



Mobile and remote workers

WORKPLACE CHECKLIST

Accessibility audit.

This handy resource can help you complete a workspace audit of your main working environment to improve accessibility.



If you work in an office environment, please use our accompanying **Office-based workers accessibility audit checklist**.

Neuro-inclusion at work

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

You may not work in a dedicated office space, but you may still want to consider the accessibility of your workspace.

The distractions around a work environment can create barriers and potentially feel more overwhelming for staff who experience neurodifferences. Minimising these triggers can create an all-round better 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 people feel at work?
- And what small changes can you make to build a more thriving working setup?

This checklist can be completed by employees, with or without their manager, to ensure their workspace meets their needs. Human resources (HR) or Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) teams may also want to complete the checklist to consider whether communal workspaces are designed with neurodiversity in mind.



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We recognise that everyone's workspace will look different depending on your working situation, role and industry. If any of the following criteria don't apply to you, please skip to the next point.

* N/A = Not applicable

Yes

No

N/A

Is lighting adjustable?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Is temperature adjustable?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Is your work clothing policy flexible?



details

Yes

No

N/A

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



details

* N/A = Not applicable

Yes

No

N/A

Do you notice strong smells?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Are there busier periods in your workplace's communal areas?



details

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

* N/A = Not applicable

Yes

No

N/A

Is there clear signage within your workplace?



details

Yes

No

N/A

Do you have a dedicated workspace?



details

Yes

No

N/A

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



details

Details

Is lighting adjustable?

Light levels and the type of lighting can create an unpleasant sensory environment for some, especially fluorescent lights. If the main lighting isn't adjustable, are there alternatives you could consider, such as separate lamps with different warmth settings or lower-level lighting spaces within your workspace?

For staff experiencing neurological differences, it can be helpful to advise on how they can adjust light levels themselves, if they need to request new equipment or appropriate contact details for someone who can help change the lighting.

Is temperature adjustable?

While it's not always practical or desirable for staff to have access to communal temperature controls, ensuring your work environment is not overly hot or cold is important. Even a few degrees difference could make your workplace more comfortable for staff with sensory sensitivity. Staff should feel able to ask about adjusting the temperature if it's preventing them from working effectively.

If you work in a separate space to others, are you able to make easy adjustments to the temperature? If you work outside, or in a place where external temperature can't be controlled, do you have the flexibility to wear appropriate clothing to mitigate hot or cold temperatures?

Is your work clothing policy flexible?

For some of us, the feel of certain fabrics can cause discomfort. And for some neurotypes, it might be helpful to wear clothing with straightforward fastenings, like zips rather than buttons, or Velcro rather than laces.

Does your workplace uniform policy consider such differences, and is there flexibility for staff that require alternatives? For instance, if staff are required to frequently put on and remove personal protective equipment (PPE), are there accessible versions to minimise stress from hypersensitivity?

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

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 positioned 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?

You could also think about alternatives to noisy hand dryers in bathrooms, or ways to reduce echoing in large spaces like corridors or warehouses. Alternatively, you could suggest designated quiet hours in which noise should be kept to a minimum (no music, phone calls or talking in communal areas, for example).

Even if you work from home, considering the background noises and where your workspace is in the house can make a difference. If alterations can't be made, could noise reduction headphones or earplugs be provided.

Do you notice strong smells?

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. Or the strong smell of someone's food, perfume, aftershave or deodorant can be noticeable and distracting to some of us.

Can you find ways to limit smells drifting between areas? Can staff request equipment like facemasks if strong smells are unavoidable? Are there protocols that could be put in place to limit the transfer of chemicals or other odorous substances? For example, staff working with machinery and potentially strong-smelling substances like diesel should remove protective clothing before entering other parts of the building.

Providing a separate rest area or outdoor space for rest can help if someone's sensory hypersensitivity becomes overwhelming. Ensure staff can access this area when needed throughout their work shift.

Are there busier periods in your workplace's communal areas?

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 or is everyone expected to arrive at and leave work at the same time?

Adapting working hours and separating 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.

Thinking about how people are getting to and from work can also help with travelling at quieter times.

Can you adjust your hours to avoid certain times and ensure equal access to work and certain communal areas? Is there an 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.

Some staff – perhaps more significantly 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 causing unnecessary obstructions? Although every individual is different, it also 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?

Depending on people's home setup, it may be helpful to offer alternatives or certain assistive equipment to make their workspace more adaptive and useable.

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

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 or area clearly signposted? 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 often travel to different locations, directions and information should be clearly communicated ahead of time and not changed last minute, where possible.

If you work from home, it may be useful to understand the overall structure and operations of the company to help visualise and navigate the digital workplace. However, some employees may prefer to work in their own team and have little involvement with the wider organisations, and that's ok too.

Do you have a dedicated workspace?

Some employees may find that without a dedicated area for their work, they can experience heightened anxiety and discomfort. Although it is not always the case, employees experiencing neurological differences 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.

If employees are required to move around, giving plenty of notice and information can help reduce stress. It may be useful to create a structured routine around which locations someone will be working in or reduce the number of locations where they are required to travel.

Support with getting to work can be considered through Access to Work Government support.

Hybrid working between home and other locations is becoming more popular. It may suit some, but people who experience neurodifferences might struggle with doing both. Accommodations may need to be made, even around flexible working, when considering neuro-inclusion.

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.