

Neurodiversity Training UK



Introduction to Neurodiversity in the Workplace



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Introduction

We live and work in a rapidly changing, technology driven 24/7 global economy with colleagues in different time zones, and new markets and customers in a variety of cultures, ever-changing trends and AI data driven insights.

This useful guide will help you optimise your workforce recruitment, retention, on boarding and training and enable them to better understand your customers. We are moving beyond workplace adjustments to 'enabling' everyone to benefit from neuro-inclusion, and diversity. Business operations, innovation, marketing, communications and customer services reflect your brand values, build social capital and improve profitability.

As a successful 21st Century employer, you can benefit from recruiting a workforce that identifies what thinking skills are optimised by positioning them in the right roles and in synergistic teams and functions. Research has proven that diverse workforces are not only more productive and profitable, but also associated with improved employee wellbeing, and motivation.

Colin Foley
Dr Tony Lloyd



In this document, we will:

01. Explain what we mean by 'neurodiversity' and the invisible 20% of your current workforce who, because they 'think differently', are adding value to your organisation in ways you may not even realise.



02. Explore how we can harness the power of a diverse workforce to power innovation, problem solving and profitability.



03. Delve into how we can transform our recruitment, retention of our talented employees and how we development our workforce to grow our business.



04. Explore how to better collaborate and communicate effectively with each other, with our manufacturers, with our distributors and customers.



05. Identify and implement strategies to enable our business to benefit from a neurodiverse workforce.



06. Inform your HR function how to optimise recruitment and performance.





Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Overview	2
Table of Contents	3
What is Neurodiversity?	4
Current Context	5 - 6
The Emerging Workforce	7
Why neurodivergence is good for business	8 - 9
Neuroinclusion Checklist.	10 - 11
Environments	12
Communication	13
References and Resources	14 - 16
Human Resource Management	17
Glossary	18 - 20
Training Menu	21 - 22
Meet the Team	23





What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity describes the naturally occurring diversity of human intelligences and neuro-cognitive potential. The World Health Organisation prevalence data states that:

1 in
10

of the global population are Dyslexic

1 in
10

1 in 20 of Humankind are ADHD

1 in
10

1 in 10 Dyscalculia

1 in
10

1 in 20 Dyspraxia

1 in
10

1 in 67 Autistic

This means that at least 1 in 5 human beings 'Think Differently'. If 20% of the global population think and learn differently, this suggests that there must be an evolutionary purpose why these different neuro-types are part of the human genome.

Each of these 'neuro-types' are a very broad spectrum of differences in the way we think, the way we learn and how we experience and interact with our world.



Perhaps we also all have a unique mind because we all have something to learn from one another and each of us experiences the world through both our genetic inheritance and the lens through which we experience our lives. The world would be a very boring place if we all think exactly the same!





DID YOU KNOW...

Did you know that some neurotypes appear to thrive in some professions that reflect the way their minds function best? It seems we choose careers and lifestyles that enable us benefit from our neurological strengths and interests, For example, it is now estimated that...



29%
OF
ENTREPRENEURS
ARE
ADHD

40%
OF
MILLIONAIRES
ARE
DYSLEXIC

50% OF THE
LEGAL
PROFESSION
AND
ENGINEERING
PROFESSION
ARE AUTISTIC

55% OF
THE
CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRY
IDENTIFY
AS DYSLEXIC
OR ADHD

70% OF
THE
ADVERTISING,
MARKETING
SALES
PROFESSIONALS
ARE
DYSLEXIC OR
ADHD





Being different is the universal design! There must be an evolutionary reason why 1 in 5 of humankind display these naturally occurring adaptive neurotypes.

Each is a very broad spectrum of ability and potential and many overlap.

Neurodivergent people have become increasingly visible in the 21st century. They are no longer perceived as disabled or disordered – but rather as individuals who 'Think Differently' and who choose careers and lifestyles that play to their strengths.



We know that a genius IQ is common in these neurotypes.

Einstein was thought to be Autistic; Leonardo da Vinci was both dyslexic and ADHD, Mozart was considered to be autistic, Walt Disney was dyslexic, Daniel Radcliffe, the actor who played Harry Potter, speaks openly about his Dyspraxia, and the famous children's author Hans Christian Anderson was considered to have Dyscalculia. Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, is also Dyslexic.

The reality is that our history is full of examples of the great innovators, inventors and creatives who have had a profound influence on our culture and economies.



The emerging workforce.

51%

of young people under the age of 25 identify as 'neurodivergent'.

A survey taken in 2023 showed us that 53% of young people under the age of 25, identified as 'neurodiverse'.

Generation Z employees, who make up over 30% of the UK workforce, bring new expectations, perspectives, and challenges.

This generation, born between 1995 and 2012, are passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion. They want workplaces to not only embrace these values but also to take actionable steps toward supporting them.

Businesses that recognise and adapt to their values and employee needs, will be better positioned to attract and retain this new talent.





Why neurodivergence is good for business....



Because neurodivergent people think differently to the majority neuro-typical people, they can be valuable to a business as they may approach situations differently. Their capacity for thinking in an unorthodox and unusual ways, thinking creatively, solving complex problems, identifying patterns and trends, paying attention to detail can add considerable value.

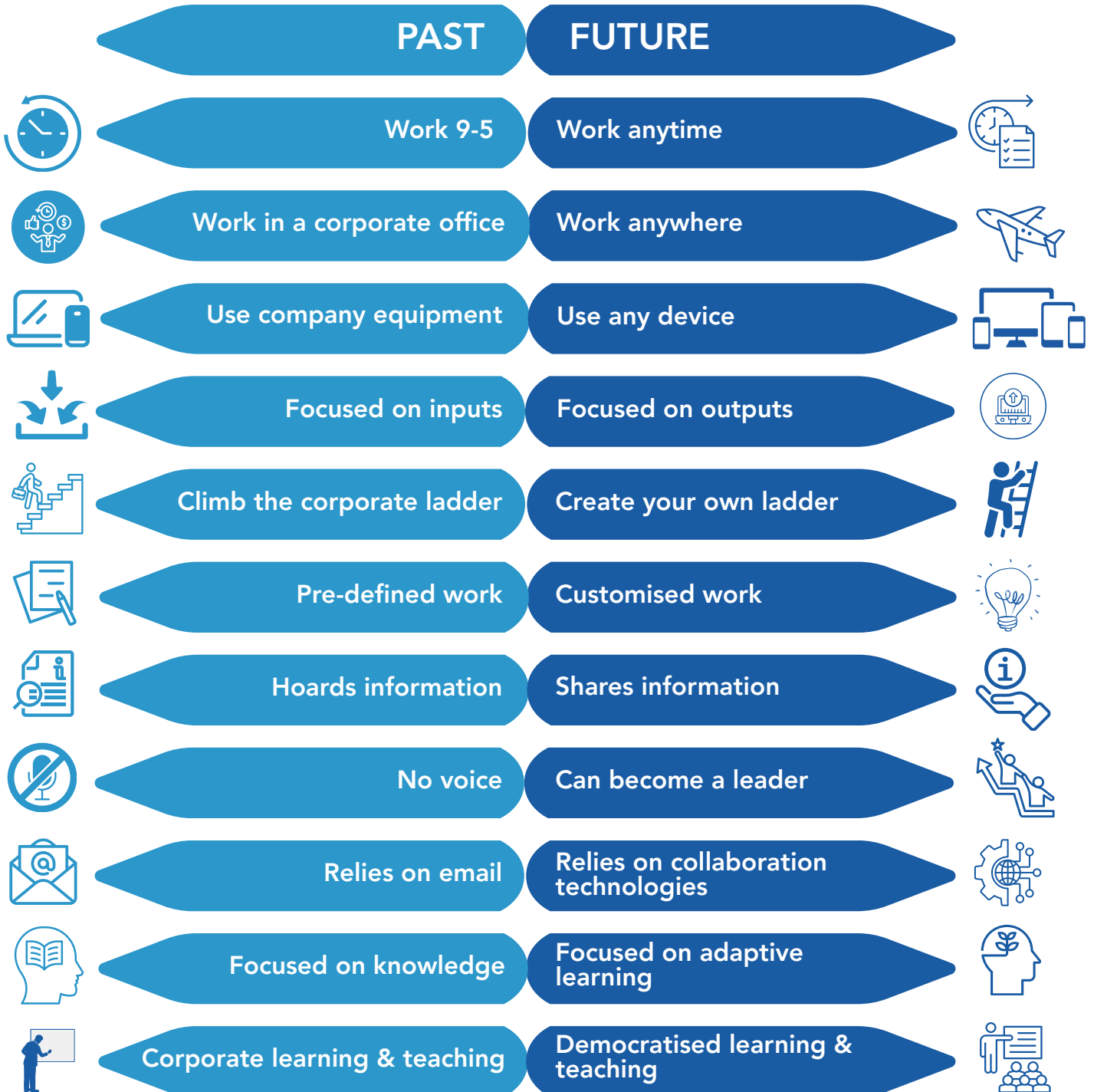
When we all think the same way, nothing ever changes. Marketing and advertising agencies now recognise that their use of colours, type fonts and images need to reach every potential customer – whatever their cognitive style of information processing.

The skills we require in the modern workforce have changed radically in the 50 years since we started to use technology.

A new understanding about how we enable talent and potential in our current and future workforce will empower you to prosper where other less dynamic and forward-thinking employers will fail.



The Evolution of The Employee





Checklist:

Some tips and quick wins for Company Directors, Team Leaders and HR Leaders



Accessible inclusive workplaces: Is the workplace environment Neurodiversity friendly?



Provide basic awareness training for your workforce.



Be clear about your company and brand values and how this is reflected in how your workforce are supported and enabled and how this also benefits customers.



Be proud of the 'company culture' – welcoming, friendly, supportive, investing in employee development, community relationships and civic responsibility.



Make clear that disclosing Neurodiversity is not a barrier to employment. Don't rely on disclosure because many people with either Dyslexia, Autism, ADHD, Dyscalculia or Dyspraxia do not even know they are neurodivergent.



Celebrate neurodiversity in the workplace and showcase how thinking differently has improved performance.



Establish flexibility of interview protocols, such as employing work-relevant tasks and activities, use of videocalls and group tasks, metrics and providing the interview questions in advance.





Checklist:

Some tips and quick wins for Company Directors, Team Leaders and HR Leaders



Ask the applicant how the interview process could enable them to showcase their ability and potential.



Allow flexibility and creative engagement with induction and onboarding protocols.



What training needs have been identified by the applicant? Agree what training could be offered within agreed time frames as part of the onboarding process and what technology they could benefit from. ('Speech to text' software, Artificial Intelligence software, standing desks, use of 'Otter', Zoom Notetaker or other note taking software that summarises the content and agreements made in meetings).



Reasonable adjustments are explained on the understanding that they enable the employee to fulfil the requirements of their role.



Reasonable adjustments are meant to be 'reasonable'. What is reasonable for a large multinational business will be quite different to what is considered in law to be reasonable for a small start up company operating out of a small one room office.



Ensure that the employee's supervisor / line manager understands how to best enable the employee in the context of their Neurodiversity.



If an employee has received a neurodivergent diagnosis as an adult, be open to exploring together how your employee can live successfully with their difference if requested.

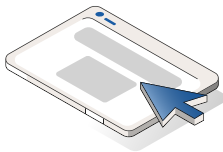




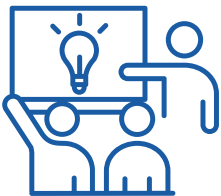
Consider the Environment.



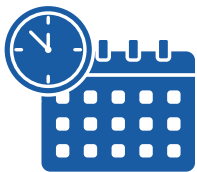
Are there spaces in your premises or in off-site locations that are conducive to the employee being able to complete their work responsibilities? For example, large open plan offices may be distracting for some people. Noise, temperature and lighting can all impact on performance and employee wellbeing.



A healthy workforce can be supported through your occupational health protocols. For example, make information available about healthy lifestyles, negotiate a company discount with local gyms or sports and leisure facilities.



Explore how meetings could be energised by standing instead of sitting. Use of wall charts, whiteboards, screens, video space conference facilities and clear objectives shared in advance and reporting offered in annotated video rather than pages of written documents.






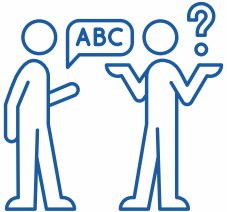


Flexi-time can reduce unplanned absence and parent training opportunities will improve their skills and resilience in managing the needs of their children and demands of work. Homeworking can sometimes benefit and save costs.



Communications Policy and Practice

How can communications be adaptable, flexible and multi-modal?

		
<p>Use more visual aids to make reporting accessible and digestible - infographics and charts, for example.</p>	<p>Allow time to read or produce documents and utilise 'alt text' on images or 'voice to text' software to record minutes of meetings.</p>	<p>Ask employees to agree what their preferred modalities of communication are, offering flexibility and mediums for sharing information across the organisation</p>
		
<p>IT Support strategies such as Office 365 applications to auto spell and grammar check documents and emails. Text to voice software to read out documents, electronic planners, reminders and task lists that enable an employee to develop their executive functioning skills.</p>	<p>Keep language clear and concise in all communications and always conclude with the questions: What actions need to be taken? By whom? When? Shared with who?</p>	<p>If employees display a more literal understanding of language, ensure that all staff consider their use of metaphor, idiom, jargon and acronyms.</p>



10 Key Tips to build truly neuro-inclusive workplaces - starting now!

1

Shift to a needs-led model that focusses on functional needs, not just a formal 'diagnosis'. This opens the door to timely support and reduces exclusion caused by gatekeeping. Dyslexia and Dyscalculia are not medical assessments, and a psychologist or specialist assessor may be able to do this.

2

Mandate inclusive practices: neuroinclusive recruitment, retention, and progression must be a must do- not simply a nice to do!

3

Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Managers and team leaders need to have some idea of what this entails and may need some additional training. If your business uses an external Human Resource Management agency, ensure they are fully aware of what is needed with regard to neuro-inclusion.

4

Ensure your business offers neuro-inclusive professional development and career progression pathways.

Some larger companies offer scalable internship and supported employment programmes including physical disabilities such as wheelchair users or hearing and sight impaired individuals. Some businesses also offer opportunities for young adults who are care-experienced and just starting their careers after being fostered or adopted as a child.

5

Be clear about what 'reasonable adjustments' are in your business. Small start-up business for example, may have very limited space, resources or flexibility with working hours. Some businesses – even small businesses work in a 24 hour seven day a week marketplace. Some businesses may require flexible human resourcing that works across multiple time zones in different countries, so the roles you have may require very specific working practices necessary for your business. HR teams and managers can move from confusion to confident implementation. Knowing that most adjustments are no-cost/low cost.





10 Key Tips to build truly neuro-inclusive workplaces - starting now!

6

Inclusion by design rather than as an afterthought. For example sensory-friendly environmental factors such as lighting, noise and temperature. Solutions are available such as 'pods', – small semi portable soundproofed pods for on-line meetings or simply as a quiet place to limit distractions. If your business optimises home working to save the cost of large premises, explore what equipment and technology would an employee need to do their job?

7

Champion neuroinclusive leadership training and ensure that line managers and HR leaders gain more than basic awareness and skills, so they can become confident to lead inclusively.

8

Prioritise intersectional data collection. What gets measured gets managed. Explain why you want to know this information and why it is relevant to your company culture, values and practice.

9

Support mental health in employment. A psychologically healthy workforce is a more productive and profitable workforce. Some businesses support the development of employee resource groups to foster peer support.





10 Key Tips to build truly neuro-inclusive workplaces - starting now!

Be clear about your recruitment protocols so you don't make expensive mistakes. What do you need? If you are recruiting for a customer facing role requiring outstanding interpersonal and communication skills, ask for a face to camera CV to accompany a written CV. Interviews need to be designed to allow you and the applicant to demonstrate there is a good fit between the interviewee and the business.

10

Consider offering open days for recruitment, don't limit your business to a structured one hour interview with standard scoring matrix – that is not the best way for the business or the applicant to decide if this is a good match. Finally make sure that your on boarding process is not a one size fits all tick box exercise and that probationary periods offer regular review, appraisal and an opportunity to ensure that the candidate becomes an asset to your business.



Neuro-inclusion isn't a 'nice to have' - it's a business imperative if we believe in attracting the talents that we need.



Moving forward from the intention of creating inclusive culture to actual implementation requires clarity and vision.

Useful tips for Human Resource Management

Recruitment, Performance and Retention.

01. Optimise recruitment by asking if there are any specific challenges or support needs that need to be addressed.



02. Workplace language - provide a glossary if needed.



03. Explain How is performance reviewed and what is the preferred communication style for this?



04. Explain in detail the job role and expectations.



05. Ask colleagues in other locations what has helped in other settings/workplaces?



06. Explore and explain the unwritten "rules" of the workplace, for example, dress code or expectations around breaks and lunch.





Glossary

Neurotype – An individual’s cognitive style – how their brain is structured and functions across memory, communication, information processing, perception, response to environmental stimuli.

Neuronormative – The ‘conventional’ view and value premised on cultural and social expectations, historic bias, outdated research and meta-analyses, systems and concepts of intelligence designed to reward or esteem certain abilities or behaviours and suppress other presentations of human potential based on:

- A preference for a predictable, controllable, consistent, moderate expression of cognition & emotion
- Ability to sustain concentration, make eye contact and hierarchical social dynamics & social constructs
- Meeting arbitrary standardisation in developmental milestones – (especially in literacy)

Neurodivergent - Someone whose brain processes, learns, and/or behaves differently from what is considered “typical”.

Some people prefer to identify as ‘Neurodiverse’ because the root of the word ‘Neurodivergent’ implies ‘deviating from the norm’ when diversity of mind is ‘the evolutionary norm’.

We must therefore respect the right of the individual to self-identify using language they embrace and recognise that language and terminology evolves in the same way we no longer use terms such as ‘invalid’ or ‘handicapped’.

‘ND’ is an abbreviated acronym used by many and is acceptable to the community who differ in their preference between neurodivergent and neurodiverse.





Glossary

Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, and Dyscalculia - These are acceptable terms to use and describe a range of differences in information processing and neurological functioning. They do not equate with low IQ.

ADHD - An umbrella term for a range of differences in neurological information processing and functioning. It is a misleading acronym for 'Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder'. Not all people with ADHD have difficulty with each of these characteristics and many see them as an asset in some 'contexts'. For example, hyperactivity equates to energy and drive, which can be an asset. Inattention can be interpreted as distractibility because those with ADHD can concentrate but can be distracted by noise and activity in their immediate environment. Impulsivity is also linked to creative lateral and innovative thinking.

Learning differences is the term increasingly used instead of 'learning difficulties'. It focusses on the strengths rather than the 'difficulties of different neuro-types'.

Neurodevelopmental conditions – The medical umbrella term to describe all of these 'naturally occurring' differences in human neuro-cognitive capabilities that find genetic expression in what we name as dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD, autism, dyspraxia (also known as 'developmental coordination disorder' in a medical context)

Autistic / Autism / ASC – Autism Spectrum Condition - This is a safe umbrella term to cover a very wide range of neurological functioning differences that impact social and communication skills, information processing and sensory information. Most people identify as Autistic rather than 'I have autism'.





Glossary

Diagnosis - This does not make Neurodiversity exist or not. The majority of people are never screened in our education system and many struggle unnecessarily in 'some' curriculum subjects as a result. Many adults with 'ND' minds do not even know they are 'ND'. A formal diagnosis by a medical professional is an official recognition of Neurodiversity, not causal. Obtaining a medical diagnosis relating to Neurodiversity

through public or private health services can be complicated, expensive, and may take many years.

Language - Person-first or identity-first language? 'Person with autism' vs. 'Autistic person'. A person with ADHD does not identify as 'ADHD-ic' or 'I am ADHD'. Some use the term 'Add-er'. Some people prefer one over the other depending on whether they feel their Neurodiversity is an integral part of their person or whether it is secondary to their identity.

Disability - "It is/isn't a disability"? – Legally, autism, dyslexia, ADHD, dyscalculia and dyspraxia (also known as Developmental coordination disorder) are protected characteristics and therefore, legally, adjustments have to be considered. Diversity of mind is a difference in how the brain interprets and processes information and, therefore, a different perspective of our environment.



Transforming the Workforce

Training for Businesses

The trainers at Neurodiversity Training UK can offer training opportunities in the areas listed on the following page or can adapt the content to meet your specific needs.

Training sessions can be in person, virtual or in recorded formats.

Course organisers will be offered a pre-session meeting in order for our trainers to create a bespoke experience tailored to their specific workplace and current needs.

All course participants will be offered further reference materials after course completion.

All courses are offered in full day, half day or shorter sessions, for example, "lunch and learn" formats of either 60 or 90 minutes



Dr Tony Lloyd



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<https://neurodiversitytraining.uk>

Training for Businesses

- Understanding and Supporting specific neurodivergent conditions in the workplace, practical strategies to support ADHD, AuDHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, Dyspraxia/ DCD and Tourette's syndrome.
- Supporting employee mental health and wellbeing, including Anxiety and OCD.
- Introduction to Neurodiversity in the workplace. The business case for a neuroinclusive workplace.
- Enabling neurodiverse minds in the workplace.
- Supporting employees who are parents and carers of neurodivergent children and young people.
- Introduction to the Equality Act 2010 and Reasonable Adjustments.
- Understanding and Supporting your neurodivergent clients/ customers.

Employees



Lunch and Learn: six weekly, 1-hour webinars to inspire employees to make healthy lifestyle changes through self-care, stress management, improved sleep & relationships.



Career Parents: six weekly, 1-hour webinars offering practical strategies for parents struggling to balance family life and work commitments.



Establishing an effective collaborative **Neurodiversity Employee Resource Group (ERG)** to encourage innovation

Additional Services

- Workplace place assessments for neurodivergent & disabled employees.
- Workplace Neurodiversity Audits to optimise neuro-inclusive recruitment, human resource management, communications, customer service and marketing.



Meet the Team



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CEO of Neurodiversity Training UK,
Former Training Director of the ADHD
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Dr Tony Lloyd

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Management Consultant

