

Creating a Neuroinclusive Workplace: A Quick-Start Guide

By Bear and Willow HR

Neuroinclusion isn't about ticking boxes. It's about designing a workplace where different ways of thinking, working, and communicating are understood, respected, and used to full potential. This guide gives you practical first steps to help neurodivergent employees thrive and bring their strengths to the table.

1. What Is Neuroinclusion?

Neuroinclusion means recognising and embracing the full range of human thinking styles, including those linked to autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette's, and others.

It's not about "fixing" individuals. It's about fixing systems that were only designed with one kind of brain in mind. Neurodivergent people bring strengths like creativity, persistence, focus, innovation and honesty, but these strengths are too often lost in environments that don't allow them to flourish.

2. Spotting the Signs

Neurodivergent people often experience or display differences that can be misread without context:

- **Highly tuned in to their environment**
Bright lights, noise, interruptions or background activity may affect concentration, not because of weakness, but due to different sensory processing.
- **Resistance to direct instruction or unexpected changes**
What may look like avoidance can actually be a need for autonomy and clarity. It's not a refusal to work, it's a reaction to how something is communicated or structured.
- **Difficulty with traditional social norms**
Meetings, small talk, or group activities may drain energy. That doesn't mean disengagement, many neurodivergent employees contribute best in focused, direct ways.

- **Strong performance in one area, hesitation in another**
When the task is clear and aligned with strengths, results can be exceptional. When it's vague or socially loaded, the environment might be the real barrier.
- **Literal communication style**
Precision isn't confusion, it's often a sign of logical thinking and clarity. What looks like "missing the point" might just be a need for directness.

3. How You Can Support

- **Back up verbal instructions in writing**
Written instructions support all learning styles and reduce confusion or memory overload. They give everyone a reference point.
- **Have private, supportive check-ins**
Some people mask or manage their energy more carefully. Creating space for honest, low-pressure conversations builds trust and helps unlock solutions.
- **Offer quiet, flexible, or remote options where possible**
Reducing unnecessary noise and stimulation increases focus, for everyone, not just neurodivergent staff.
- **Give fair warning for changes**
Change is part of work, but unexpected or last-minute shifts can be difficult to adapt to. Letting people prepare helps them stay productive.
- **Ask what works best for the individual**
You don't need to guess. Simply asking "how do you work best?" shows respect and opens the door to real inclusion.

4. Free, Easy Adjustments

You don't need a huge budget to be more inclusive. These practical tweaks benefit everyone:

- **Share meeting agendas in advance**
This helps people prepare, prioritise, and participate fully. It makes meetings more focused for everyone.
- **Be flexible with time and working styles**
Energy dips and peaks vary from person to person. Autonomy over timing can lead to better outcomes.
- **Use clear, specific instructions**
"Please email this to the client by Friday" is better than "Can you sort that?" Clarity supports efficiency and reduces errors.

- **Let people single-task when needed**

Not everyone thrives under multitasking pressure, one task at a time often leads to better quality work.

- **Give thinking time before expecting answers**

Some people process deeply before speaking. Allowing time makes room for richer responses and more thoughtful input.

5. Why It Matters

Neuroinclusive practices aren't "extras" they're smarter ways to lead and work.

- You'll **retain and engage talented staff** who might otherwise burn out or disengage.
- You'll **improve communication and collaboration** across all teams, neurodivergent or not.
- You'll **bring in new perspectives and skills** that can solve problems in ways others miss.
- You'll show clients and candidates that your business leads with **inclusion, intelligence and care.**

Want to Go Further?

This is just the start.

Our **Neuroinclusion in the Workplace** workshop takes you beyond the basics. You'll get:

- A deeper understanding of traits like masking, RSD, executive dysfunction, and hyperfocus
- Real-world case studies and solutions
- A workplace audit tool
- Editable neuroinclusive policy templates
- The full, in-depth version of this guide

Book a session or speak to us at support@bearandwillowhr.co.uk

Visit us at www.bearandwillowhr.co.uk