



The Neuro-Inclusive Workplace Checklist

A practical guide to building environments where neurodivergent people can function sustainably

By Neal Glendenning

Contact: info@theneuroinclusionproject.co.uk

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Important note

This resource is intended to support understanding and good practice in neuro-inclusive workplace design. It provides general guidance and does not constitute legal, medical, or clinical advice. Organisations should apply the principles in line with their own policies, regulatory obligations, and professional judgement.

Neuro-inclusion is often discussed as a matter of awareness or attitude.

In practice, it is about **design**.

Workplaces do not fail neurodivergent people because individuals are difficult or inflexible. They fail because systems are built around narrow assumptions about attention, communication, energy, and regulation.

This checklist is designed to help organisations move from good intentions to **structural safety**.

You do not need to do everything at once.
Inclusion is not a switch... it is a direction.

How to use this checklist

This is not a pass/fail test.

Use it to:

- identify friction points
- spot hidden exclusion
- prioritise changes with the biggest impact
- shift responsibility from individuals to systems

If several areas feel uncomfortable to read, that's not failure.
It's information.

1. Culture

What is implicitly expected, rewarded, and tolerated

A neuro-inclusive culture does not rely on individual resilience. It reduces unnecessary strain at the system level.

Check your culture:

- Are people valued for output and impact, not style or personality?
- Is "professionalism" defined narrowly (e.g. tone, speed, extroversion)?
- Are different working rhythms accepted without moral judgement?
- Is rest framed as part of sustainability, not a reward?
- Are mistakes treated as learning rather than personal failure?

Red flags:

- Praise for overwork or constant availability
 - Shame or jokes about forgetfulness, sensitivity, or inconsistency
 - “We’re like a family” masking blurred boundaries
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2. Communication

How information is shared, clarified, and followed up

Communication is one of the biggest drivers of inclusion or overload.

Check your communication systems:

- Are expectations explicit rather than implied?
- Are instructions available in written form, not just verbal?
- Are deadlines, priorities, and success criteria clearly stated?
- Is feedback specific, timely, and non-ambiguous?
- Are people allowed to ask clarifying questions without judgement?

Red flags:

- Reliance on “reading the room”
 - Vague feedback (“be more proactive”, “use your initiative”)
 - Last-minute changes without explanation
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3. Workload & Workflow

How work is structured, paced, and transitioned

Neurodivergent burnout is often a workload design issue, not a resilience issue.

Check workload design:

- Are roles clearly defined, with realistic scope?
- Is work prioritised, or does everything feel urgent?
- Are task switches minimised where possible?
- Is there recovery time built into high-demand periods?
- Are deadlines adjustable based on capacity and context?

Red flags:

- Chronic urgency as standard practice
 - Unclear ownership leading to constant cognitive load
 - Rewarding crisis performance without addressing causes
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4. Sensory Environments

The physical and digital conditions people work in

Sensory strain is invisible... until it causes withdrawal, dysregulation, or burnout.

Check the environment:

- Are there quiet spaces or low-stimulus options?
- Can people control lighting, sound, and seating where possible?
- Are open-plan spaces balanced with privacy?
- Is camera-on culture flexible rather than enforced?
- Are digital tools clutter-heavy or cognitively demanding?

Red flags:

- “Everyone works best in open plan”
 - Mandatory hot-desking
 - No acknowledgement of sensory fatigue
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5. Psychological Safety

Whether people can be honest without punishment

Psychological safety is not about comfort.
It's about **risk without threat**.

Check psychological safety:

- Can people say they're struggling without career impact?
- Is uncertainty allowed, or punished?
- Are mistakes met with curiosity rather than blame?
- Can people disagree with leadership safely?
- Is feedback two-way, not just top-down?

Red flags:

- Fear of being seen as “difficult”
 - Silence in meetings followed by private stress
 - Performance management used to enforce conformity
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6. Leadership

How power is used, explained, and felt

Leadership style has a disproportionate impact on neurodivergent safety.

Check leadership practices:

- Are decisions explained, not just announced?
- Is authority predictable and consistent?
- Do leaders model boundaries and pacing?
- Are adjustments normalised by leadership behaviour?
- Is empathy matched with structural action?

Red flags:

- Arbitrary rule changes
 - Public praise, private criticism
 - Leaders who expect regulation from others but not themselves
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7. Neurodivergent Adjustments

Practical supports that reduce friction

Adjustments are not special treatment.
They are access tools.

Check adjustment practices:

- Are adjustments available without requiring disclosure?
- Are they framed as routine, not exceptional?
- Do managers understand how to implement them?
- Are adjustments reviewed and adapted over time?
- Is responsibility shared, not placed solely on the individual?

Common adjustments include:

- Flexible hours or start times
- Written instructions and agendas
- Reduced meeting load
- Task chunking and prioritisation support
- Sensory accommodations
- Alternative communication methods

Red flags:

- “We’ll adjust if there’s a formal diagnosis”
 - Adjustments treated as favours
 - One-off changes with no follow-up
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What neuro-inclusive workplaces understand

Neuro-inclusive organisations understand that:

- regulation is environmental, not just individual
- clarity reduces anxiety and increases performance
- flexibility improves consistency
- safety unlocks contribution
- inclusion is ongoing design work

They do not ask neurodivergent people to cope better.

They ask **systems to work better**.

A final note

You do not need to get everything right to move in the right direction.

Start with:

- clarity over assumption
- predictability over pressure
- compassion backed by structure

Neuro-inclusion is not about lowering standards.

It is about **removing unnecessary barriers so people can meet them sustainably**.