

Office-based workers

WORKPLACE CHECKLIST

Accessibility audit.

This handy resource can help you complete an environmental audit of your workplace to improve accessibility.



If you work on-site, at home or in multiple locations, please use our accompanying **Mobile and remote workers accessibility audit checklist.**

Neuro-inclusion at work

Effective neuro-inclusion is about adapting our everyday practices and environment to suit different people, and the physical workplace is a vital part of that.

The distractions in the workplace can create barriers and potentially feel more overwhelming for staff who experience neurodifferences. Minimising these environmental triggers can create a better, all-round working experience, and not just for staff who may experience sensory hypersensitivity.

This is your opportunity to think about your wider workplace.

- How do you want your workplace to look and feel?
- How comfortable do staff feel working there?
- And what small changes can you make to build a more thriving workplace?

This checklist can be completed by employees, with or without their manager, to ensure the workplace meets their needs or by HR or ED&I teams to ensure workplaces are designed with neurodiversity in mind.



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Hopefully this checklist will give you some clear ideas on how people might navigate and adapt their workplace.

While this audit is aimed at neuro-inclusion, it's always important to consider wider accessibility within your workplace and ensure your working environment promotes the safety and wellbeing of all employees.

* N/A = Not applicable

Yes

No

N/A

Is there an easy way to control and dim lights?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Are temperature controls easily accessible and adjustable?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Do you have ways to reduce background noise in your workplace?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Do you notice strong smells or harsh cleaning chemicals?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Can you avoid busier periods in your workplace or crowded corridors at certain times?



details

* N/A = Not applicable

Yes

No

N/A

Do you have access to a separate or quiet space as a comfortable retreat?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Does your workplace feel cluttered or busy?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Is there clear signage within your workplace?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Do you have a dedicated workspace or desk?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Do you have a designated person to talk to about adapting or navigating your workplace?



details

Details

Is there an easy way to control and dim lights?

Light levels and the type of lighting can create an unpleasant sensory environment, especially fluorescent lights. Are there alternatives you could consider, or could you have lower-level lighting spaces within your workplace?

Natural light is good but consider if this might become too bright at certain times or the day.

For staff who experience neurodifferences, it can be helpful to ensure they can either adjust overhead light levels themselves or know who they can easily speak to change the lighting for them. Table lamps can also be provided to offer more adjustable lighting for individuals.

Are temperature controls easily accessible and adjustable?

While you may not want staff to be constantly changing the temperature, ensuring your work environment is not overly hot or cold will reduce discomfort. Even a few degrees could make your workplace more comfortable for staff with sensory sensitivity.

Again, it's important that staff feel they can easily adjust these settings to make them feel comfortable and reduce anxiety about asking for these flexibilities.

Do you have ways to reduce background noise in your workplace?

Workplaces are often noisy. There can be music playing, equipment running, announcement speakers or people talking – all manner of sounds.

Can music be turned down or a workstation position away from louder noises or machines? If there are areas where people tend to gather and chat, proximity to these should be considered as well. If the employee wishes, could they have a separate or more secluded workspace?

Wider considerations like alternatives to noisy hand dryers in bathrooms and echoing corridors can also be considered.

Where considerations cannot be made or an employee prefers, can you provide noise reduction headphones or earplugs?

Do you notice strong smells or harsh cleaning chemical?

Smell might not be a sense we think about in the workplace all that much. However, it can be one of the most overpowering senses. Consider the cleaning chemicals that are used and where these might be stored in proximity to workers. It can be the same with kitchen facilities, if people are working nearby. Even the strong smell of someone's perfume, aftershave or deodorant can be noticeable and distracting to some of us.

If you can find ways to limit smells drifting from room to room, this might also be preferable.

If your workplace is getting a refit or being redecorated, make sure there are alternative working arrangements for staff who require it – there are acute smells involved in any construction work.

Are there busier periods in your workplace or crowded corridors at certain times?

Thinking about how people move around the workplace, and at what times, can be important for creating neuro-inclusive spaces.

For example, does everyone take lunch at the same time or is everyone expected to arrive at and leave work at the same time?

Adapting working hours and separate lunch breaks, if desired, can be an easy way to prevent some employees feeling crowded or overwhelmed. More modern practices like hybrid or remote working also have benefits here to help adapt ways of working to suit different individuals.

Can you adjust your hours to avoid certain times and ensure equal access to the workplace? Is there internal policy around flexible working arrangements, so employees and managers have access to appropriate guidance. This policy can consider wider aspects of ED&I, not just neurodiversity.

Do you have access to a separate or quiet space as a comfortable retreat?

Sometimes, we just need to take a break and to shut the world out for a bit. Having a low sensory room or quiet spot will ensure that people have a place to go if they start to feel overwhelmed. It should be secluded from people's view and away from other rest areas that might be more regularly used.

Staff with neurological differences, and perhaps more noticeably for autistic adults, may need to take a break to help self-regulate. Doing this in a low sensory environment can help to minimise stressors and distractions. A space like this provides a more accessible and sustainable working environment.

Does your workplace feel cluttered or busy?

A busy environment doesn't just mean one that's full of people. Is there lots of furniture or objects lying around or causing unnecessary obstructions? Although every individual is different, it helps to be mindful of the visual impact of using more vivid and elaborate fabrics and colour schemes.

Are people regularly checking communal spaces are free of clutter and things lying around? Are people keeping their individual workspaces tidy?

These considerations can help to build a comfortable and enjoyable workplace for everyone.

It helps for furniture and work areas to be spread out as much as possible. Having multiple seating options is still desirable so that staff can move around if they need to, but this will depend on the size of your workplace. Specific adaptations may need to be made for employees on a case by case basis.

Is there clear signage within your workplace?

Having clear directions and signage within your workplace is not just a health and safety requirement, it means that people, including visiting guests, can more easily navigate your workplace.

Is the use of each room clearly written on the door? Do you use certain symbols or pictures to support this type of communication? Are these explanations and symbols literal or could they be misinterpreted?

A clearly visible map can also be useful for new starters who may need more help navigating an unfamiliar environment. Workplace mentors can also work as a guide if needed.

If you use meeting rooms or multiple locations, these should be clearly communicated ahead of time and not changed last minute where possible.

Do you have a dedicated workspace or desk?

Some employees may find that without a dedicated area for their work, they can experience heightened anxiety and discomfort at work. Although it is not always the case, some employees with neurodifferences may feel unsettled or distracted if they have to constantly move around or do not know where they will be working each day, which causes unnecessary stress.

Employers may need to take this into account when considering the functional layout of their workplace.

Do you have a designated person to talk to about adapting or navigating your workplace?

This can be one person or a group of people, like your manager, neurodiversity champions or HR team, who can support employees in the workplace.

You may know who these people are, but it's important that their roles are clearly defined within your organisation and employees know who to speak to about any physical workplace changes or concerns.
