



The Neuro Inclusion Index™

Measuring Inclusion at the Level That Actually Determines Performance



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Overview

The **Neuro Inclusion Index (NII)** is a clinically-informed assessment framework designed to help organisations understand how inclusive their systems are **in practice**, not just in principle.

Rather than measuring intention, awareness, or policy presence, the Index evaluates the **neurobiological, cognitive, and emotional impact** of environments on neurodivergent people.

It answers a fundamentally different question to traditional inclusion tools:

What does it cost a person, neurologically and emotionally, to function inside this system?

For neurodivergent individuals, inclusion is not primarily about whether adjustments exist... it is about whether the system allows them to remain regulated, oriented, and sustainable over time.

The Neuro Inclusion Index makes that cost **visible, measurable, and actionable**.

What the Index Enables Organisations to See

The Index reveals:

- where systems unintentionally create overload
- how everyday practices drain regulation capacity
- why “performance issues” often emerge late
- where burnout risk is structurally embedded
- which redesigns will have the greatest impact

This allows organisations to move from **individual problem-solving** to **system-level responsibility**.

What the Neuro Inclusion Index Is... and Is Not

The Index is:

- clinically informed
- neurodivergent-led
- system-focused
- evidence-aligned
- non-pathologising

The Index is not:

- a wellbeing survey
- a personality or strengths assessment
- a diagnostic or screening tool
- a compliance checklist

It does not measure people.
It measures **systems**.



Why Traditional Inclusion Measures Miss the Problem

Most organisations assess inclusion through:

- staff perception surveys
- engagement scores
- awareness metrics
- policy audits
- representation data

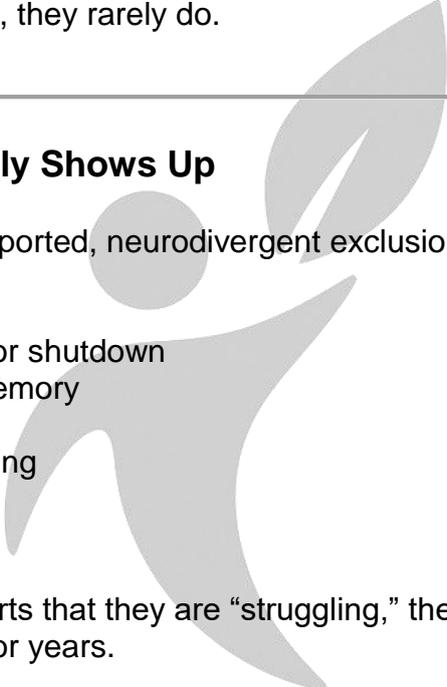
These tools are useful... but incomplete.

They assume that inclusion failures show up as **conscious dissatisfaction**.

For neurodivergent people, they rarely do.

How Exclusion Actually Shows Up

Before dissatisfaction is reported, neurodivergent exclusion typically appears as:

- cognitive fatigue
 - emotional volatility or shutdown
 - reduced working memory
 - increased errors
 - withdrawal or masking
 - sickness absence
 - burnout
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By the time someone reports that they are “struggling,” the system has often been unsustainable for months or years.

The Missing Variable: Neurobiological Load

Neurodivergent people are often operating under **continuous hidden load**, created by:

- unclear expectations
- constant context switching
- unstructured communication
- sensory unpredictability
- social decoding demands
- emotional threat cues
- performance surveillance

None of these are visible on policy documents.

Yet together, they determine whether a person can function safely and consistently.

The Neuro Inclusion Index exists to measure **this invisible load** — before it becomes a crisis.

What the Neuro Inclusion Index Measures

The Neuro Inclusion Index evaluates systems across **six interacting domains**. Each domain represents a different source of load that affects regulation, capacity, and sustainability.

The domains are not independent.
Pressure in one amplifies strain in the others.

1. Psychological & Nervous System Safety

This domain examines whether the emotional climate allows people to remain regulated.

It includes:

- tone and predictability of interactions
- feedback style and escalation
- blame vs repair culture
- tolerance for difference and uncertainty

Environments that signal threat — even subtly — force constant self-monitoring and suppression, reducing cognitive capacity before work even begins.

2. Cognitive Load & Executive Demand

This domain assesses the *hidden thinking* required to operate effectively.

It measures:

- clarity of instructions and expectations
- planning and sequencing burden
- memory load
- decision density
- task switching frequency

When this load is excessive, difficulties are often mislabelled as poor organisation or motivation.

3. Sensory & Environmental Load

This domain captures the cost of physical and digital environments.

It includes:

- noise and unpredictability
- lighting and visual clutter
- interruptions
- open-plan exposure
- digital notification pressure

Chronic sensory load directly impairs emotional regulation and executive access.

The Remaining Domains

4. Relational & Social Protocol Load

This domain examines the cost of social navigation.

It includes:

- reliance on unwritten rules
- expectations of emotional performance
- masking pressure
- interpretation ambiguity
- power and status dynamics

High scores here indicate environments where success depends on social decoding rather than competence.

5. Autonomy, Agency & Control

This domain measures the degree to which individuals can self-regulate.

It includes:

- flexibility in time and method
- trust vs micromanagement
- control over workload and pacing

- ability to self-advocate safely

Reduced autonomy increases threat perception and decreases executive functioning.

6. Recovery, Pacing & Sustainability

This domain assesses whether the system supports long-term functioning.

It includes:

- rest permission
- workload cyclicity
- early escalation pathways
- tolerance for fluctuating capacity
- burnout risk signals

Many systems extract performance now at the cost of human sustainability later.

What Organisations Receive

A Neuro Inclusion Index assessment produces **decision-ready outputs**, not abstract scores.

Organisations receive:

- an overall Neuro Inclusion Index profile
 - domain-level pressure analysis
 - identification of the **Invisible Neurodivergent Tax**
 - early burnout and disengagement indicators
 - a prioritised Neuro-Inclusive Redesign Roadmap
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The Invisible Neurodivergent Tax

This refers to the cumulative cost of:

- self-regulation
- masking
- compensating for unclear systems
- absorbing sensory and social strain

The Index makes this tax explicit... and shows where it is generated.

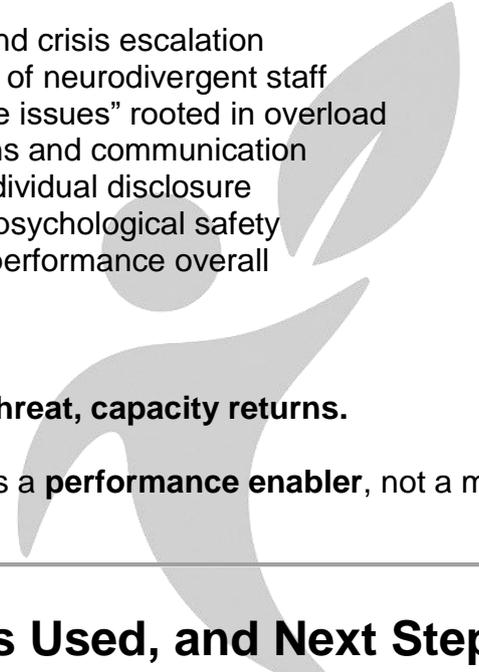
From Insight to Redesign

Recommendations typically span:

- leadership behaviour
 - communication norms
 - workflow and role design
 - environment and sensory load
 - policy vs lived practice
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What Changes After an Index Assessment

Organisations that use the Neuro Inclusion Index commonly experience:

- reduced burnout and crisis escalation
 - improved retention of neurodivergent staff
 - fewer “performance issues” rooted in overload
 - clearer expectations and communication
 - less reliance on individual disclosure
 - stronger trust and psychological safety
 - more sustainable performance overall
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The key shift is this:

When systems reduce threat, capacity returns.

This reframes inclusion as a **performance enabler**, not a moral add-on.

How the Index Is Used, and Next Steps

Common Use Cases

The Neuro Inclusion Index is used:

- as a baseline diagnostic
 - prior to training or transformation
 - to guide system and policy redesign
 - to support NHS and public-sector reform
 - as an accountability tool beyond DEI optics
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Ethical & Clinical Positioning

The Index is:

- non-diagnostic
- non-pathologising
- system-focused
- disclosure-free

It does not label individuals.

It identifies **where systems demand unsafe adaptation.**

Closing Principle

**Inclusion is not how welcome people feel cognitively.
It is how regulated they can remain biologically.**

To explore whether the Neuro Inclusion Index is appropriate for your organisation, contact **The Neuro Inclusion Project.**

