

**Roundtable**

# **Neurodiversity Roundtable**

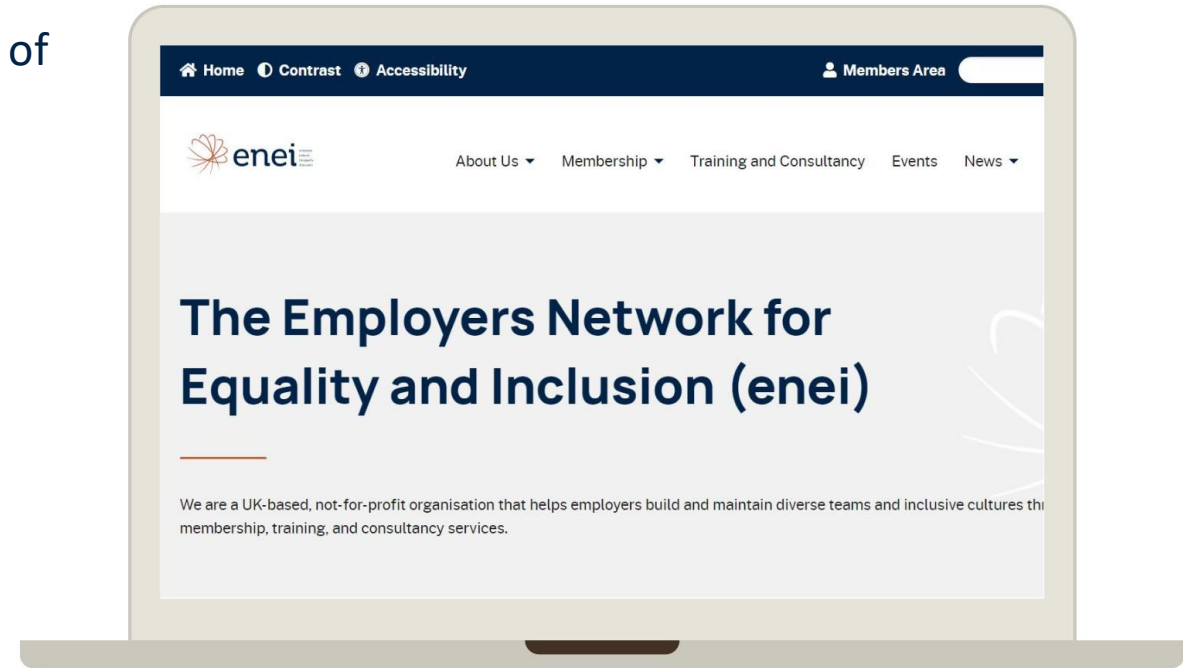
**30.01.2024 - 11.00**

**Presented by Emma Jennings**



# Who we are

- The UK's leading employer network covering all aspects of workplace equality and inclusion
- “One-stop-shop” for advice, consultancy, training, networking, best practice, benchmarking, and thought leadership
- Not-for-profit
- Supporting 400+ Members across the UK with their equality, diversity and inclusion journey
- [enei.org.uk](https://enei.org.uk)



# Webinar Housekeeping

- You have entered the session on mute and off video
- Please use the Q&A function throughout the event
- This session is not being recorded to foster inclusive discussion, but the slides will be available
- Let us know about your event experience with our brief poll before we close today's event
- The event will close by 12:30
- As always, please be respectful of others

enei provides an inclusive event experience for everyone. We do not tolerate harassment of event participants in any form and will respond appropriately.

The views expressed by speakers during this event are based on their own personal perspectives and experiences and do not necessarily reflect those of enei. The language and terminology used by speakers do not represent the views of all people who share the speakers' identities or protected characteristics. enei aims to create an open and respectful space for dialogue.



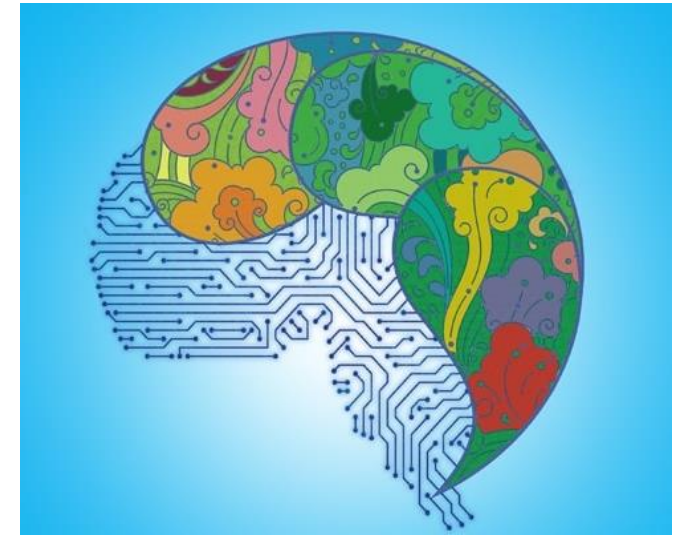
# Roundtable Agenda

- enei Introduction (5 minutes)
- Discussion 1 – Breakout rooms (10 minutes)
- LifeArc – Presentation + Questions (30 minutes)
- Discussion 2 – Breakout rooms (20 minutes)
- Questions & Actions (5 minutes)
- Close.



# Neurodiversity – Scene Setting

- Neurodiverse conditions are defined as disabilities in Great Britain under the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- A total estimate of 2.6 million people in the UK with ADHD (Source - ADHDDUK).
- National Autistic Society report at least 700,000 autistic adults in UK of which only 15% are in employment.
- According to the British Dyslexia Association, the number of individuals with dyslexia in the UK is around 10% (1 in 10 people).
- 67% of dyslexic individuals request support for stress at work.
- Disabled people are twice as likely to be unemployed than those without a disability



# Neurodiversity – Scene Setting

*“One big benefit of an inclusive work culture is that it fosters diversity of thought, different approaches to work, innovation, and creativity. Research suggests that teams with neurodivergent professionals in some roles can be 30% more productive than those without them. Inclusion and integration of neurodivergent professionals can also boost team morale.”*

- Deloitte Insights

# enei's Neurodiversity Hub



- [Quick Guide: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\) in the Workplace](#)
- [Quick Guide: Autism in the Workplace](#)
- [Quick Guide: Dyscalculia in the Workplace](#)
- [Quick Guide: Dysgraphia in the Workplace](#)
- [Quick Guide: Dyslexia in the Workplace](#)
- [Quick Guide: Dyspraxia in the Workplace](#)
- [Quick Guide: Tourette Syndrome \(TS\) in the Workplace](#)

# Breakout Rooms – Discussion 1

(10 - 15 minutes)

- 1) How is your organisation approaching Neurodiversity and inclusion?
- 2) Are you facing any particular barriers?



# Today's Guest Speakers

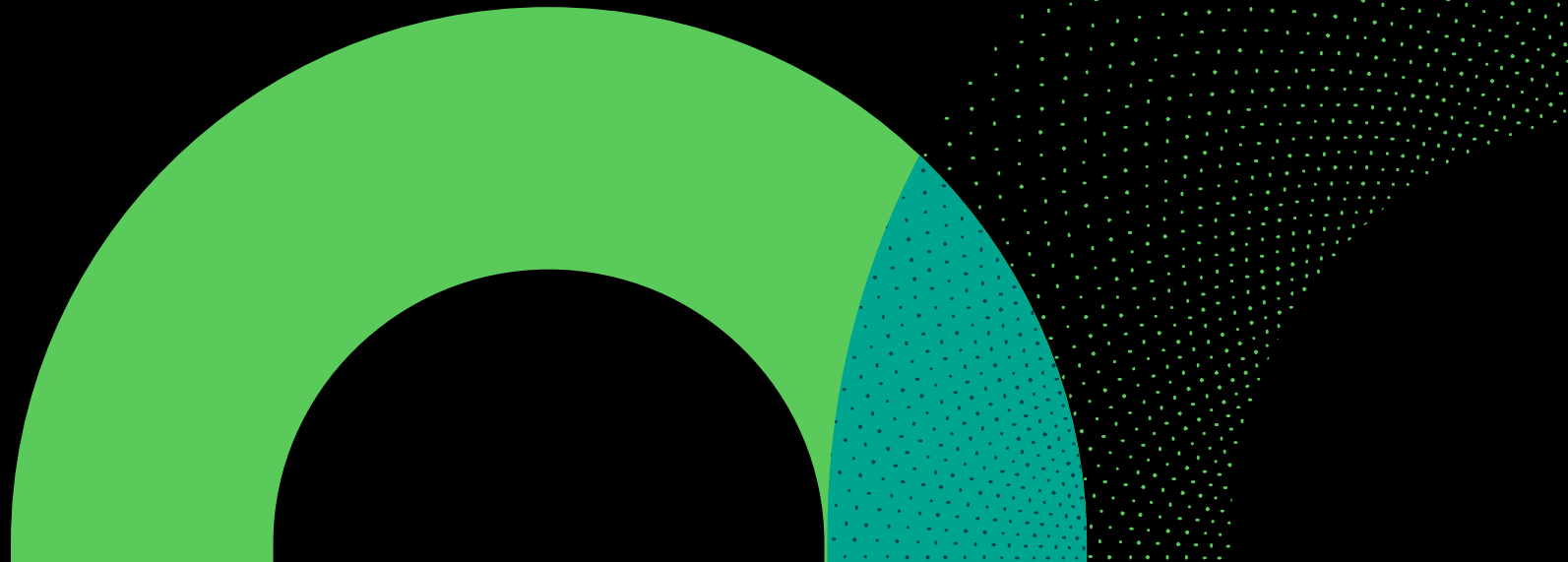
- **Laura Valler,**  
Employee Experience and Engagement Lead
- **Abby Stock-Duerdoth,**  
Former Industrial Placement Student

LifeArc



# ENEI Neurodiversity Round Table

## 30 January 2024



# Thank you for having us



**Laura Valler (she/her)**  
Employee Experience and  
Engagement Lead, LifeArc



**Abby Stock- Duerdoth  
(she/they)**  
Scientific Projects Officer,  
Beacon: for rare diseases



# Introduction to LifeArc



- **LifeArc is a self-financing medical research charity.**
- **As the early-stage translation specialists, we bridge the gaps between the lab and the patient: advancing new discoveries into the next generation of prevention, diagnostics, treatments, and cures.**
- **Translating science is a long, expensive, and unpredictable journey but at LifeArc we are committed to providing the expertise and funding to help researchers harness the power of their discoveries - and transform lives.**



# ED&I at LifeArc

## LifeArc's ED&I Vision

- We are committed to ensuring LifeArc continues to be an inclusive, diverse and equitable environment in which everyone can thrive as their truest selves.
- Our vision is to **foster inclusion** by bringing together coalitions of our people, partners and patients to tackle critical health challenges through translational science.
- We will build our teams, organisation and our partnerships to **reflect the communities that we belong to and the values we hold**; we will collaborate with a **diversity of patient representatives** at every stage to enable greater innovation in healthcare solutions and more **equitable healthcare outcomes**.



# Our ED&I strategy

## Inclusive Science and Research

### Goal:

To ensure that the **choices we make** about which opportunities to pursue are informed by an understanding of **diverse patient needs**, local **community engagement** and **diverse advisory groups**.

## Inclusive Funding and Engagement

### Goal:

To develop relationships with a **diverse potential partners and healthcare researchers** that share our ED&I vision, and **drive equity in our processes** for securing partners and providing funding, continuously monitoring and accelerating our progress

## Inclusive Culture

### Goal:

To **attract and retain diverse talent** to create an **inclusive culture** and **accessible workplace**, where diversity of thought and experience enables every person to feel valued and develop



# Our ED&I Taskforce

## Who they are & what they do:

- Colleagues from across the organisation with a range of lived experience.
- Taskforce members act as champions for ED&I and were instrumental in shaping our strategy.
- Empower colleagues to get involved, tell their stories and raise awareness of ED&I.

## How they do it:

- LISTEN! Connect with colleagues to stay aware of current collective areas of interest
- Meet monthly to discuss current topics and maximise impact in the organisation.
- Connect with ED&I Leadership group regularly to ensure alignment
- Supported by dedicated colleagues from Internal comms and HR to help raise awareness of their work, and align with existing organisational priorities

# Supporting neurodiverse colleagues: our approach

## Inclusive Culture core objective:

*‘to increase organisational understanding of inclusive behaviours and working practice*

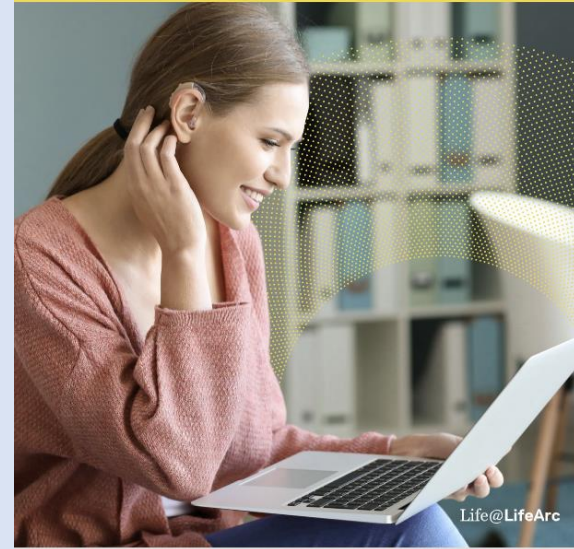
A key action to help us achieve that is to:

*‘enhance our suite of policies and guides to support both colleagues and managers’*

lifeArc



Talking about:  
**Disability**



Life@LifeArc

Talking about:  
**Dignity at work**



Life@LifeArc

# Our Neurodiversity Guides

The background is a solid dark brown color. In the upper left corner, there is a curved area with a fine dotted pattern in a slightly lighter shade of brown. A large, bright orange semi-circle is positioned at the bottom of the frame, with a smaller, darker brown semi-circle nested inside it. In the bottom right corner, there is another curved area with a fine dotted pattern, similar to the one in the top left.

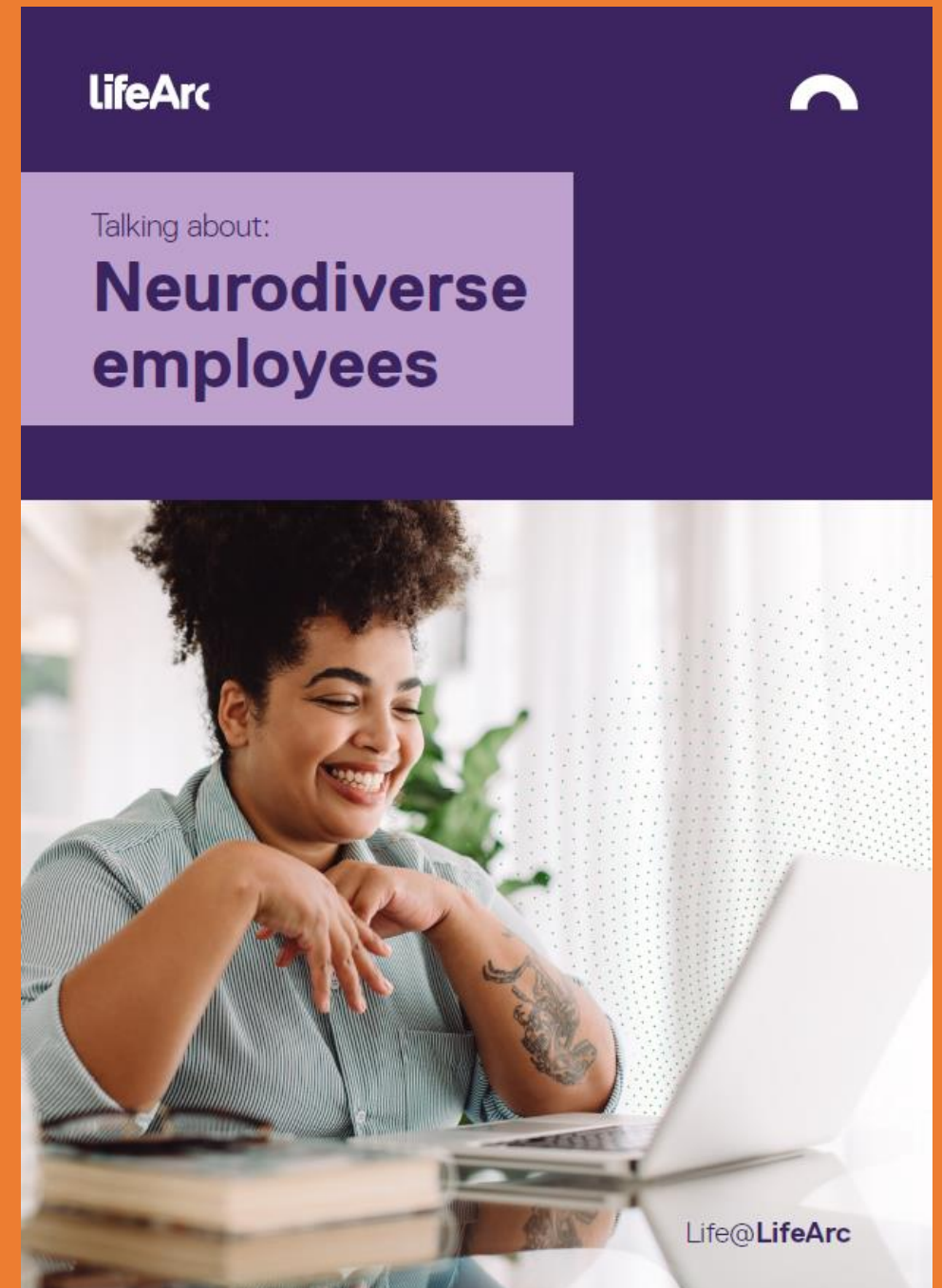
# Developing our Neurodiversity Guides: Motivation and Approach

- Key was **practical advice**
- Offered 'support'
- Wanted tangible solutions
- You don't know what you don't know
- Online researching
- Reflecting on school environments
- Talked to friends
- found that most people really didn't know what they could ask for
- Lots of information about the importance of being inclusive out there but very little on how to really do that



# Guide for neurodiverse employees

A resource for anyone who identifies as neurodiverse, whether they have a diagnosis or not, and anyone wishing to learn more about the resources available to support neurodiverse individuals.





# What's in the guide?

Diagnosis  
Disclosure  
Tailored adjustments  
TAPs  
Coping strategies  
Legal & LifeArc's  
commitment  
Resources and support

Why getting a diagnosis might be helpful	Why you might not feel it necessary
A diagnosis solidifies certain legal protections, as neurodiverse conditions are classed as disabilities under the Equality Act (2010)	NHS waiting lists can be long and going private can be expensive
Some support is only available if you have a diagnosis, such as assistance dogs	You can still be part of the neurodiverse community with a diagnosis
A diagnosis can make it easier to ask for help at work	Without a diagnosis you can still access lots of research and support for neurodiversity

Adjustment type	How might it help?
Physical	
Change of desk location	Sounds, smells, lighting, and proximity to others. Moving to desk on the end of a row or in a quieter part of the office without getting burned out.
Ergonomic equipment	The sensory issues that come with conditions can make comfortable furniture hugely important. Check with your employer for a chair, ergonomic mouse, or standing desk.
Hybrid working arrangements	Neurodiverse people are at risk of burnout. Working from home or in a quiet space can help to prevent this. Being able to work from home can help to be more efficient and productive when needed.

**Here are a few suggestions of how you might go about disclosing:**

- Be up front: "Hey, I'm looking into a diagnosis for (a neurodiverse condition) and wanted to make you aware."
- Ask for support: "Hi, I think I'd benefit from some reasonable (tailored) adjustments like a desk in a quieter part of the office, because I find the noise overwhelming". You could add "This is because I have (a neurodiverse condition)" or not. Check out the reasonable (tailored) adjustments section for more.

Ideas for coping strategies, continued

**Clothing choices**

Sensory issues can be exacerbated by wearing uncomfortable clothes – take the time to find clothes that make you feel good. Wearing something stretchy and soft that keeps you at the right temperature can make it easier to stay focused in meetings, concentrate on written work and generally get through the day.

**The 'Pomodoro Technique'**

This time-management strategy can help you

**Free screen readers**

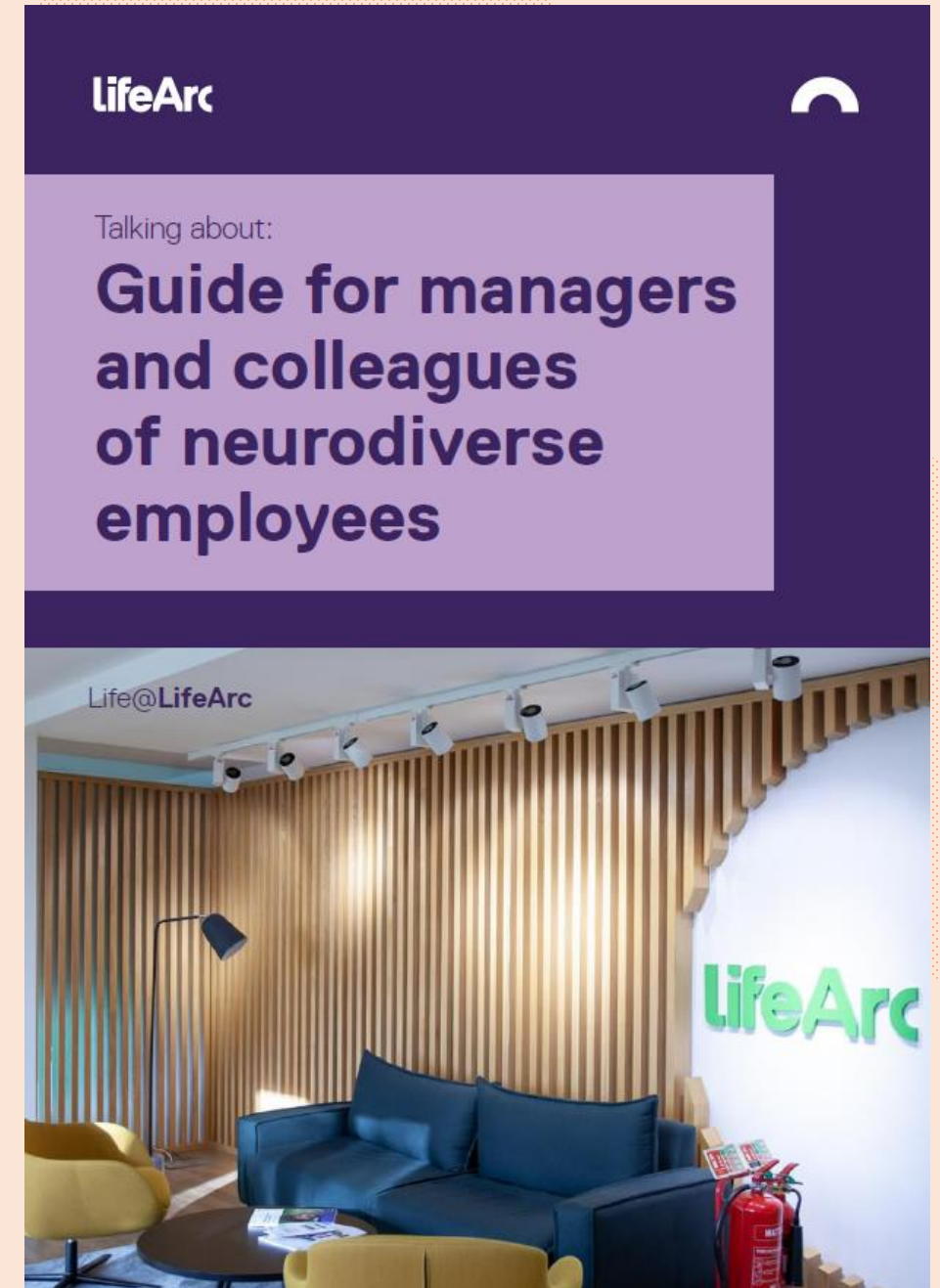
While you can use paid software like Dragon, free versions can also be great, such as Google text-to-speech and Edge's in-built read aloud feature for websites.

**Educate yourself**

Understanding more about your own brain and relationship to neurodiversity can help you think of other ways to thrive. Being aware of concepts like [behaviour meltdowns](#), [executive](#)

# Guide for managers and colleagues of neurodiverse employees

A resource for managers and colleagues of anyone who identifies as neurodiverse, whether they have a diagnosis or not, and for anyone wishing to learn more about the resources available to support neurodiverse individuals.



# What's in the guide?

Disclosure

Tailored adjustments

TAPs

Legal & LifeArc’s commitment

Resources and support

Adjustment type	How might it help?
Physical	
Change of desk location	Sounds, smells, lighting, and proximity to other people can all be overwhelming. Moving to desk on the end of a row or in a quieter area can make it easier to be in the office without getting burned out.
Ergonomic equipment	The sensory issues that come with conditions such as autism make being comfortable hugely important. Check whether equipment like a more comfortable chair, ergonomic mouse, or standing desk might be helpful.
Hybrid working arrangements	Neurodiverse people are at risk of burn out. Being able to spend more time in their own familiar space can help to prevent this. Neurodiverse individuals might be more efficient and productive when they are able to work in less formal environments.

As managers and colleagues, you can only know that a team member is neurodiverse if they have disclosed this to you. It is important not to make assumptions based on your own perception.

If an individual hasn't disclosed but you think they might benefit from some of the resources and coping strategies that many neurodiverse people find helpful, you could refer them to this resource.

If a colleague has told you that they are neurodiverse, remember that this does not change who they are, how they should be treated, or what their abilities are. They are the same person and have simply shared an aspect of themselves with you. **Remember that this is personal information and should not be shared without consent.**

**Why it might be hard to disclose**  
For some individuals, telling someone that they are neurodiverse can be very stressful. Individuals might struggle to find the right words or be afraid that it will change the way you think about them. Always try to listen openly and not make judgements or assumptions.

As with any disability, neurodiversity is a personal subject and can be a very sensitive one. If you're not sure how to deal with a disclosure, contact HR for advice and guidance.

Once someone has disclosed, an important first step is to explore with them whether tailored (reasonable) adjustments would be helpful. You can also signpost them to the [Guide for Neurodiverse Colleagues](#).

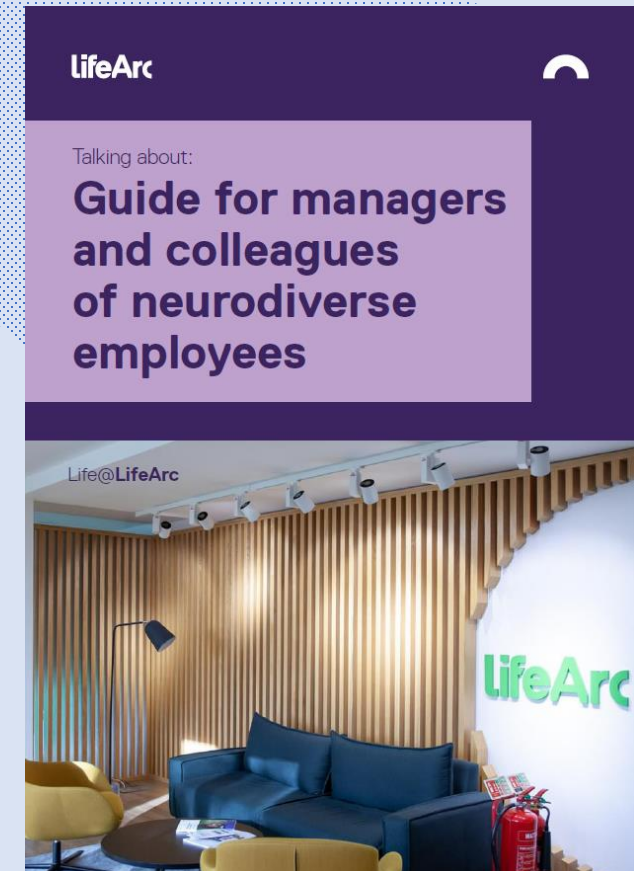
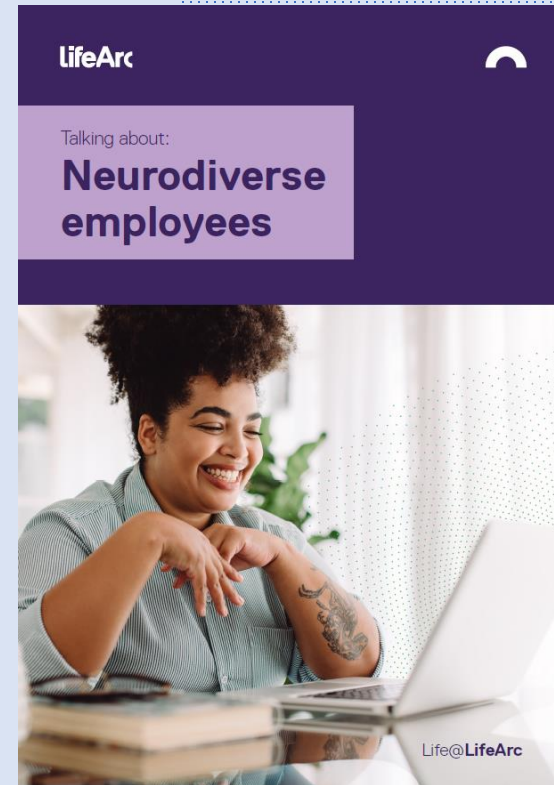
## What does the Law say and what is LifeArc’s commitment?

Under the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#), all neurodiverse conditions are defined as disabilities, however that does not mean every neurodiverse person necessarily views themselves as disabled. Whether someone identifies as disabled or not can change over time and depending on the environment they are in.



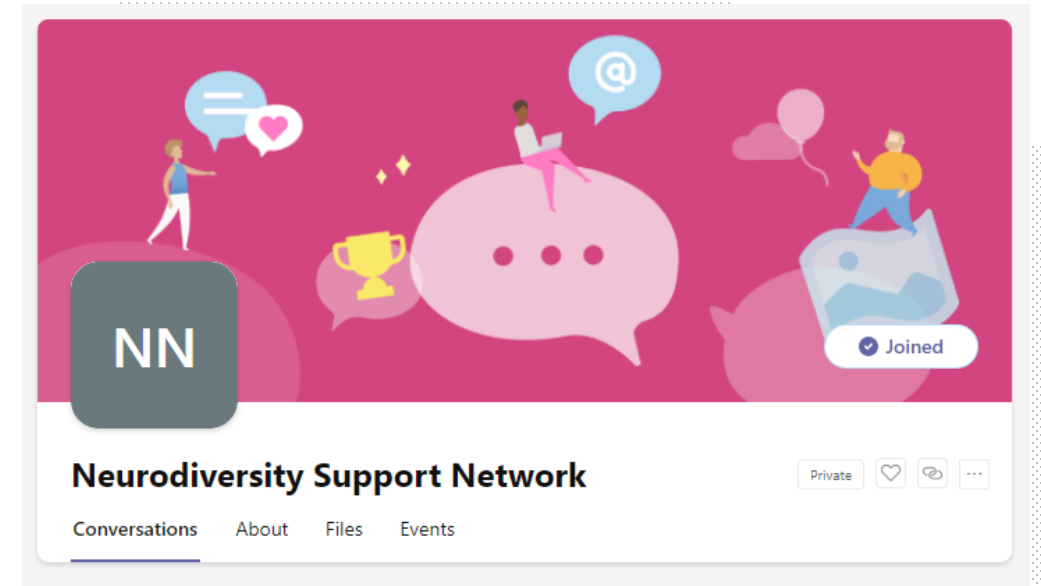
# Launching our guides

- **National Inclusion Week 2023**
- **Information session for all colleagues**
- **Anonymous feedback invited using QR code**
- **Guides uploaded on intranet and shared with all people leaders**
- **Promoted on Viva Engage**
- **Discussed with ND colleague support network**



# The guides support the wider conversation

- Neurodiversity Colleague Support Network
- Supporting conversations with Line Managers
- Manager training and induction
- Supporting HRBPs conversations and guidance



# Key learnings

- **Seeking input from colleagues with lived experience is critical**
- **External expertise / approval added further validation**
- **Connect with internal experts as early as possible (e.g IT)**
- **Communicate, communicate, communicate!**

# Next Steps

- Continue seeking feedback via our ND network, and others with lived experience.
- Update and adapt the guides (at least!) annually
- Neurodiversity celebration week
- Reviewing talent attraction processes and documents
- Work experience in our labs

# Breakout Rooms – Discussion 2

**(15 - 20 minutes)**

- 1) What initiatives have or are you planning to implement?
- 2) How can you evaluate the effectiveness of your organisation's neurodiversity initiatives?
- 3) What needs to change in the next 12 months to improve neurodiversity inclusion at your workplace?

# enei Resources

- [Employer Guides Neurodiversity in the Workplace](#)
- [Quick Guide: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\) in the Workplace](#)
- [Quick Guide: Autism in the Workplace](#)
- [Quick Guide: Dyscalculia in the Workplace](#)
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# Contact Us

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