

Neurodiversity

A guide for members

union for professionals



WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY AND WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Like many human characteristics, such as height, weight or shoe size, the detailed anatomy of people's brains varies considerably.

The term neurodiversity is now used to describe dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism spectrum/Asperger's syndrome and other differences.

These conditions are thought to be due to this variation in how people's brains are 'wired'.

The characteristics of neurodiverse people are extremely varied. Many are very able – leading successful careers and in positions of authority.

High-achieving neurodiverse people include: scientist Albert Einstein, inventor Thomas Edison, ballet dancer Darcey Bussell, writer Agatha Christie, architect Richard Rogers, scientist and Sky at Night presenter Maggie Aderin-Pocock, inventor James Dyson, Apple founder Steve Jobs and Microsoft founder Bill Gates.

Recognising difficulties and differences is the first step towards overcoming them and focusing on your strengths and talents.

If you are not sure if you have a neurodiverse condition, check our website for information and checklists which may lead you to investigate further.

Prospect's web-based information and guidance aims to:

- help individual members, their representatives and managers recognise the characteristics of neurodiverse conditions
- specialist training for the individual
- suggest how we can help make a difference in the workplace and
- direct members and reps to relevant support and sources of information.

TELL YOUR EMPLOYER ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

If you have already been professionally assessed as having a neurodiverse condition, have you disclosed this to your employer?

We understand that this may be difficult and there are many reasons why you may not wish to tell your manager.

We would advise that it is usually in your interests to do so – but speak to your Prospect representative first, particularly as this can be a sensitive process.

If or when you do decide to disclose, it is important to be honest about your strengths and weaknesses and ask for a professional workplace assessment. Your Prospect representative can help you along the way.

People who have neurodiverse conditions are likely to be covered by the definition of a disabled person under the Equality Act, if their condition has a substantial and long-term effect.

They are therefore protected from discrimination and their employers must make reasonable adjustments to enable them to do their jobs.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

- Prospect's neurodiversity pages: www.prospect.org.uk/at-work/neurodiversity
- Prospect Members' Guide to One To One Interviews: <https://library.prospect.org.uk/download/2002/00002>
- Negotiators' Guide to Disability Equality <https://library.prospect.org.uk/download/2008/00088>

EQUALITY BRIEFINGS:

- Neurodiversity and discrimination: <https://library.prospect.org.uk/download/2013/01208>
 - Disability discrimination and appraisal and performance systems: <https://library.prospect.org.uk/download/2013/01192>
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