

Witherslack Group **W Futures**
Employer Award

Awarded by
ADHD Foundation
The Neurodiversity Charity

Witherslack Group **W**

Empowering Neurodiversity in the Workplace

Understanding Neurodiversity in the workplace



Understanding Neurodiversity in the Workplace



- 1 There is a **natural variation** in how people think, act, learn, communicate, are motivated and relate to others in society and in the workplace. This can present both opportunities and challenges for individual employees.
- 2 It is the universal design that **human brains function differently** at the individual level. This is the essence of neurodiversity.
- 3 We like to surround ourselves with 'like-minded' people, but risk producing more of the same **at the expense of innovation, agility, and profitability**. Thinking differently is the new mantra in business.
- 4 Fear of **stigmatisation and lack of understanding** from others can prevent individuals from seeking or disclosing a diagnosis. Our education system has mistakenly led people to believe that those who think differently are less able, less intelligent and less employable. We should not assume that underachievement in education means a lack of talent or potential.
- 5 Many workplaces are unwittingly **designed in ways which do not support neurodiverse people's ability to thrive and add value**. Some individuals will navigate these workplaces by hiding signs of their neurodiversity. Masking or camouflaging different thinking can be exhausting, placing an immense pressure on a person's mental and physical health. This waste of energy is also a waste of talent and resource.
- 6 Neurodiversity entails not only **challenges but also important strengths**. Differences in how individual's process information or communicate ideas are not "symptoms" that need fixing or changing. For example, ADHD isn't an "attention deficit": it is variable attention that reflects deep focus, attention to detail and commitment to passions.
- 7 Whilst neurotypes such as Dyslexia, Autism, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, and ADHD are defined as "Protected Characteristics" under the Equality Act (2010), **not everyone identifies as disabled**. People chose to define themselves using different language, for example, "Neurodivergent" or "Neurodiverse." Respect for people's right to identify is important as the language and understanding about neurodiversity evolves.
- 8 Create a **context (culture) that enables and optimises performance and employee wellbeing** and commitment and you will create a fertile environment for innovation.

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