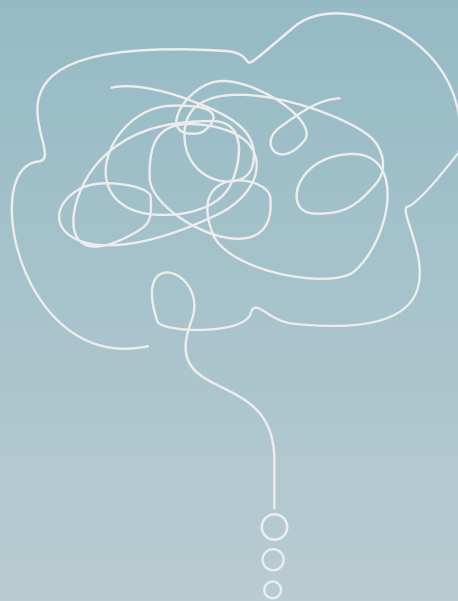


CREATING A NEURODIVERGENT- FRIENDLY INTERVIEW PROCESS

A practical guide for small business
employers to build inclusive recruitment
experiences.



WHY NEURODIVERGENT-FRIENDLY INTERVIEWS MATTER

Traditional interview processes are often designed around what works for neurotypical candidates — fast thinking, recalling examples on the spot, handling ambiguous questions with ease.

For many neurodivergent candidates, especially those with ADHD or autism, that's exactly where things break down. They may:

- Struggle with uncertainty or lack of structure
- Find it difficult to retrieve examples quickly from memory under pressure
- Find it harder to process questions or understand what is being assessed by a question
- Experience sensory overwhelm in busy or unfamiliar environments

None of that is a reflection of their skills or potential to do a job — just of the process itself.

THE BENEFITS

By making small, thoughtful adjustments to your interviews, you help candidates show their actual strengths.

Tailoring your recruitment process creates a fairer, more inclusive experience that helps neurodivergent candidates perform at their best.

Benefits include:

- Attracting diverse talent with unique perspectives and problem-solving abilities
- Reducing stress, misunderstandings, and no-shows
- Making better hiring decisions based on real capability
- Building your reputation as an inclusive, forward-thinking employer

For small businesses, these changes are simple, practical, and impactful and they help you find the right person for the role, not just the one who happens to interview well.

PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION & COMMUNICATION

Many neurodivergent individuals thrive with predictability and struggle with uncertainty.

We recommend providing candidates with specific details about the interview process at least 48 hours in advance.

This should include:

- Exact location with parking/transport details
- Names and roles of interviewers
- Interview format (panel, one-to-one, practical tasks)
- Example questions or list of competencies to allow them to prepare
- Expected duration
- Offer reasonable adjustments proactively
- Offer a range of interview formats, such as online, telephone or in person, where possible

INTERVIEW FORMAT ADJUSTMENTS

If a candidate has told you they are neurodivergent or asked for reasonable adjustments, consider what modifications could make the interview more pleasant for them.

Environmental considerations

- Offer a quiet, private space away from busy office areas
- Minimise interruptions (phones, people walking through)
- Consider lighting - avoid harsh fluorescents if possible
- Have water available

Flexible timing options

- See if they have a preference for mornings or afternoons
- Allow extra time - schedule 45 minutes instead of 30 or 1.5 hours rather than 1 hour
- Add in a break if the candidate needs to reset

FOCUS ON SKILLS, NOT PERSONALITY

When assessing neurodivergent candidates, it's vital to prioritise job-relevant skills over personality traits or interview mannerisms.

- Evaluate skills and experience directly linked to the role
- Avoid penalising candidates for differences in communication style or social behaviours, such as fidgeting or lack of eye contact
- Don't rely on subjective impressions like "likeability" or "fit" without clear job relevance
- Use structured scoring to keep evaluations objective and fair
- Recognise that neurodiverse candidates might interview differently than they perform on the job
- Realise that they might need different communication styles but deliver excellent results.

This approach ensures your hiring decisions are inclusive, practical, and focused on what really matters.

QUESTION TECHNIQUES THAT SHOWCASE STRENGTHS

Structured, specific questions

Instead of "Tell me about yourself," try:

- "What specific aspects of this role interest you most?"
- "Can you walk me through how you approached [specific task from their CV]?"
- "What work environment helps you produce your best results?"

Competency-based examples with context

- Provide the STAR method framework upfront
- Allow extra thinking and processing time
- Accept written notes or preparation materials
- Consider practical assessments rather than relying on questions

Avoid problematic questions

Skip questions that unfairly disadvantage neurodivergent candidates:

- "Where do you see yourself in 5 years?" (executive function challenges)
- Surprise tasks or "thinking on your feet" scenarios without warning

POST-INTERVIEW

Follow-up and Decision-Making

- Use a consistent scoring matrix for all candidates, focusing on job-relevant skills and competencies
- Involve at least two people in interviewing and decision discussions to challenge personal bias
- If unsure after the interview, consider alternative assessments (e.g., work samples, trial tasks) to better evaluate skills
- Provide constructive feedback based on how candidate responses matched the role's requirements — not on interview style or how questions were answered
- Invite candidates to share feedback on the process to help improve inclusivity and experience

This structured, fair approach helps ensure objective decisions and positive candidate experiences, whatever the outcome.

**“EMPLOYERS WHO
EMBRACE
NEURODIVERSITY TAP
INTO UNIQUE TALENTS
THAT CAN TRANSFORM
TEAMS AND DRIVE
EXTRAORDINARY
OUTCOMES.”**

*Judy Singer, Sociologist and Neurodiversity
Advocate*

