



Research Roundup

A summary of new research in the field of neurodiversity and related subjects.



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1a. Neurodiversity at Work 2023: Demand, Supply and a Gap Analysis

McDowall, A; Doyle, N; and Kiselva, M., Birkbeck University of London and Neurodiversity in Business (NiB)

Click to see report



Note from Neurodiversity in Business:

Neurodiversity in Business (NiB) has supported over 500 of the world's leading organisations to develop, improve and share practices and initiatives to support neuroinclusion in the workplace.

Neurodiversity in Business is proud to partner with Birkbeck, University of London to embark on this journey to undertake and promote this best-in-class research of current neurodiversity practice, thanking their sponsors Sage, McDonalds and Rolls Royce for their generous support.

Learn more about NiB on their website: <https://neurodiversityinbusiness.org/>

Summary

Employers and employees agree on neurodivergent staff strengths, such as...



Creativity



Innovative thinking



Detail processing



Focus

70% of neurodivergent employees surveyed highlighted these skills as strengths.

1a. Neurodiversity at Work 2023: Demand, Supply and a Gap Analysis

..continued

The challenges reported across neurodivergent conditions vary, substantiating a case for tailored adjustment and support. The adjustments neurodivergent employees reported as being most helpful are...



having a flexible
schedule



being able to do part of
their work from home



having a private space to
work when required

Neurodivergent employees report worryingly low levels of wellbeing (2.02 on a 5-point scale). Career progression and psychological safety were critical for retention and wellbeing. Typical corporate career paths may impose a 'neurodivergent glass ceiling' because they are designed for generalists rather than specialists.

When asked about barriers to disclosing their neurodivergence and/or requesting support, **65%** of neurodivergent employees said they were worried about stigma and discrimination from management, and **55%** about stigma and discrimination from colleagues. **65%** of neurodivergent employees experience a lack of understanding of neurodiversity by managers and decision makers.

1a. Neurodiversity at Work 2023: Demand, Supply and a Gap Analysis

...continued

Although **92%** of employers surveyed have a DEI policy, only **22%** said it includes a focus on neurodiversity. The report concludes:

“employers need to focus on developing their confidence in creating neuro-inclusive processes throughout the employee life-cycle.”

The results support a focus on manager training, equipping frontline managers with the knowledge and confidence to navigate employee experience, training and provision of support. Wellbeing and inclusion need to be embedded into corporate strategy and policy, and their importance supported through top-down role modelling in conjunction with support for bottom-up initiatives.



Ib. The Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey 2023

Business Disability Forum (2023)

Summary

Disabled employees' experience of feeling included and having adjustments at work is complex.

Managers' confidence in making adjustments has improved – but workplace health and adjustments-related support services are often disorganised and not streamlined within organisations

A significant number of barriers remain in the workplace after workplace adjustments have been provided for individuals

Conversations about having a disability between employees and managers and with the wider team, and the difficulty in getting adjustments, remain huge barriers. In addition, both employees and managers said that senior leaders were not always calling out poor behaviours, microaggressions, and insensitive comments even when they witnessed these behaviours themselves.



[Click to see Report](#)



Ib. The Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey 2023

...continued

These factors led to an impact in overall work-related stress and a detrimental effect on the level of employees' mental wellbeing that they said they experience each day.

A better understanding of managers and wider workplaces about the whole experience of having a disability and being disabled is needed, and it is also why an improved and more mature approach to removing disability-related barriers for disabled employees at work is needed. Ultimately, disabled employees do not see their experience of workplace adjustments in isolation but in the context of how they are treated by others in the organisation, the existing barriers that remain after adjustments are made, and the general culture of disability inclusion in their workplace.

Key Statistics



78% of disabled employees said they, rather than their employer, had to initiate the process of getting adjustments.



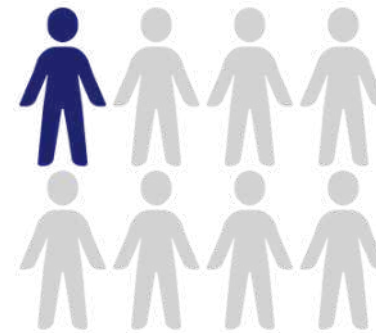
- **58%** of employees said getting the adjustments they needed was due to how assertive and confident they are to ask for that support.
- **81%** of managers said it is a lot easier to make adjustments when an employee tells them they have a disability or condition.

1b. The Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey 2023

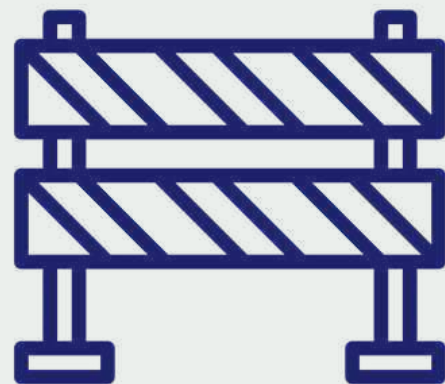
...continued



64% of managers are very confident to have a conversation with an employee who tells them they have a disability or a condition.



The speed of getting adjustments has improved by **4%** since 2019. But **1 in 8** disabled employees are waiting over a year to get the adjustments they need.



- **56%** of disabled employees said there are still disability-related barriers in the workplace after adjustments have been made.
- Only **37%** of disabled employees feel their employer is genuine about removing all disability-related barriers and making the workplace inclusive for disabled employees.
- Only **18%** of disabled employees said their adjustments have removed all barriers in the workplace.

1b. The Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey 2023

...continued

The most common types of adjustments:



Working flexibly or with adjusted hours (47%).



Having time off to attend appointments to help manage a disability or conditions (42%).



Ergonomic or adapted equipment for an immediate working station and computer set up.



10% of disabled employees said it was easy to get the adjustments they needed.



38% of disabled employees said they had been bullied or harassed in their workplace specifically because of their disability or condition.

1c. Dyslexic Thinkers: Recruiting the Unique Talent Your Company Needs

Made by Dyslexia (2023)

[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

This research carried out in partnership with Randstad Enterprise, highlights a gulf between what employers believe they know about Dyslexic Thinking, and the experiences of dyslexic employees, despite Dyslexic Thinking skills aligning with 2023 WEF's most in-demand skills.

- **66% of HR leaders say they understand the value of Dyslexic Thinking, only 14% of dyslexic employees agree.**
- **64% of employers feel their recruitment processes identify Dyslexic Thinking, only 4% of dyslexics agree.**

The research also finds a significant disparity between how well employers believe they are accommodating Dyslexic Thinkers and what long-term support is available.

1d. Neurodiversity and Inclusivity in the Workplace: Biopsychosocial Interventions for Promoting Competitive Advantage

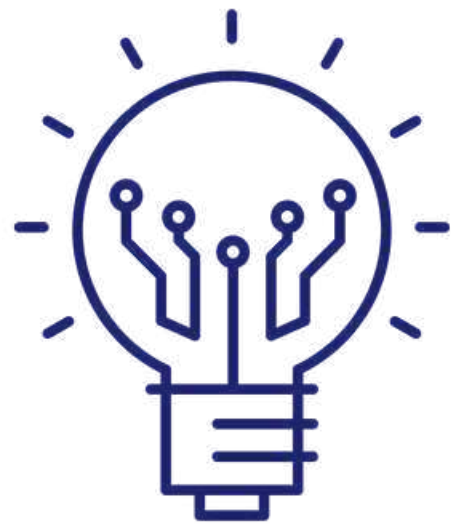
Hutson, P. and Hutson, J (2023)

[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

Research has demonstrated that diverse teams perform better and are more creative and innovative. As such, many firms in industry have established DEI programs, especially those where forward-thinking design cognition are competitive advantages. These efforts correspond with a global talent and worker shortage and align with the realization that neurodiverse populations are eight times as likely to be unemployed, while most actively desire and seek work opportunities.



The technology sector has been the first to consistently identify, build, and promote programs for the neurodiverse population, leveraging a largely untapped resource. To promote a potential competitive advantage, and address the needs of a neurodiverse workforce, certain firms are adopting biopsychosocial interventions in the workplace, including integration of behavioural education, redesigning hiring, resource training for managers, and environmental adaptations.

1d. Neurodiversity and Inclusivity in the Workplace: Biopsychosocial Interventions for Promoting Competitive Advantage

...continued

Such firms have confirmed that neurodiversity is a competitive advantage. However, autistic workers in particular are often leveraged in technical positions where stereotypes continue to pigeonhole them as quantitative or technologically talented. Calls to incorporate neurodiverse support have failed to muster the same support outside of the technology sector. Considering many of the traits that manifest among neurodivergent employees, such as creativity, imagination, and innovation, are qualities sought out in every industry, the unilateral approach to Neurodiversity (focused on tech programs) needs to give way to broader implementation of programs to bolster their talents and unique thinking abilities.



1e. Eliminating (Dis)advantage Caused by Role-Irrelevant Factors

Cameron, C. and Austin, R (2023)

Summary

This research explores how organisations can mitigate or eliminate disadvantages that are experienced by marginalized groups in the workplace due to role-irrelevant factors. The research uses interview and observational data from 18 organisations with formal neurodiverse talent integration initiatives to investigate the differences between common HR practices and those developed specifically for neurodiversity inclusion initiatives in the four core areas of HRM (recruitment/selection, training/development, performance appraisal, and pay). They found that high employee engagement and increased organisational motivation are antecedents to create a neurodiversity-inclusive environment, and led organisations to develop processes that formalised certain previously informal processes and made subjective processes more objective in the core areas of HRM. These findings have implications for diversity management more broadly and suggest directions for future research.



[Click to see Report](#)



If. Neuro-Inclusive Job Design in a Smart Work Context: Demands-Control-Support Perspective

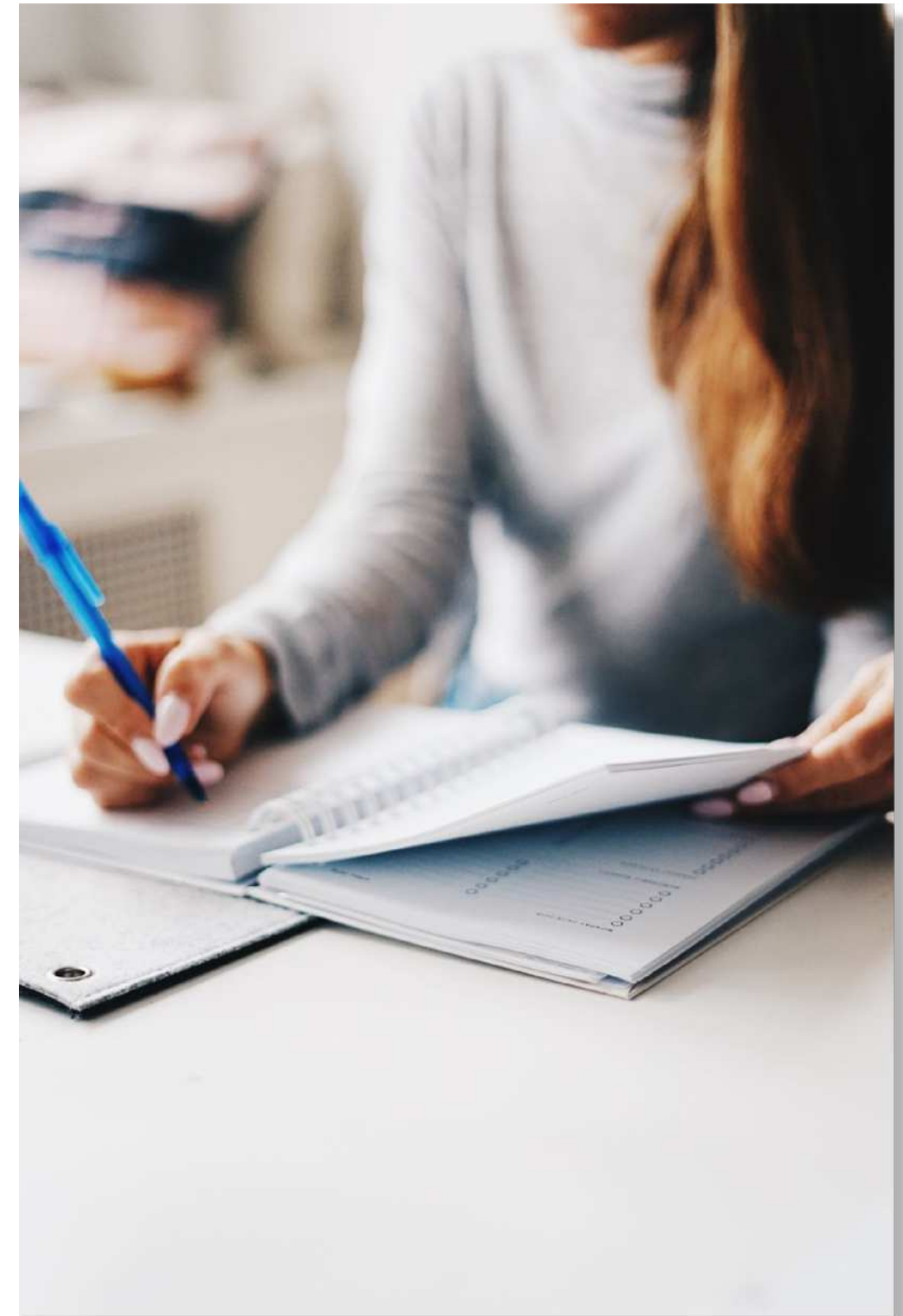
Szulc, J. and Tomczak, M (2023)

[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

This research draws on the demands-control-support model of job demands to explore how a neuro-inclusive job design can be created in the context of smart work (fully flexible work arrangement where employees can work outside their office). They found that each individual is different. Not only will neurodivergent employees have unique perceptions of what constitutes demands and support but they will also have specific preferences in terms of exerting control over their working life. The findings emphasize the need to move away from universal HR as a route to positive employee outcomes in order to be able to facilitate a more accurate reflection of organisational reality for disadvantaged members of society.



1g. Erratic Bosses or Inspiring Leaders? Entrepreneurs' ADHD-Like Symptoms and Employee Satisfaction

Peick, S. (2023)

[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

Drawing on Coping-Dueling-Fit theory, this research develops a model to derive the influence of entrepreneurs' ADHD-like symptoms on employee satisfaction. Using a mixed-data approach combining survey data from entrepreneurs in Germany and corresponding secondary data from an employer review platform, the research found that inattention is positively and hyperactivity/impulsivity is negatively related to employee satisfaction.

Moreover, the research found that constructive conflict in teams weakens the negative relationship between ADHD hyperactivity/impulsivity symptoms and employee satisfaction and reverses the relationship from negative to positive. The research proposes a more strength-based approach and constructive conflict in teams as an effective means to channel entrepreneurs' neurodiverse minds for venture success.

1h. Breaking Down Barriers: Improving the Workplace Experience for Neurodivergent Canadians

Hutchinson, J (2023)

[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

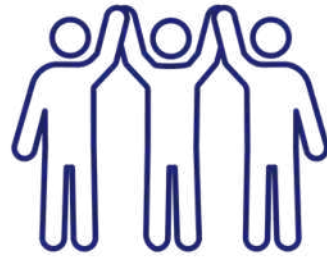
This research analyses the findings of 40 interviews with neurodivergent workers and employers of neurodivergent workers to better understand the experiences of neurodivergent individuals in the workplace and how employers can better support them. They found that:

- Neurodivergent workers face many barriers to employment and career progression. Chief among these barriers is a lack of awareness and understanding about neurodiversity, as well as associated stigma and bias;
- Other common barriers include facing difficulties obtaining required accommodations, receiving unclear or ambiguous communication from managers and co-workers, having to mask behaviours to meet social norms, and feeling uncomfortable disclosing or unable to disclose their neurodiversity status.
- To help reduce these barriers and create workplaces where neurodivergent workers thrive, employers can implement companywide awareness training on neurodiversity, alternative hiring processes, improved accommodation processes, a people-first management style, and a sense of community for neurodivergent workers;

1h. Breaking Down Barriers: Improving the Workplace Experience for Neurodivergent Canadians

...continued

■ Employers who have already implemented neurodiversity inclusion initiatives cite:



Improved company culture & morale



Better managers



More diverse perspectives



Increased retention



More diverse talents & skills

■ Putting in place supports for neurodiversity in the workplace can be easy, inexpensive, and beneficial for all employees, not just those who are neurodivergent.

Ti. The experiences of autistic doctors: a cross-sectional study

Shaw, S., Fossi, A., Carravallah, L., Rabenstein, K., Ross, W., and Doherty, K (2023)



[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

This cross-sectional research explored the experiences of autistic doctors. Autistic doctors reported many challenges in the workplace. This may have contributed to a culture of nondisclosure. Mental health was poor with high rates of suicidal ideation, self-harm, and prior suicide attempts. Despite inhospitable environments, most were persevering and working successfully. Viewing autism as a disorder (rather than difference) was associated with prior suicide attempts and a preference for person-first language. A neurodiversity-affirmative approach to autism may lead to a more positive self-identity and improved mental health. Furthermore, providing adequate supports and improving awareness of autistic medical professionals may promote inclusion in the medical workforce.

1j. Exploring the experience of neurodivergent engineers in the workplace: Re-crafting engineering?

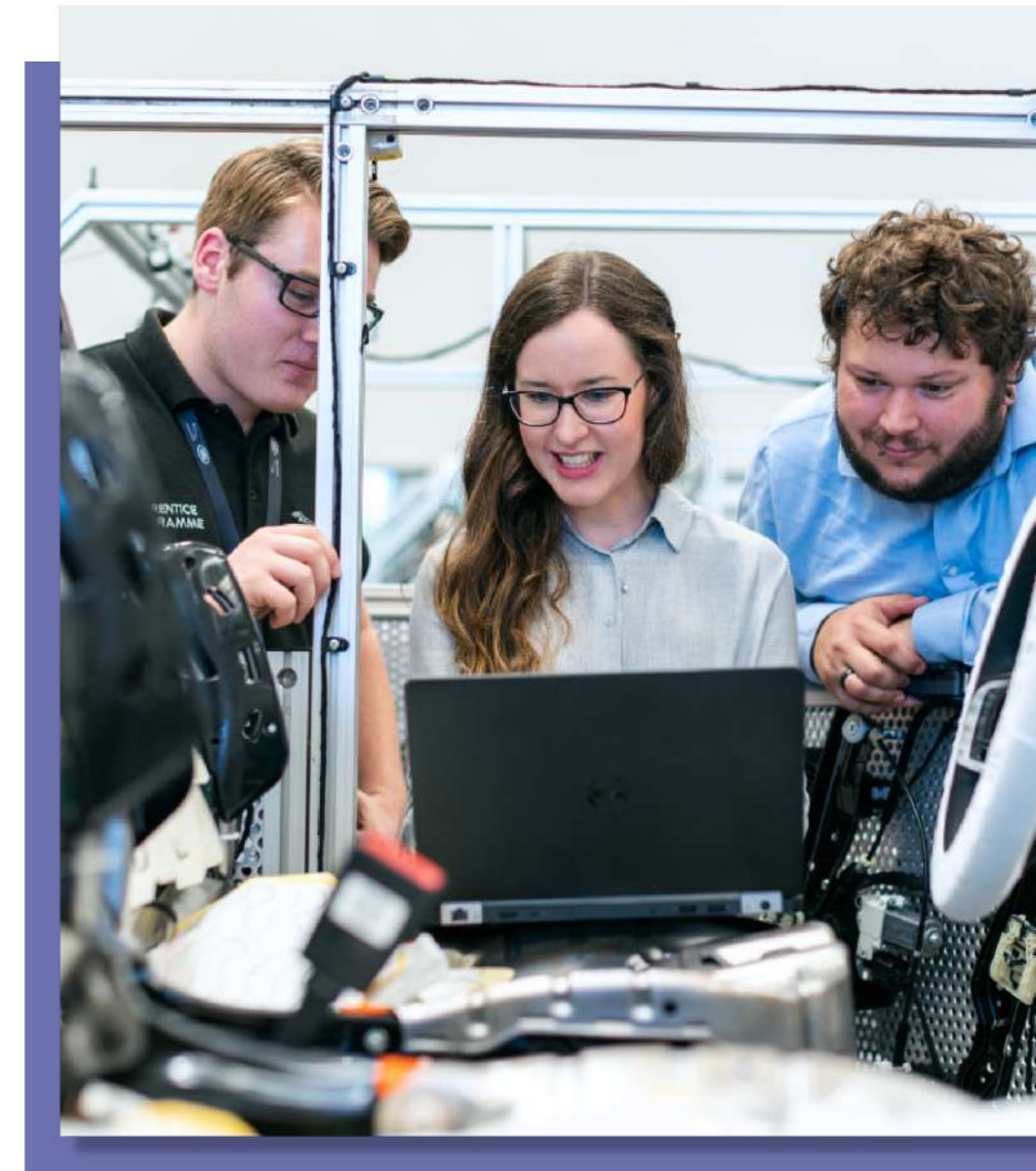
Ripley, W (2003)

[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

This research explored the use of job crafting amongst neurodivergent engineers. It found that engineers use job crafting mostly reactively (e.g., because of pressure to behave as 'engineers' and work following a specific pattern) but also proactively (e.g., shape their careers/roles according to their strengths, use some strategies in order to improve their performance), depending on how supportive their organisational context was. However, most of them, and especially those in larger organisations, appeared to be experiencing constraints not only due to the organisational context (e.g., negative stereotyping, lack of support from HR and especially their line managers) but also professional standards (e.g., they struggled to 'fit the box' of being a chartered engineer). In some cases, line managers ruled out progression opportunities based on the stereotypical assumption that neurodiverse individuals lack the social skills needed to manage a team. The forms of job crafting that are emerging so far are: approach crafting (e.g., adding tasks they enjoyed doing more of, establishing different ways of managing their teams), avoidance crafting (e.g., avoiding networking or socialising, avoiding for going for certain promotions) but also crafting in other domains (e.g., adjusting their working hours when working remotely, changing their physical environment, etc.).



1k. Autism research is ‘all about the blokes and the kids’: Autistic women breaking the silence on menopause

Moseley, R., Druce, T., and and Turner-Cobb, J (2021 – but just came to our attention and wanted to include as it is an interesting topic!)

[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

The research explored autistic women’s awareness and perception of the menopause; menopausal experiences and their impact across each individual’s life; ways that menopause with autism might differ from a non-autistic menopause; and what optimal support might look like. The research found that menopausal experiences varied greatly and some participants experienced marked deterioration in daily function and coping skills, mental health, and social engagement. Menopausal awareness was often low, so too was confidence in help from health care professionals. These findings implicate the potential for menopause to severely compromise health and well-being of autistic people, including risk of suicide, the potential for autism to be identified at the time of the menopause, and challenges accessing appropriate support.

11. Understanding the Long-Term Impact that Imprisonment in Prisons has on Adults Diagnosed with a Specific Cognitive Neurodiversity

Banfield, T (2022)

Click to see Report



Summary

The research aimed to evaluate the Support Change Project, within HMP Dartmoor to develop and influence future policy and change. Autistic offenders engaged in group and one-to-one interventions. The support-focused sessions contained high levels of differentiation. The interventions had a focus on resilience, coping and wellbeing. Offenders were placed into intervention groups with similar support needs and strengths and the teaching material was adapted accordingly. The Research Group improved in resilience, coping and wellbeing whereas the Control Group remained the same. Attitudes towards reoffending improved in the Research Group.



1m. Using eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) with autistic individuals: A qualitative interview study with EMDR therapists

Fisher, N., Patel, H., van Diest, C. and Spain, D (2022)

[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

This research explored the effectiveness of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) psychological therapy to support autistic individuals with co-occurring mental health conditions. It found that EMDR therapists may need to adapt their approach in order to enable autistic clients to access therapy, understanding the strengths, preferences and needs of each autistic client, and tailoring therapy accordingly. A thorough understanding of autism is therefore important for both EMDR therapists and supervisors.



In. Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Neurodiversity: Definition of Terms from Scotland's National Autism Implementation Team

Premal J. Shah, Marie Boilson, Marion Rutherford, Susan Prior, Lorna Johnston, Donald Maciver and Kirsty Forsyth



[Click to see Report](#)



Summary

Adults with neurodevelopmental disorders frequently present to, but fit uneasily into, adult mental health services. The research offers definitions of important terms related to neurodevelopmental disorders through unifying research data, medical and other viewpoints. This may improve understanding, clinical practice and development of neurodevelopmental disorder pathways within adult mental health services.

2a. Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper

(March 2023)

[Click to see Policy Document](#)



Summary

This White Paper sets out the Government's vision to help more disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work. They propose interventions to:

- Improve work incentives
- Step up employment support
- Identify and understand the barriers preventing people from joining the workforce or resulting in people leaving the workforce early.
- Improve the overall experience of the benefits system for disabled people
- Listen to and work with disabled people to reach these goals

The White Paper emphasises the need to empower and support disabled people and focus on what they can do, rather than what they can't.



2a. Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper

...continued

Some specific points of interest include:

- Updated guidance for employers on employing disabled people and people with health conditions. This includes a section on 'hidden impairments' which notes common challenges, strengths and adjustments linked to neurodifferences.
- A new online tool for employers, 'Support with employee health and disability' which is currently available in a test version.
- Reforms and improved access to Occupational Health services. This includes testing a financial incentive and support model to help SMEs and the self-employed overcome barriers to purchasing Occupational Health services.
- Piloting a new Access to Work enhanced package for people who need more support than the existing scheme can provide and a new flexible offer to enable disabled people to take up new hybrid working opportunities.
- Trials of a new health adjustments passport that is completed by Individuals with a disability or health condition to help them identify what extra support they need in the workplace and smooth the transition into employment and between roles.
- A commitment to work with Neurodiversity in Business (NiB) along with the Business Disability Forum and Disability Confident Business Leaders Group.

2b. British Dyslexia Association Response to 'Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper

DOUBT

[Click to see Policy Document](#)



Summary

Overall, the British Dyslexia Association 'very much' welcomed the report from the Department for Work & Pensions 'commitment to 'close the disability employment gap' and 'to empower and support disabled people'. **They welcomed the change of emphasis from what people can't do to what they can.**

They did, however, address concerns relating to Access to Work, specialist support, implementation of adjustment passports and flexible working.

2c. Curia Dyslexia Commission 2022 Report

(Published 2023)

[Click to see Policy Document](#)



Summary

The Dyslexia Commission was created to find implementable solutions that could be applied within the current policy framework. Curia held ten inquiry sessions which brought together experts from government, school administrators, activists, charities, former prisoners and academics to discuss the issues facing people with dyslexia.

Recommendations related to increasing the awareness of dyslexia and neurodiversity, the importance of early intervention and diagnosis and support within schools. Of particular interest are recommendations on dyslexia in the workplace:

- Normalise neurodiversity conversations in the workplace
- Fund assistance for workers with dyslexia to help them work at their full potential
- Take steps to encourage company dyslexia policies, e.g. requiring organisations to be transparent about their disability policy, including neurodiverse conditions.

2d. Neurodiversity Glossary

Inclusive Employers (2023)

[Click here for Glossary](#)



This glossary produced by Inclusive Employers provides definitions of a wide range of terms associated with neurodiversity.

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3a. Industry Updates: Articles

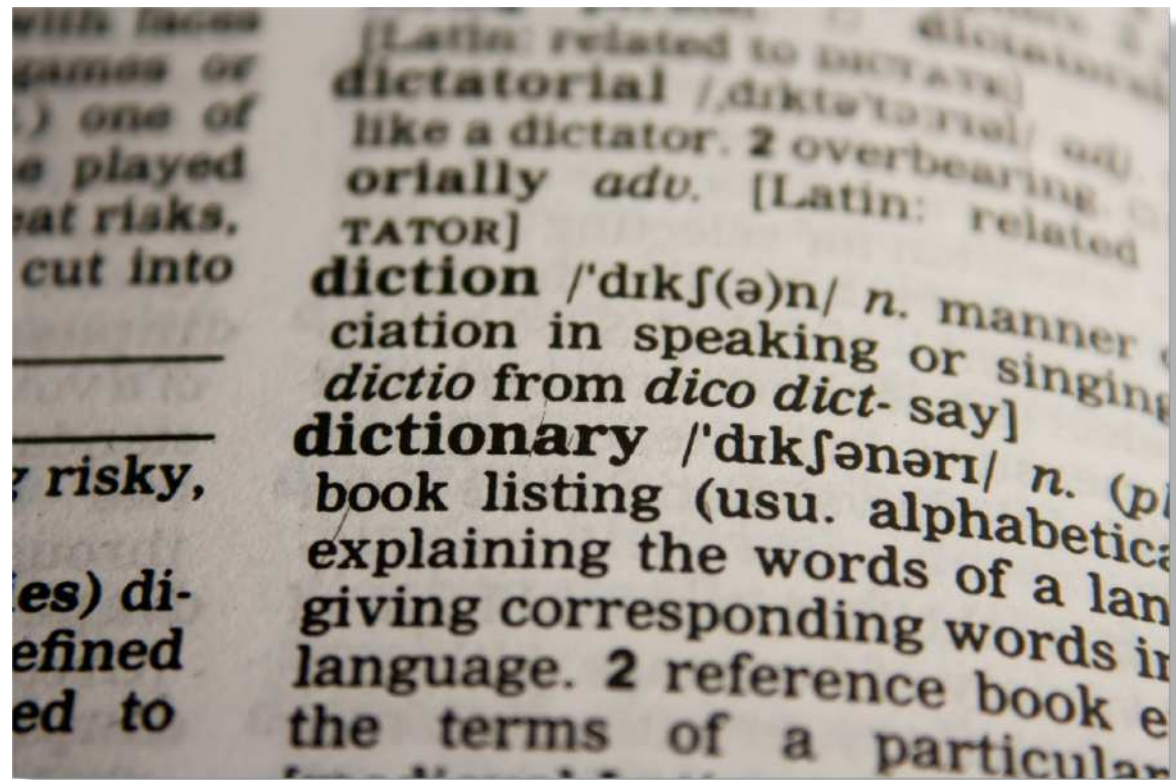
ADHD and Mental Health Challenges
in Women & Girls

Click to see article



Why it is time to modernise our views of ADHD
and other ND traits

Click to see article



Different words we use can mean we
can end up in different places!

Click to see article



4a. Additional Resources

NEURODIVERSITY
IN BUSINESS



THE NEURODIVERSITY CHARITY

Neurodiversity in Business have launched a resource hub to provide quick access to reliable, comprehensive ND resources.

Visit Resource Hub



Remember Lexxic has neurodiversity resources on the website along with new blogs every month and a new Employer Guide to help organisations on their first steps to neuro-inclusion:



Lexxic's Resource Hub



There are also loads of resources available on the Neurodiversity Celebration Week website!



NCW's Resource Hub



Keeping in touch!

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