

Neurodiversity Policy

The Bristol Methodist District. (Charity Number 1134873)

First Issued	January 2025
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out our approach to creating a neuro-inclusive workplace and the support available to individuals with a neurodivergent condition. We recognise the benefits of a neurodiverse workforce, and the strengths and skills that neurodivergent individuals can bring to our organisation.
- 1.2 We are committed to raising awareness and understanding of neurodiversity while promoting a culture and working practices that ensure inclusivity. By adapting our practices to embrace neurodiversity, we aim to create an environment where everyone can thrive.
- 1.3 The policy accompanies our Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDO) policy and our Anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices.

3 Defining neurodiversity

- 3.1 Neurodiversity is an umbrella term used to refer to the different ways in which an individual's brain processes and learns information.
- 3.2 We are a neurodiverse organisation as we have both neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals working here.
- 3.3 Neurodivergent conditions include the following:
 - 3.3.1 Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which can cause difficulties in concentrating, focusing, hyperactivity and impulsiveness.
 - 3.3.2 Autism / Aspergers (referred to collectively as autistic spectrum condition (ASC) or autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)), which affects how people communicate and interact with the world.
 - 3.3.3 Dyscalculia, which affects the ability to process numbers and results in challenges with arithmetic and telling the time.
 - 3.3.4 Dysgraphia, which affects written expression and presents as difficulties with spelling and grammar, poor handwriting and trouble putting thoughts on paper.
 - 3.3.5 Dyslexia, which causes challenges with reading, writing and spelling.
 - 3.3.6 Dyspraxia (also known as developmental coordination disorder), affecting physical coordination.
 - 3.3.7 Tourette's syndrome, which is characterised by physical behaviours such as tics.
- 3.4 This list is by no means exhaustive. For instance, some people are not born with but acquire a neurodivergent condition during their life.
- 3.5 We appreciate that neurodivergent conditions affect people in different ways, and some individuals may be diagnosed with one or more neurodivergent conditions with overlapping symptoms.

4 Our commitment to you

- 4.1 We recognise that neurodivergent individuals can bring strengths to the workplace in many areas such as attention to detail, thinking outside the box, visual imaging, pattern recognition and analytical skills.
- 4.2 We believe that efforts to create and maintain a neuro-inclusive organisation will help foster creativity, different viewpoints, richer ideas and innovation, which help drive improved organisational performance.
- 4.3 However, we understand that neurodivergent individuals can experience a number of barriers in the workplace. As examples, we are committed to making changes to address these barriers by:
- 4.3.1 ensuring that we build awareness and understanding around neurodiversity;
 - 4.3.2 creating inclusive recruitment practices and selection processes;
 - 4.3.3 encouraging individuals with neurodivergent conditions to share their lived experience if they feel comfortable and able to do so;
 - 4.3.4 signposting support for neurodivergent individuals and colleagues to build understanding;
 - 4.3.5 creating a neurodiversity network through an employee resource group;
 - 4.3.6 providing training for Line Managers to ensure that they can support neurodivergent individuals;
 - 4.3.7 providing neurodiversity training sessions for the workforce to help staff empathise with and support their neurodivergent colleagues better.

5 Requesting support

- 5.1 We recognise that you may not be comfortable identifying yourself as neurodivergent. However, we do not want this to be a challenge for you.
- 5.2 If you are finding any aspect of work difficult or challenging because of your neurodivergent condition, you are encouraged to speak to your Line Manager.
- 5.3 You do not need to have a formal diagnosis to ask for help. If for any reason you are unable to approach your Line Manager, you can speak to a more senior manager.
- 5.4 We urge you to be as open as possible about any barriers that you are experiencing or adjustments that you need to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support.
- 5.5 We may need to discuss your requirements with you and your medical adviser or occupational health to help us get the right support in place.
- 5.6 Any health-related information disclosed by you during discussions with your Line Manager or a more senior manager will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

6 Tailored workplace adjustments

- 6.1 We will work with you to ensure that we understand what reasonable adjustments you would find most helpful, and we will do what we can to provide you with the right level of support.
- 6.2 We understand that what may be challenging in the workplace for one individual with a specific neurodivergent condition may not be challenging for another individual with the same neurodivergent condition. Similarly, adjustments that work for one person may not work for another.
- 6.3 Examples of reasonable workplace adjustments that might help some neurodivergent individuals reach their full potential at work include:
- 6.3.1 a permanent desk;
 - 6.3.2 a structured work environment with set routine for breaks, lunch, reviews and weekly check-ins;
 - 6.3.3 additional breaks;

- 6.3.4 the provision of quiet working areas;
- 6.3.5 the adoption of assistive technology, such as screen readers or speech recognition software;
- 6.3.6 the adjustment of sound and lighting levels in the workplace;
- 6.3.7 having work communicated and delegated by your Line Manager in a certain way;
- 6.3.8 the option to work flexibly; and
- 6.3.9 regular wellbeing checks.

6.4 We will never make assumptions on what we think would be a reasonable adjustment based on the typical characteristics associated with a neurodivergent condition.

6.5 We recognise that each person is unique and will always consider your specific needs.

6.6 Where workplace adjustments have been agreed, we will continually review these with you to ensure that they meet your needs.

7 Neurodiversity and the Equality Act 2010

7.1 The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination because of certain protected characteristics, one of which is disability.

7.2 A person is disabled under the Act if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

7.3 We recognise that many neurodivergent individuals will not identify as having a disability. However, some neurodivergent conditions could meet the definition of disability under the Act. Where the definition is met, we have a statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments for you and you are protected from discrimination at work. For more information, see our Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy.

7.4 We do not tolerate any discrimination against individuals who are neurodivergent and will deal with any such conduct in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

8 Occupational health

8.1 In some cases, we may refer you to occupational health for a workplace needs assessment so that they can make suggestions and recommendations on the types of adjustments that may be appropriate. Occupational health may also signpost you to external sources of help and advice.

9 External sources of help

9.1 There are various organisations that provide help and support on neurodiversity, including:

- [ADHD Foundation - The Neurodiversity Charity](#), which works in partnership with employers, individuals, doctors, and other agencies to provide support and services for individuals with ADHD, ASC and related learning differences such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, Irlen's Syndrome, dyscalculia and Tourette's Syndrome;
- [British Dyslexia Association](#), which is a membership organisation working to achieve a dyslexic-friendly society for all; and
- [National Autistic Society](#), which provides useful resources about autism and help and support for autistic people and their families.

10 Data protection

10.1 We will process any personal data collected in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

10.2 Data collected from the point at which we become aware of the circumstances is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.

11 Review

- 11.1 This policy may be reviewed at any time at the request of any member of staff, but it will be automatically reviewed two years after initial approval and thereafter on a biennial basis unless organisational changes, legislations, guidance, or non-compliance prompt an earlier review.

12 Definitions

- 12.1 The Bristol Methodist District ("we", "us", "our")
12.2 The Employee ("you", "your")

Document control box

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