

NEURODIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Statement, Aims and Principles

We are committed to promoting an inclusive environment for neurodiversity and having a heightened awareness of how neurodivergent conditions can affect people in the workplace. As part of this, we will provide appropriate workplace support where possible to any of our employees who are neurodivergent.

Response welcomes the wide range of skills and attributes brought to the workplace by all employees including those with a neurodivergent profile. Response is committed to removing barriers that hinder disabled people or those with neurodivergent conditions from accessing jobs, buildings or services as well as invisible barriers such as attitudes and perceptions.

Neurodiversity refers to the different ways that the brain works and interprets information. Those who are neurodivergent will process information in a different way to those who are neurotypical. Common examples of neurological conditions that may be experienced by employees and fall within the scope of this policy include, but are not limited to: Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Tourette's Syndrome.

Although we recognise that neurodivergence can cause difficulties for affected individuals, we will focus on the strengths that are brought to the workplace.

Definition

Neurodivergent - non-medical term to describe people whose brains process information, learn, and behave differently from what is considered 'typical' thus resulting in different strengths and struggles.

Autism - affects a person's perception of the world and their interaction with others.

Dyslexia - can cause difficulties with how a person processes language and has an impact on their reading, writing, spelling, memory etc.

Dyspraxia - can affect a person's physical and mental co-ordination.

Dyscalculia – impacts a person's ability to understand and use math and numbers.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) - can cause inattention, impulsiveness and hyperactivity.

Get in contact

A G Palmer House

Morrell Crescent
Littlemore, Oxford
OX4 4SU

T 01865 397940

E info@response.org.uk

W response.org.uk





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Tourette's Syndrome - can manifest through sudden uncontrolled rapid and repeated movements or vocal sounds called tics.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals connected to Response, including employees, bank workers, contractors providing services, agency workers, prospective workers, volunteers, trustees, trainees on vocational and work experience schemes, individuals we support, formal partners of Response, families & friends of individuals we support.

Compliance

Equality Act 2010
Data Protection Act

Related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Bullying & Harassment Policy
Disciplinary Policy
Flexible Working Policy
Grievance Policy
Recruitment & Selection Policy
Redundancy Policy
Safeguarding and Protection from Abuse (Adults)
Safeguarding and Protection from Abuse (Children's)

Training and Staff Support

Response has signed up to Employer level 2 of the government's Disability Confident scheme that supports employers to make the most of the talents and skills disabled people bring to the workplace.

Response deliver training to staff and managers on neurodiversity and best practice around how to maximise potential in the workplace.

Response will fund reasonable awareness and training events with prior permission from the Neurodiversity Lead and Associate Director of People & Business Support

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Neurodiversity – Employer responsibilities

We are aware of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to making reasonable adjustments for employees who have a disability where they suffer a substantial disadvantage within the workplace, in comparison to neurotypical employees.

You will not be treated unfairly or suffer any other form of detriment at work due to your neurodivergence. You will be given the same opportunities as other colleagues and will not be refused employment, overlooked for promotion and training opportunities or denied any other workplace benefits due to your neurodivergence. Response will ensure that as far as is possible, to eliminate any form of discrimination through policies, practices, attitudes or procedures that can impact on neurodivergent employees. Response will, as far as is possible, remove barriers from the standardised recruitment processes that may discriminate against neurodivergent applicants during recruitment, progress and promotion processes. This includes but is not limited to tests, overly prescriptive written job descriptions and interviewing styles. As best practice we send out interview questions prior to the interview to support with the preparation process.

Neurodiversity – Employee support – Work with me Passport

We recognise that many neurological conditions are “spectrum” conditions meaning that they can affect individuals in varying ways. We will ensure that any measures implemented will be suited to each individual by undertaking a process of consultation with them. We will not adopt a “one size fits all” approach, nor will we stereotype individuals based on common characteristics associated with their neurodivergence.

All employees will be encouraged to complete a ‘work with me’ passport to understand more about our employees, their learning style and what helps to keep them happy and motivated in the workplace. It will be frequently referred to as a tool to develop and maintain effective working relationships, to support employees establish themselves within Response and to support us create a positive environment for them to work. We embrace and acknowledge everyone has their own unique needs to support them to fulfil their full potential.

Every employee who is or thinks they might be neurodivergent has the right to raise and discuss their issues with their Line Manager or Human Resources, in the knowledge that the matter will be dealt with in a sensitive, confidential, non-judgmental and effective manner.

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Neurodiversity - Notification

If you have been diagnosed with or believe that you are neurodivergent, we would encourage you to disclose this information to your line manager. We appreciate that you may feel uncomfortable sharing this information, however, any information disclosed as part of this process will remain confidential and will be treated with sensitivity at all times. As stated above we have a Work with Me Passport that will be offered to all employees and will be encouraged to complete. This document allows us to understand and help support you in creating a positive workplace environment for you to thrive in.

Your line manager will seek to have an open and honest discussion with you about your neurodivergence, how it affects you and the impact that it may have on your duties. The discussion will then focus on adjustments that can be made to your role to attempt to remove any barriers that your neurodivergence may create.

It may be necessary for a 'needs assessment' to be independently arranged by the employee to help us identify exactly how your neurodivergence affects your ability to perform your role. We will then be able to use the results of the assessment to understand which adjustments will be most helpful to you.

Any information obtained about you for this purpose will be held in accordance with our obligations under data protection legislation.

Neurodiversity – Workplace adjustments

Response is legally obliged by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to an employee's role or working conditions if they have a disability that places them at a disadvantage when performing their role and we will ensure compliance with our obligations in this regard.

In order to assist you in your daily duties, we will explore making adjustments to your role or working environment with the aim of reducing the effect that your neurodivergence is having on you. We acknowledge that neurodivergence affects each individual in different ways so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with you first.

As an illustrative guide, we have set out below examples of adjustments that may be made to reduce or remove disadvantages faced by neurodivergent employees in the workplace:

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- Amending working duties – within reason and in line with the employees job description.
- Offering flexible working arrangements such as homeworking or permitting employees to start earlier or finish later.
- Redesigning the workplace/workstation.
- Providing visible instructions next to office equipment and machinery, such as photocopiers.
- Allowing employees to use equipment such as noise cancelling headphones.
- Providing a mentor/buddy to employees when learning new tasks.
- Allocating work areas with more natural light.
- Supporting with an Access to Work application.
- Considering recommendations for reasonable adjustments by GPs, medical specialists, Occupational Health

This is not an exhaustive list and all applicable adjustments will be discussed and explored with neurodivergent employees on an individual basis to ensure the adjustments put in place are appropriate to their individual circumstances. The effectiveness of any adjustments will be reviewed on a regular basis and may be subject to change if it becomes apparent that these are no longer fit for purpose.

This review will be carried out proactively between the employee and their line manager in line with our duty to make reasonable adjustments. Please note reasonable adjustments can only be made if the core duties within the job description are not compromised. If adjustments are refused, Response will clearly set out its reasons.

Neurodiversity – Creating an inclusive environment

We are committed to ensuring neurodivergent employees feel comfortable in discussing neurodivergence, should they wish to, and the impact it has on them. We will raise awareness by:

- Providing training to managers on awareness of and supporting neurodivergence.
- Arranging activities and education campaigns on neurodivergence for all staff.
- Creating a support network for neurodivergent employees to ensure a safe place to go to discuss issues they may be having and to share coping strategies.
- Encouraging neurodivergent senior employees to talk about the impact it has on them.
- Creating neurodiversity champions.
- Ensuring our policies, procedure and practices are neurodivergent appropriate.

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Performance Management and Capability

Response understands that standard employment practices can be a barrier to neurodivergent workers therefore we will ensure that:

- All performance management and capability procedures are reviewed and improved to remove and identify any barriers.
- When concerns are raised by line managers about the performance and capability of a neurodivergent employee, the performance management and capability procedure will not be initiated until any barrier(s) have been identified, removed or, reasonable adjustments have been identified and implemented.
- The line manager will not initiate the performance management and capability procedure until after a reasonably agreed time period has passed to allow the adjustment and changes to take effect.
- Response will not use any part of the performance management/capability procedure to identify employees for redundancy, disciplinary or capability proceedings.

GDPR Statement

Response Organisation manages all of the data referred to in this policy and supporting documents in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. For more information on how we handle information, please see the Data Protection Policy and further documents contained within our Personal Information Management System.

Equality, Diversity and Human Right

Response recognises some people experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic circumstance, employment status, class, appearance, responsibility for dependents, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

Response is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the following strands of equality; Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Gender-reassignment, sexual orientation, Religion and/or Belief, Civil Partnership and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity.

Response will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of



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Human Rights legislation. Staff and others with whom Response works with, will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998)

Review

The effectiveness of this Policy is regularly monitored by the Directorate to determine whether any improvements are needed and is reviewed *3 yearly*.

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