries, please submit your query on the **(Insert Details)**

Confidential colleague queries and support:

Insert Details

Neuroinclusion Network:

Insert Details

Family Network:

Insert Details

NeuroPositive ambassadors:

Insert Details

For People Manager Advice:

Insert Details

Employee Assistance Programme:

Insert Details

11. External Supports

Ireland

Dyslexia Association of Ireland - <https://dyslexia.ie/>

Dyspraxia Ireland - <https://www.dyspraxia.ie/>

ASIAM - <https://asiam.ie/>

Irish Society for Autism - <https://autism.ie/>

Neurodiversity Ireland - <https://neurodiversityireland.com/>

auticon - <https://auticon.com/>

Guide to Neuroinclusive Hiring, Adverts and Interviews

Resource 2

Guide to Neuroinclusive Hiring: Inclusive Job Adverts & Interviewing

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COMPANY LOGO
HERE

Creating a neuroinclusive hiring process begins with designing accessible job adverts and conducting interviews that allow neurodivergent candidates to demonstrate their true capabilities. This guide provides practical steps to ensure job postings and interviews are inclusive, fair, and welcoming to not only neurodivergent talent, but all candidates.

Neuroinclusive hiring benefits both employers and employees by ensuring all candidates have a fair opportunity to showcase their skills. By making small, intentional changes to job adverts and interviews, HR leaders can create a recruitment process that attracts and supports neurodivergent talent, leading to stronger, more diverse teams.

1. Writing Neuroinclusive Job Adverts

A. Use Clear, Concise Language and Formatting

- Avoid jargon, idioms, and unnecessary complexity.
- Keep sentences short and instructions straightforward.
- Use bullet points to break down responsibilities and requirements.
- Use sub-headings to split content into clear sections
- Use a dyslexic friendly sans serif font, or you can download one like Dyslexie Font
- Include a link to the description that avoids black text on white background

Example:

Instead of - "Looking for a self-starter with excellent communication skills who thrives in a fast-paced, high-pressure environment."

Say - "You will be responsible for writing reports, attending team meetings, and responding to emails. Clear written communication skills are important, and being able to manage multiple priorities."

B. Focus on Essential Skills

- Clearly distinguish between must-have and nice-to-have skills.
- Make it clear that someone can apply without having every single skill listed
- Avoid unnecessary social or personality-based requirements if it isn't required for the role e.g. asking a software engineer to be great at networking
- Consider removing generic "soft skills" unless directly relevant.

Example:

Instead of - "Must have strong interpersonal skills and be a team player."

Say - "This role involves working with colleagues on projects. You should be able to communicate clearly via email and in meetings."

C. Offer Alternative Application Methods

- Allow candidates to submit applications via video, audio, or written format.
- Deadlines should be clear, obviously communicated in the description and realistic.
- Provide a contact email for questions about the role and make it clear the candidate can ask this person about adjustments. Finding the right tone and language of this will promote psychological safety.

D. State Your Commitment to Neurodiversity

- Include a neurodiversity statement in job adverts to promote psychological safety and therefore encourage applications from neurodivergent candidates. This can be a part of your existing inclusion statement.

Example:

We value neurodiversity and are committed to an inclusive, supportive workplace where everyone can thrive. If you are neurodivergent and require adjustments during the hiring process, let us know. Your wellbeing and unique perspective matter to us.

2. Neuroinclusive Interviewing Practices

A. Offer Interview Accommodations

Ask candidates in advance if they require adjustments, such as:

- Receiving questions in advance.
- A quiet, distraction free environment.
- Alternative formats (e.g. written responses instead of verbal interviews).
- Extra time for processing and responding to questions.

B. Structure the Interview Clearly

- Use a predictable format – explain what will happen at each stage.
- Start with a brief overview: “First, I’ll introduce myself. Then I’ll ask you some questions about your experience, and at the end, you can ask any questions you have.”
- Ask one question at a time rather than multi-part questions.

Example:

Instead of - “Can you tell me about a time you worked in a team and faced a challenge, how you handled it, and what the outcome was?”

Say - “Can you describe a time you worked in a team?” **(pause and wait for response)** “What was a challenge you faced in that team?” **(pause and wait for response)**

C. Use Strength-Based Questions

Neurodivergent candidates may have unique strengths that traditional interviews overlook. It sometimes doesn’t come naturally to share their strengths compared to non-neurodivergent candidates. Focus on assessing strengths by asking specific questions.

Example Questions:

- “Can you describe how you approach problem-solving? You can share a story of when you have done this if it helps.”
- “How do you like to structure your work to stay organized?”
- In this role, you will be expected to manage a team, how would your co-workers describe your management strengths?

D. Be Flexible with Responses

- Give clear permission that candidates can respond in their preferred way and take their time to provide a considered response (e.g., writing down answers before speaking).
- Avoid judging based on body language, eye contact, or social cues.

Example:

A candidate who avoids eye contact or gives direct, factual answers should not be rated lower for “lack of enthusiasm” or being ‘impolite’ if their response is clear and relevant.

E. Consider Alternative Assessments

Instead of a traditional interview or in addition to, offer:

- Work trials (e.g., sample tasks or projects).
- Skills-based assessments (e.g., problem-solving exercises).
- Portfolio reviews (for candidates with relevant past work).

Example:

Instead of asking a software developer, “Tell me about a time you solved a complex coding problem,” Ask them to complete a small coding task relevant to the job.

3. Post-Interview Considerations

A. Provide Clear Next Steps

- Let candidates know when they can expect a response.
- If providing feedback, be direct and constructive.
- If they are unsuccessful, offer suggestions for future applications and/or training.

B. Evaluate Without Bias

- Train hiring managers to avoid unconscious bias around neurodivergent communication styles, to increase general understanding and how to deliver a neuroinclusive experience for all candidates. Ensure assessment criteria focus on skills and competencies, not social performance.

Key Takeaways:

- Write job adverts in clear, accessible language with only essential skills.
- Offer alternative application methods and state your commitment to neurodiversity.
- Provide interview accommodations and structure the process clearly.
- Focus on strengths-based assessment rather than traditional social cues.
- Consider alternative hiring methods like work trials and skills-based assessments.

Neuroinclusive Hiring Charter

Resource 3

Our Neuroinclusive Hiring Charter

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We are actively building and fostering a diverse and inclusive organisation that is welcoming to all. We value the unique strengths of neurodivergent individuals and ensure our approach to hiring gives all applicants the best opportunity to be successful.

This document will outline the key commitments and standards that are central to our Neuroinclusive hiring approach.

Our Neuroinclusive Hiring commitments:

Neurodiversity is respected and embraced throughout the hiring process. Our recruitment practices are designed to ensure equal opportunities and a positive experience for neurodivergent candidates.

Prioritising Accessibility:	Accessibility is a key focus in every aspect of our hiring process. We design each stage with inclusivity in mind to ensure all candidates have equal opportunities to succeed.
Clear and transparent communication:	Our job advertisements are written using clear, direct, and straightforward language. This promotes transparency about role requirements and maximises readability for all applicants.
Eliminating Bias:	We are dedicated to removing bias from our recruitment processes, including advertising, assessment, and selection, to create a fair and inclusive experience for everyone.
Focus on candidate skill:	We focus on candidates' skills and experience, rather than behavioural traits, when making hiring decisions. This ensures a fair assessment process that values the unique strengths neurodivergent individuals bring to the role.

We create an Accessible and Inclusive environment, providing accommodations that ensure an optimal digital and physical environment throughout the hiring process and beyond.

Equitable Recruitment experience:	We aim to provide an equitable experience for all candidates at every stage of the recruitment process, ensuring fairness and accessibility.
Tailored Workspaces:	Our workspaces are tailored to be accessible and adaptive, meaning the working environment can be adjusted for your sensory and cognitive needs. This may include noise-cancelling headphones, adjustable lighting, or ergonomic equipment.
Easy and confidential Accommodation requests:	Requesting accommodations, such as extended interview times or alternative communication methods, is made simple and confidential, with no impact on the candidate's experience or their opportunity for success.

We are dedicated to providing continuous education and training for everyone involved in the hiring process, ensuring an inclusive environment for neurodivergent colleagues and candidates.

Enhancing understanding and reducing stigma:

We deliver comprehensive training for all colleagues involved in recruitment, focusing on neurodiversity awareness to improve understanding, eliminate stigma, and reduce the potential for bias against neurodivergent candidates.

Refresher training for Recruiters:

Our recruiters participate in regular refresher courses on anti-bias awareness, which equip them to engage in open, respectful conversations about accommodation needs and promote a supportive hiring atmosphere.

Accessible information and support:

We prioritise making information and resources easily accessible to all colleagues. This includes guidelines on best practices for supporting neurodivergent candidates and facilitating their needs throughout the recruitment process.

We are committed to championing Neurodiversity at all levels of our organisation.

Leadership as Champions:

Our leadership teams will actively advocate for inclusive practices, serving as champions for neurodiversity and ensuring that these values are integrated throughout the organisation.

Top-down and grassroots support:

We promote accountability at the leadership level in supporting neurodivergent colleagues, while also encouraging grassroots initiatives, such as employee resource groups, that encourage inclusion and advocacy.

Advocacy from Recruiters and Hiring Managers:

Our recruiters and hiring managers will be strong advocates for neurodiversity within (Insert Company) promoting awareness and supporting initiatives that align with our commitment to inclusivity.

Role Models in the Financial Services Industry:

We aspire to be a leading advocate for neurodiversity among all our colleagues, setting a positive example within the financial services sector and inspiring others to embrace inclusivity.

We embrace a tailored approach to Neuroinclusive Hiring, recognising that there is no “one size fits all” solution

Listening to colleagues lived experiences:

We are committed to evolving and enhancing our practices in line with industry best practices and the lived experiences of our colleagues. We prioritise understanding individual experiences through various methods, including colleague surveys and active participation in employee resource groups, to gather valuable insights that inform our practices.

Engaging with Neurodiversity Experts:

We collaborate with external neurodiversity experts and researchers to continually update our knowledge and refine our recruitment practices, ensuring they reflect the latest best practices.

Commitment from Our Inclusion and Diversity Team:

Our dedicated Inclusion and Diversity team is committed to studying societal and industry developments that can enhance our approach, ensuring that we apply relevant insights and innovations at (Insert company).

Where do these commitments apply?



Recruitment:

From the moment you engage with our job advertisements and branding, through your application process, interactions with hiring teams and recruiters, and throughout our interview and accommodations practices, we ensure inclusivity at every step.



Onboarding:

From the job offer to preparing you for success on day one, our commitment extends to providing any necessary accommodations, including workspace adjustments, technology, and anything else to help you thrive in your role.



Throughout your career:

These commitments aren't just for the hiring process; they continue throughout your entire career journey with us, ensuring inclusive and supportive experiences at every stage of your development.

Better Together

Our commitment and active steps towards neurodiversity and inclusivity benefits everyone within our organisation. While these principles will guide our best practices to ensure equality and parity for all, we recognise that our journey doesn't end here. We are dedicated to doing what is right, embracing the idea that there is always room for growth and improvement.

We also understand that we don't have all the answers, and value the insights and experiences of our colleagues who we encourage to reach out to us so together we can create an organisation that is inclusive to all.

List of Common Accommodations

Resource 4

Note

This document has been developed by Bank of Ireland with subject matter guidance from auticon, a company specialising in neuroinclusion services. The workplace accommodations listed reflects the Banks ongoing commitment to fostering a more inclusive workplace, informed by advice and ongoing expertise from auticon. For further information on auticon's Neuroinclusion Services, including training and advisory on workplace accommodations please visit **[auticon.com](https://www.auticon.com)**

List of Common Accommodations

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Below you will find some ideas for accommodations that might be useful for the mentioned challenges.

Please bear in mind that this list below is not exhaustive. It can help provide a framework on how to approach different types of needs and challenges. It can be used as a resource in those cases where you and the colleague need some ideas for potential solutions, or have tried some and not found them satisfactory. However, accommodations will need to be considered on a case by case basis and should align with both individual needs and the overall sustainability of our business.

Challenges	Accommodation (examples)
Slower processing of written communication	• Keep emails short and concise • Text-to-speech software • 15-minute check-ins, scheduled in recurring or spontaneous, rather than messaging
For those with passive communication (e.g. where individuals may be reflective or find it challenging to share opinions or thoughts.)	• Take a direct approach • Enquire about opinions in a way that gives the individual time to think of their response, e.g., via email • Have key questions noted within the meeting agenda so people can adequately prepare • Align to preferred communication method
Sensory & workspace	• Provide noise-cancelling headphones • Provide any ergonomic office equipment • Flexible workstations to be able to adjust lighting and away from noisier areas on the workplace • Physically accessible workplaces • Designated quiet areas with dim lighting, comfortable seating and reduced noise • Flexibility with the dress code • Designated desk
Distraction	• Set desk away from flow of traffic within the office • Quiet zones to work from • Hold meetings or important conversations in private rooms • Assistive software to support note taking in meetings • Record virtual meetings for individuals to review when needed
Fatigue	• Normalise and encourage short breaks throughout the day – e.g., note this in onboarding documentation • Limit back-to-back meetings • No meeting days • Normalise having 'cameras off' in virtual meetings
Prioritisation	• Give clear deadlines • Break larger tasks down into smaller chunks with individual deadlines • Regular feedback meetings to assess priorities

Appendix 1

List of typical Accommodations (cont'd)

Challenges	Accommodation (examples)
Executive function & time Management	• Making use of task management tools and apps • Structured task management • Using visual schedules and checklists • Regular-checklines to manage deadlines
Taking longer to process things	• Give time to prepare – provide agendas and key questions ahead of time • Have frequent short breaks throughout the day • Provide the context around a topic, where possible • Key point of contact available to answer questions
Encouragement	• Encourage and recognise progress and contributions • Recognising unique skills and cognitive benefits within teams and the organisation • Deliver positive reinforcement alongside any constructive feedback
Reading and Writing (Dyslexia)	• Dyslexic friendly materials • Speech-to-text software and assistive technologies • Considering unique communication preferences such as verbal and visual communication • Extra time for reading and writing related tasks
Physical Environment (Dyspraxia)	• Ergonomic workstations and furniture • Assistive tools and technologies (e.g. keyboards, mice, voice recognition) • Structured breaks to manage physical fatigue • Clear pathways in the office
Mental health and wellbeing	• Ensure easy access to any necessary resources and tools to support with wellbeing and mental health • Foster an environment and workplace policies that are open and supportive of mental health and wellbeing • Provide access to external counselling or support
Isolation & social inclusion	• Inviting all staff even if they have said “no” to previous social events • Looking at the sensory elements and how inclusive work social events are and encourage feedback from neurodivergent staff • Provide structured networking opportunities • Undertaking inclusive communication training for managers and the team • Create peer-to-peer support groups • Regular and recurring team meetings
Productivity	• Flexible working (hours and hybrid/WFH options) • Break large tasks down into smaller chunks with specified deadlines
Focus	• Allow the use of fidget tools • Encourage regular breaks to prevent burnout • Support flexible working hours (e.g., offering flexible working hours (e.g., starting between 8 and 10 and finishing between 4 and 6) provides employees who may experience fluctuating attention throughout the day, to work during hours where they can be most productive.)

Appendix 1

List of typical Accommodations (cont'd)

Challenges	Accommodation (examples)
Virtual meetings	• Option to have cameras off or on • Meetings scheduled into calendars ahead of time • Follow-up message sent post meeting • Give people the option to input both verbally and using the chat function, depending on preference • Using a system for sharing thoughts and comments ,(e.g., raise hand function) • Limit number of attendees • Explicit and co-negotiated rules around contributions (e.g., raise hand; write into chat)
Meeting engagement	• Share meeting agendas in advance • Define the expectations and purpose of an individual's role for the meeting • Allow someone to shadow their first few meetings before expecting them to be active contributors • Offer alternative methods of participation such as written feedback or a quick follow up meeting after
Recurring interruptions during meetings	• Using a system for sharing thoughts and comments, (e.g., raise hand function) • Individual can share thoughts immediately via chat function • Provide individual with a notepad/pen to write down thoughts/comments immediately (in person)
Workplace culture	• Offer the use of a workplace buddy/mentor • Explain any unwritten rules within the team and company
Career development	• Offer career development guidance and mentorship • Explain career paths and progression opportunities that recognise someone's unique skills
Unsure of where to go for help	• Provide information on team members areas of expertise during onboarding and keep information in an easy to find place • Provide a key point of contact at the end of each meeting
Learning/ Support for colleagues and teams	• Offer neurodiversity training for the whole organisation • Direct to available resources and support
Universal accommodations	• Provide agendas for all meetings • Provide a mentor/buddy • Ensure verbal instruction are supplement with a written summary • Regular and recurring 1-2-1 meetings • Ensure 1:1s include time to focus on wellbeing at work • Flexible working hours • Hybrid and WFH options

Neuroinclusive Physical Environment Checklist

Resource 5

Physical Environment checklist

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When focusing on neuroinclusive design for a building, there are key areas to consider. Each area addresses specific needs and preferences of neurodivergent individuals, ensuring the environment is supportive and accessible for everyone. We have provided some considerations, but options aren't limited to only these.

A physical workplace assessment

A part of your neuroinclusion journey could include a thorough physical workplace assessment from a subject matter expert like auticon, who can provide you with details on neuroinclusive barriers and opportunities, and share flexible options for improvement generally and for specific needed.

This type of assessment can be done in collaboration with your facilities and HR teams, and provide a report that can be shared with all colleagues before onboarding so all neurodivergent colleagues are aware of what to expect during onboarding.

Sensory considerations

Lighting: Use natural light where possible and provide adjustable lighting options to accommodate different sensitivities, for example, desk lamps.

Acoustics: Incorporate soundproofing materials to reduce noise levels and provide quiet spaces for concentration.

Textures: Select materials and finishes that are pleasant to touch and avoid overly stimulating textures. Overly bright and busy patterns, particularly lots of different ones all in one place can be over stimulating. Muted tones are best.

Design Considerations

Layout: Design clear, intuitive layouts to help with navigation and reduce anxiety. Open spaces should be balanced with private areas for those needing solitude.

Wayfinding: Use clear, consistent signage and visual cues to assist with navigation throughout the building.

Furniture: Provide a variety of seating options to cater to different comfort levels and sensory needs.

Flexible Workspaces

Quiet Zones: Designate quiet areas or rooms where employees can retreat to focus or decompress.

Collaborative Spaces: Create spaces that encourage collaboration but also offer flexibility for different working styles. E.g rooms with moveable furniture, whiteboard walls and other collaboration tools.

Private Spaces: Ensure there are private rooms or booths for tasks that require concentration or for personal breaks.

Meeting room flexibility: For meeting rooms surrounded by glass, curtains can help to reduce noise input, avoid distractions and prevent people from being overly self-aware of people looking in.

Technology and Equipment

Assistive Technology: Ensure the availability of assistive technologies, such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, project management tools, mind mapping and other accessibility tools.

Adjustable Workstations: Provide height adjustable desks and ergonomic chairs to support physical comfort and focus.

Sensory Tools: Offer sensory tools such as noise-cancelling headphones to help block out distracting sounds or provide noise-input without disturbing others in the office.

Health and Wellbeing

Relaxation Areas: Include spaces designed for relaxation and mindfulness, such as lounges or quiet gardens for wellbeing walks.

Social Areas: Provide comfortable, low stimulation areas for socializing and informal meetings. These should include areas away from noisy coffee machines.

Indoor Air Quality: Maintain high indoor air quality with good ventilation and the use of non-toxic materials.

Biophilic Design: Incorporate elements of nature, such as plants, natural light, and water features, to promote well-being.

Neuroinclusive Event Guidelines

Resource 6

As part of our commitment to Neuroinclusion in **(Insert Company)**, it is essential that we consider the needs of neurodivergent colleagues when planning and hosting events. Below are some key practices to ensure the event is welcoming and accessible to everyone.

1. Pre-Event Planning

- a. **Clear Communication:** Provide detailed information about the event in advance. This includes the agenda, location, timing, travel options and what guests can expect. An FAQ can be very helpful. It is also encouraged to provide a photograph / floorplan of the event room where you can highlight bathrooms, cloak rooms, quiet spaces and exits.
- b. **Sensory Considerations:** Ask colleagues if they have specific sensory needs (e.g. sensitivity to light, noise or smells) and make accommodations accordingly, such as providing quiet spaces or adjusting lighting.
- c. **Dress Code:** Provide a description of the dress code so there is no ambiguity.

An example statement for an event might be as follows, 'semi-formal event where we invite you to dress to impress—your way! We understand that everyone expresses themselves differently, so while we encourage stylish and expressive attire, we also prioritise your comfort and authenticity. Whether that means wearing your favourite dress, a sharp suit, or a combination of what makes you feel confident and comfortable, we want you to feel at ease while enjoying the event'.

- d. **Accessibility Options:** Ensure that any materials (slides, handouts) are available in multiple formats e.g. as large print, plain text. Allow colleagues to request specific formats in advance.
- e. **Point of Contact:** Provide the names of colleagues who will be point of contact at the event for any support needed

2. Event Environment

- a. **Lighting and Noise Control:** Where possible, choose venues with adjustable lighting and sound levels. Avoid using bright or flickering lights.
- b. **Quiet Spaces:** Designate a quiet area where colleagues can go if they need a break from sensory stimulation or social interaction. Ensure this space is clearly marked and accessible for everyone.

Sample wording for communications relating to the quiet space - "We have provided a designated quiet space at our event for anyone who needs a moment of calm or a break from the sensory environment. This space is open to all colleagues —whether you need to step away for a few minutes or a longer period, we encourage you to take care of yourself in whatever way feels best. Please be mindful that others may also be using the quiet space for the same purpose. We kindly ask that you respect the peaceful atmosphere by refraining from conversation. If you need to listen to music or other audio, please use headphones. We understand that using a quiet space might be new to some colleagues, and we want to emphasise that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to use this area. This is a judgment-free zone where you can recharge at your own pace. Your well-being is our priority, and this space is here to support that."

- c. **Seating Options:** Offer flexible seating arrangements where colleagues have a choice.
- d. **Facilitators:** Ensure there is an event facilitator greeting colleagues as they arrive, with clear signposts to the event room.

3. During the Event

- a. **Structured Agenda:** Stick to the agenda as much as possible. Clearly signal transitions between different parts of the event and allow time for breaks.
- b. **Inclusive Communication:** Speakers and presenters should speak clearly and at a moderate pace. Avoid the use of jargon.
- c. **Engagement Choices:** We recognise that some colleagues may prefer to engage in different ways. Where we can, allow colleagues to contribute through written responses, online platforms, or in smaller breakout groups.
- d. **Event Experience:** We want our events to be fully and authentically inclusive for everyone to enjoy.

Some wording you might use to outline our commitment, 'We are committed to ensuring that everyone feels comfortable and has a positive experience at our event. We understand that everyone has different needs, and we want you to feel supported throughout the event. Please know that there will be no social judgment for using headphones, taking breaks, or stepping out when needed. You are free to pop in and out of sessions as you see fit, and we encourage you to do whatever makes you feel most comfortable. Our goal is for every attendee to feel welcome, respected, and at ease'.

4. Post-Event Follow-Up

- a. **Feedback:** Provide various avenues for feedback, such as online forms, email, or one-on-one conversations. Ensure that feedback can be anonymous if desired.
- b. **Accessible Materials:** Share any presentations, recordings, or follow-up materials in accessible formats. Recap the key points and next steps clearly and concisely.
- c. **Continued Support:** If ongoing communication is needed, make sure it's consistent and accessible. Be open to further adjustments based on feedback.

5. Cultural Awareness

- a. **Respect Individual Preferences:** Understand that neurodiverse colleagues may have different ways of socialising and engaging with others. Respect their preferences and avoid pressuring them into situations that make them uncomfortable.
- b. **Foundations of Neurodiversity Awareness Training:** Encourage all event facilitators to undertake our Foundations of Neurodiversity Training to better understand the varied needs of neurodiverse colleagues.

6. Flexibility and Empathy

- a. **Adaptability:** Be prepared to make real-time adjustments if a colleague expresses discomfort or difficulty. Flexibility is key in creating a supportive environment.
- b. **Empathy First:** Approach any situation with empathy. Listen to the needs of neurodivergent individuals without judgment and work collaboratively to find solutions.

These guidelines help to ensure that our events support our commitment to Neuroinclusion and creates a culture of belonging, allowing all colleagues to participate fully.

Inclusion Passport

Resource 7

Inclusion Passport Colleague Details

Colleague Name:	
Staff ID:	
People Manager:	
Date Implemented:	
Review Date:	

Introduction

The inclusion passport is a tool that aims to remove barriers that colleagues may face due to their personal circumstances, including but not limited to health conditions, disabilities, caring responsibilities, and other personal circumstances. The passport is to help colleagues feel more included in the workplace by providing a space for them to share their unique needs, preferences, and working styles with their colleagues and people managers.

The passport is typically shared with colleagues and people managers to help them better understand how to work with the colleague in a way that is most productive and inclusive.

The Inclusion Passport is a living record of any agreed workplace accommodations set up between you and your people manager or the Group.

Please note that this is a template document only and can be amended to suit the needs to the user.

The purpose of the Passport is to:

- Ensure that you and your people manager have a living record of any agreed workplace accommodations;
- Minimise the need to renegotiate accommodations or repeat potentially difficult conversations each time you change your job, relocate or are assigned a new people manager within the Group;
- Ensure you are continuously supported throughout your career with the Group; and
- Provide you and your people manager with a structure to help you regularly review and discuss your workplace accommodations.

What are workplace accommodations?

A workplace accommodation can be defined as some modification to the tasks, the structure of a job or the workplace, or provision of special equipment or facilities, which allows a colleague to overcome barriers and enjoy equal employment opportunities.

Examples of Workplace Accommodations

Colleagues may encounter many different types of barriers in the workplace. Below are some examples of the types of accommodations that may reduce these barriers and promote equal opportunities at work. This list is not exhaustive but illustrative only. Accommodations will often be unique to the individual colleague.

- **Equipment:** e.g. ergonomic chairs, standing desks, specialist software, etc.
- **Environment:** e.g. change to physical layout, reduced lighting, etc.
- **Ways of Working:** e.g. phased returns, job restructuring, reduced hours, redeployment.
- **Educational:** e.g. training materials available in alternate formats, accessible venues and websites for educational supports.

Implementing your passport

This is a live document and should be reviewed regularly by both you and your people manager and amended as appropriate (at least every six months). Be aware that your people manager may need to get additional advice from Occupational Health, Access to Work or People Services before any accommodations or changes can be agreed and implemented, but this process should not be subject to any undue delays and you should be consulted and kept informed of progress throughout.

If a review date is specified in this inclusion passport, you should put this in your calendar and let your people manager know when the date arrives. However, please speak to your people manager at any time if you believe your situation or needs have changed and it needs to be reviewed earlier.

The Group recognises that colleagues themselves have the best understanding of what accommodations are most likely to be effective and appropriate for them, and is committed to listening to colleagues and ensuring that reasonable accommodations are effective so that barriers can be removed, enabling you to perform at your best at work. People managers should refer to the relevant guidance for more information on how to manage the process of putting in place workplace accommodations effectively.

Workplace assessments

Details and dates of your last workplace, risk or Occupational Health Assessment (if applicable).	
Date of your next review (if applicable).	

Sharing this Passport

An up-to-date copy of this passport should be held by you and your people manager. It's open for you to pass on to anyone you think needs to know about any impact or issue that can arise due to the interaction between your personal circumstances and barriers within or outside the workplace that can affect you at work.

Consent and Confidentiality

By completing this passport, you consent to the information being held by your people manager. The contents of the passport will be treated in the strictest confidence. No information contained in the passport will be shared with anyone without your consent.

If your people manager changes, your existing people manager will ask for your consent before giving a copy to your new manager in the strictest confidence.

Accommodation details

My health condition/ personal circumstances interacts with barriers within and/or outside the workplace to create the following impact(s) on me at work:

The following accommodations have been agreed between me and my people manager:

Please complete this section with any additional information that you think it is important to know about your circumstances in order to better support you at work.

Date implemented	Review date

Positive Conversations: Managing Disclosure and Discussing Accommodations

Resource 8

Positive Conversations – Handling disclosure and sourcing accommodations

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Please note: These scenarios are fictionalised examples. They are based on real life conversations between managers and neurodivergent colleagues and are designed to get you thinking about how to best support colleagues.

They do not purport to represent the lived experience of any or all neurodivergent colleagues.

Scenario 1: Conversation between Claire (the manager) and Emma (the employee) after Emma discloses her autism diagnosis

Scene: In a private meeting room. Emma (Employee) sits across from Claire (Manager).

“ **Claire:** Hi Emma, how are you?

Emma: Claire, I've been meaning to talk to you. There is something I would like to talk to you about and I am not sure how to say it?

Claire: Ok, well why don't you just tell me what's on your mind and we can take it from there?

Emma: Ok I was recently diagnosed with autism.

Claire: Thanks for confiding in me. I'm glad you have shared that with me. How do you feel about the diagnosis?

Emma: Honestly, Claire, it's been a mix of emotions. Relief to finally understand why I experience things differently, but also some anxiety about how it might impact my work.

Claire: Emma, I can imagine that there's a lot to process with this new information, around your identity, your strengths and challenges, how learning you are autistic may shape your life and work. What we can do is maybe talk about one or two things that are causing you immediate concern and take it from there. This is not a one-time conversation and we can continue to have regular check ins, if you like, to ensure we are supporting you as best we can. We will work together to ensure you have the support you need, how does that sound?

Emma: That sounds good thanks. ”

Scenario 2: Supporting colleague challenges without any diagnosis

Scene: Thrive conversation in person – office setting

During a recent conversation with his manager, Peter had spoken about some of the challenges he had been facing at work. These included things like feeling he was forgetting things and feeling disorganised and often get overwhelmed with multiple tasks. He advised his nephew was recently diagnosed with ADHD and he sees a lot himself in his nephew which has made him consider speaking to somebody about it himself. Claire had advised that labels are not important but that she would support him to be at his best in work...

“ Claire: Thanks for sending on the Inclusion Passport, Peter. I appreciate you taking the time to outline your needs. This is a great step in making sure we can support you effectively. Let's go through it together and see how I can best support you to be your best at work.

Peter: Sure, that sounds good. It's been a really helpful exercise for me because I've been able to reflect on some of the challenges I've been facing at work.

Claire: Absolutely and that's what it's all about that we create a work environment where you can thrive. Let's focus on the challenges you're experiencing and how we can address them. We can also use this approach to identify the strengths you bring to your work.

Peter: Okay thanks, that makes sense. Sometimes I struggle with staying focused, especially during long meetings. And I find it difficult to focus on tasks and find it challenging to get started on some activities which makes me frustrated. Sometimes I underestimate the length of time it will take to complete a task and I feel that I let everyone down including myself.

Claire: Thank you for sharing that. When you do complete a task on time or feel more focused than usual, is there anything in particular that helps you to do that?

Peter: Ehm let me see.

Claire: So for example what are the things that make you feel more confident on a task?

Peter: I guess when I have good clarity on what's expected of me.

Claire: That makes sense. Is it ok if I provide you with an observation I've noticed?

Peter: Yes great.

Claire: I noticed that you worked really well on the risk management framework project with the analytics team. Your dedication and attention to detail on that project were incredible, resulting in a fantastic outcome for our team and our stakeholders. I have said it before but that was really excellent. What do you think were the features of that project that set you up for success?

Peter: Well one thing I put on my inclusion passport.... Ensuring tasks and deadlines are clearly defined can help me with prioritisation and time management. Like for example that risk management project there was a really clear set of objectives and tasks assigned to those objectives – what needed to be done when and so on...

Claire: Yes, great. I think it might be helpful if I can try to be clearer with expectations around deadlines and priorities. We could even incorporate the prioritisation matrix into our regular one to ones so that you have more clarity on the tasks that should take priority over others.

Peter: That would be really helpful, thank you.

Claire: Let's start doing that and see how it works. I know you had mentioned you can sometimes struggle to keep focus in some of our longer meetings.

Peter: Yes, sometimes I like to take a lot of notes to help me stay present which is useful but also being an active participant in the meeting can be really helpful.

Claire: Yes, I think active participation is really important actually, thanks for bringing this up. I want our meetings to be engaging and that everyone has the opportunity to contribute. It would be good to review our meeting structure to make sure that we have shorter meetings that are just relevant to those people in that meeting. I was thinking to reduce meeting time to 45 minutes at a time, with breaks in between. We have a team charter session in two weeks and I want to include our meeting habits as part of that discussion. Whatever we agree on as a team, I will make a concerted effort to ensure this is enforced moving forward.

Peter: That would be great. I also sometimes need a bit more time to process information. Is there any way we can address that?

Claire: Of course. We can make sure you have access to meeting notes and agendas in advance, and we can look at using the tools available to us like MS Teams transcripts to create a written note of important meetings. This way, you can review the information at your own pace. Again, I think the whole team could benefit from a more structured approach to important meetings.

I've also heard that there are different types of software that can be useful depending on what your particular challenges are. I don't know much about them though.

We could arrange for a Workplace Needs Assessment. This will help identify specific tools, strategies, and possibly software that can assist you in your daily tasks. It's a way to get professional advice tailored to your needs. How does that sound?

Peter: I think that could be really helpful. I want to do my best at work, and it's been frustrating not knowing how to improve.

Claire: It's completely understandable to feel that way. We'll start by setting up the assessment, and I'll also make sure you have the support you need in the meantime. For example, we can implement some immediate changes like scheduling regular breaks during long meetings and providing more written instructions for tasks. How does that sound as a starting point?

Peter: That sounds like a good start. Can I just ask, do you require me to provide evidence of a formal diagnosis. Unfortunately, I am still awaiting an assessment for a formal diagnosis.

Claire: No, an official diagnosis isn't required from our end. Just to clarify though that a Workplace Needs Assessment is not a formal diagnosis. It is a personal decision for each colleague to seek a formal diagnosis and is not required by the company.

Peter: That's great to hear. I really appreciate you taking this seriously.

Claire: Your wellbeing and success are important to me, Peter. Let's also schedule regular check-ins to discuss how the accommodations are working and make any necessary changes. The inclusion passport is a living document and we can update it as we go.

Of course this conversation is confidential Peter, but you might want to consider sharing the inclusion passport with others on the team or your stakeholders. It can be a useful tool for communicating how best to work with you.

Peter: I'll have a think about that. I don't want to be treated differently by the team.

Claire: Every one of us has needs but it is your passport and you control who and when you share it with.

Peter: Thank you so much for your understanding. I'm not sure if others would be so understanding. I know everyone has a lot of work to do and I don't want to let you or team down.

Claire: Peter we all face different challenges and I really appreciate you coming and talking to me but do not forget that you are a valued member of this team, you provide expertise and your contribution matters. I'm here to support you. I'll send a follow up email with details about the Workplace Needs Assessment and we can update the inclusion passport together at our next session. We'll get the ball rolling on those adjustments right away. In the meantime, if you think of any other ways we can help, please let me know.

Peter: I will. Thanks again, Claire. I feel a lot better after talking to you.

Claire: I'm glad to hear that. Let's work together to make sure you have what you need to succeed. //

Neuroinclusive Ambassadors

Resource 9

Neuroinclusive Ambassador Role

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What is the purpose of the Neuroinclusive ambassador?

To act as a champion for neurodiversity inclusion within the organisation by raising awareness, providing peer support, and advocating for inclusive practices.

How will it help to achieve neuroinclusion in my company?

Neuroinclusive ambassadors are a source of support for colleagues and their managers. They provide immediate support to colleagues to help support them to thrive at work. This group can also help to establish networks; feedback loops; and process/practice input over time.

How many Neuroinclusive ambassadors should we appoint?

The ideal number of neuroinclusive ambassadors depends on your organisations size structure and goals.

See below for recommended ratios.

Company size	Suggested Ambassadors	Note
Less than 100 employees	1-2	You can start small and grow with demand
100-500 employees	3-8	Aim for cross-departmental representation
500-1,000 employees	8-15	Consider regional or divisional team leads
1,000+ employees	15+	Ensure ambassadors span different departments, seniority levels and locations

Key Responsibilities for this role

Awareness Raising

- Share neurodiversity resources and insights in team meetings or through internal comms channels
- Help organise neurodiversity awareness events (e.g. Neurodiversity Celebration Week)

Peer Support

- Be a friendly, informed point of contact for colleagues with questions
- Signpost to official support channels when needed

Advocacy

- Feedback neurodivergent colleagues' experiences (anonymously) to improve policies
- Suggest inclusive accommodations for recruitment and ways of working

Role Modelling

- Demonstrate inclusive language and behaviours
- Challenge stereotypes in a constructive way.

What makes a great ambassador?

- A good listener and empathetic communicator.
- Someone with a passion for inclusion and belonging.
- Someone with an interest in neurodiversity.
- Someone who can commit to the training and time

What supports should be provided to ambassadors?

- Neurodiversity awareness training
- Resource pack and guidance documents
- Access to central HR teams for advice
- Peer support network with other Ambassadors

Government Funding Summary Document

Resource 10

This funding includes funding for workplace needs assessments, workplace adaptations and training. More information can be found [here](#).

Work and Access Programme

Click here to view: [gov.ie - Work and Access](#) 

Work and Access employer supports include:

- Workplace Needs Assessment, to assist in identifying employees need for additional supports
- Workplace Adaptation, to accommodate additional employee needs
- Disability Equality and Inclusion Training, to provide employers and organisations with access to training for staff, to gain a better awareness and understanding of disabilities in the workplace
- Helps provide reasonable accommodations for employers or applicants with disabilities.
- Supports from the programme include one or more of the following:
 - Workplace Needs Assessment
 - Communication Support
 - In-work Support
 - Personal Reader
 - Work Equipment
 - Workplace Adaptation
 - Disability Equality and Inclusion Training

Work and Access - Workplace Needs Assessment Grant

- Helps people with disabilities find or keep a job by removing or reducing workplace barriers.
- Funding of up to €2,500 to help the identify supports needed in workplace to do it effectively.

Grant may be used for: Eligible costs to carry out the assessment

- Up to 10 hours of communication support for contact hours with the specialist.

Work and Access - In-Work Support Grant

- Funding towards specialist support if you have a disability or health condition
- Funding of up to €12,500 if you need help to do your job, re-train or move to another role.
- The grant can cover training services if identified under a Workplace Needs Assessment.

One can apply for the following supports and receive 30 contact hours:

- Work coach
- Lámh Support Worker
- Specialist
- Other Communication Support Worker e.g. sign language interpreter, lip reader

Work and Access - Workplace Adaptation Grant

- Helps people with disabilities find or keep a job by removing or reducing workplace barriers.
- Available to private sector, voluntary, community and non-for-profit organisations
- Grant up to €25,000 covers adapting the following:
 - Equipment
 - Technology
 - The business premises
 - Remote working premises

Work and Access - Workplace Equipment Grant

- Funding of up to €12,000 for assistive equipment or technology for people with disabilities.
- Grant available to those who need specific tools to do their jobs effectively at work or home.
- Grant cannot be used for to: Buy equipment required by law, such as health and safety equipment
- Cover the usual costs of setting up or running a business
- Buy job-specific equipment typically provided by employers

Work and Access - Disability Equality and Inclusion Training Grant

- Grant up to €20,000 for employers to arrange & pay for disability equality & inclusion training.
- Level of funding depends on whether the course is certified by QQI or another national body: 90% of cost for QQI courses or other nationally recognised governing bodies.
- 80% of the cost for courses not certified by a recognised body.
- Training courses covered include: General disability equality and inclusion training
- Inclusive recruitment and management training
- Disability-specific training

Wage Subsidy Scheme for people with disabilities

Click here to view: [gov.ie - Wage Subsidy Scheme](#) 

- Financial support for employers who employ people with disabilities.
- Scheme for private sector employers who employ workers working 15-39 hours a week.
- Contract of employment must be a minimum of 6 months.

The EmployAbility Service

Click here to view: [Jobseeker Services | Turas Nua](#) 

- An employment and recruitment service for employers
- Helps employees with a disability, injury or both.

Includes the following free supports:

- Ongoing support for both the employer and employee throughout employment
- A professional job-matching service to help ensure successful recruitment
- Advice and information on additional employment supports