Neurodiversity Support Toolkit

forward

Why This Matters:

Neurodiversity is simply the idea that all brains work differently. Some people think visually. Some think verbally. Some need structure. Some thrive on variety. Some need quiet. Some need movement.

In most workplaces, systems are designed around one "default" way of working. That doesn't suit everyone.

This guide is here to offer practical ideas that can help reduce overwhelm, improve focus and support different working styles. It draws on guidance from neurodiversity organisations, workplace research, and accessibility best practice. It is intended as practical support rather than medical or clinical advice. Whether you identify as being neurodiverse or recognise that your brain works differently, this advice could help you with your work.

Maximising Your Strengths

Neurodiversity is not just about challenges. It often brings significant strengths.

You might notice that you:

- Think creatively
- Spot patterns others miss
- Notice detail
- Work deeply on topics of interest
- Communicate strongly verbally
- Thrive with structure
- Generate ideas quickly

The key is to build your work around your strengths where possible.

Ask yourself:

- When is my energy highest?
- What tasks feel easier for me?
- What environments help me focus?
- What tends to overwhelm me?

Then adjust where you can:

- Do complex work when energy is high
- Save routine tasks for lower-energy times
- Batch similar tasks together
- Avoid unnecessary task switching

Practical Tips to Support Productivity
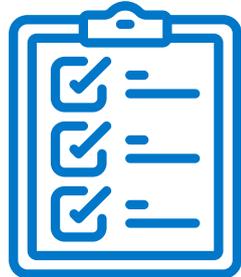
Keep Planning Simple

Avoid complicated systems.
Each day, try choosing:
- One main focus task
- Two smaller tasks

Create a Decompression Space

If possible, identify a place that isn't your main desk, try a:
- quiet room in the office
- different chair at home
- short walking route

Use a Timer to Get Started

If starting feels difficult, set a 10 or 25 minute timer and just begin.

Often momentum builds once you've started.

Schedule Your Breaks

- Add a lunch break to your calendar
- Take a short walk
- Step away from your desk for 10 minutes
- Make a drink away from your laptop

Leaving your workspace helps your brain reset.

Practical Tips to Support Productivity

Reduce Digital Clutter

Small changes can reduce stress:
- Close unused tabs
- Turn off unnecessary notifications
- Keep your desktop clear
- Batch emails rather than checking constantly

Break Tasks into Smaller Steps

Instead of "Write report", try:
- Open document
- Add headings
- Draft bullet points
- Write introduction
- Review

Use Rewards to Build Motivation

Linking tasks to small rewards can help with momentum.
For example:
- Morning coffee after completing your first task
- A short break after finishing admin
- A podcast on your walk after submitting work

Use Time Blocks

Rather than working in one long stretch, divide your day or week into blocks.
For example:
- Morning: focused work
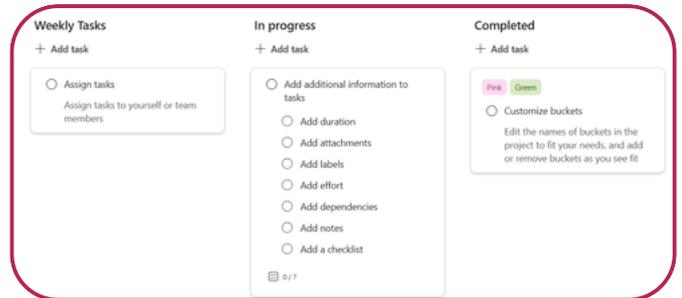- Midday: emails or admin
- Afternoon: meetings or collaborative tasks

Useful Tools and Free Support

Microsoft Planner, Loop or To Do
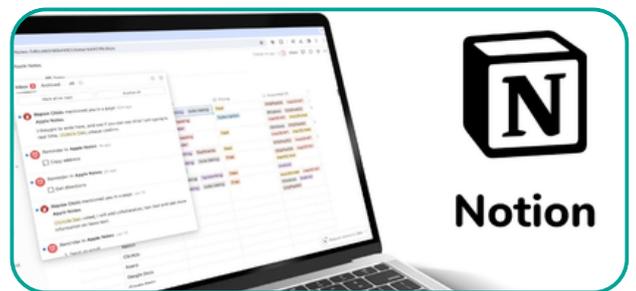
Visual task boards can help you:
- See your workload clearly
- Break tasks into checklists
- Move tasks across stages

Notion (Free Version Available)

A flexible digital workspace for:
- To-do lists
- Notes
- Project tracking

It can be customised to suit how your brain works.

Noise Support

If you struggle with background noise:
- Noise-cancelling headphones
- White noise apps
- Low instrumental music

Reducing sensory overload can significantly improve focus.

Speech-to-Text

Built into Microsoft Word and most smartphones. Helpful if you think faster than you type or find writing tiring.

Read Aloud Tools

Microsoft Word has a "Read Aloud" function that can help with proofreading and processing longer documents.

Timers

Phone timers, Online countdown timers and Focus sessions in Microsoft can reduce procrastination and improve attention.