Hidden Impairments and Neurodiversity
Practical guidance for the employer

Do-IT>

Individuals with hidden impairments, such as ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia (DCD), dyscalculia and specific language impairments, may have difficulties in a number of areas.

Each individual will also have many strengths that could be an advantage to every business, such as finding alternative solutions to problems, seeing the bigger picture, good analytical skills, and good communication skills.

Irrespective of a diagnosis or difficulties, you may want to consider the following approaches:

- Ask the individual what has helped them in the past at work.
- Ask them what (or who) could help them now.
- Try to understand how their challenges effect them at work.
- Consider developing an individual development plan and regularly review it to see what is working well or not.
- Arrange short and regular meetings to discuss goals, and review how work is going. This can make a big difference, leading to positive outcomes.
- Ask if (and what) the individual wants others to know about their diagnosis (including peers and line managers) and how they want it described / told to others.
- Ask what situations / tasks make it harder for them to complete their work, such as background noises or working in group settings.
- Discuss, where possible, the individual's preferred form of communication (e.g. email, orally, face-to-face meetings).
- Encourage the individual to consider their mental wellbeing, as they may be at greater risk of anxiety and depression. Mindful approaches can be helpful.
- Where possible, use technology to help with work tasks, including spell-checkers, text-to-speech, proofing and speech-to-text software, organisers and alarms. The individual may need training and practice with these tools in order to become confident in their work setting.
- Consider organising an Access to Work assessment.

Please remember that every individual will be different, and challenges may depend on the specific workplace setting and type of tasks asked of the individual.

Below are some resources that can help you supporting individuals in the workplace. All links can be found at **doitprofiler.com/wpp/resources**.

Support organisations
- AADDUK
- ADDISS
- ADHD Europe
- Adult Dyslexia Organisation (UK)
- Afasic
- Afasic Scotland
- Autism Initiatives
- Autism Scotland
- British Association for Supported Employment
- British Dyslexia Association
- Dyslexia Action
- Dyslexia Association Ireland
- Dyslexia Scotland
- Dyspraxia Association of Ireland
- Dyspraxia Foundation
- Dyspraxia Scotland
- Education Scotland
- Foundation for people with Learning Disabilities
- HADD
- INCADDS
- Mencap
- National Autism Society
- Royal College of Psychiatrists
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
- Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability

Other useful resources
- Access to Work
- Easy read materials
- How to check readability of materials
- Disability Confident Campaign
- For more detailed information and guidance, go to doitprofiler.com/resources

For more information on our computerised workplace assessment tools, go to doitprofiler.com/workplace

doitprofiler.com/workplace

Literacy/Dyslexia	Social and Communication/ASD	Attention, Concentration/ADHD	Coordination/ Dyspraxia (DCD)	Maths/Dyscalculia
• Consider reading materials and how they are presented. • Have "easy read" materials available, where possible. • Proofing software, like Ginger or Ghotit, can be a great help to individuals. • Utilise text-to-speech and speech-to-text software, which are often built into computer systems as standard, or discuss trying free versions online. • Spell-checkers can also be very helpful tools for individuals. • Avoid printing on bright white paper. Use cream or pale blue instead. • Use an easy to read font, such as Arial, Verdana, Comic Sans and size of 12+. • Use short sentences and leave plenty of space between lines of text. • Avoid asking the individual to read out aloud in a group, unless this has been discussed beforehand. • Create templates for reports to limit text an individual must enter, saving time. • Write down instructions and use visual prompts to act as reminders. • Email, colour code and / or underline important text. • Allow more time to read information. Explain the meanings of words if not clear.	• Address the individual by name to ensure they know you are speaking to them. • Ask the individual to repeat back what's been said to make sure they understand. If they don't, try and explain differently. Show, as well as tell, where you can. • If a change is occurring, such as change of staff, work tasks or work setting, describe what will happen beforehand if possible. • Ask if there are specific settings that make it harder for the individual to work, such as background noise, bright lighting or group working. • Avoid making jokes and using of metaphors, such as 'get a grip' etc. • Be specific in what you are asking the individual to do. Avoid saying things like 'in about 5 minutes'. • Maintaining eye contact may be harder and may not indicate the individual is not listening to you. Discuss what is comfortable when communicating if appropriate to do so. • Avoid using work jargon and acronyms. • Create a list of words and terms used in the work setting.	• Noisy and / or busy surroundings may make it harder for the individual to focus or understand important information. If possible, discuss what works best for the individual. This could include being away from the 'main stream' of traffic, or where appropriate, wear headphones to reduce external noise when concentrating. • Discuss taking breaks in work, even for a few minutes, to refocus. Setting alarms can remind the individual to do this on a regular basis. • Where possible, when giving important information, choose a quiet setting. • Short, regular meetings can help to set and review goals and will help the individual stay on task. • Use colour coding for filing and sorting documents and other information to help to find things more easily. • Discuss setting alarms and creating warnings of deadlines using technology, such as MS Outlook, Google, or on their phones. • Show to how to set up diary systems to record work, targets, and set reminders.	• Handwriting may often be difficult to read. Discuss the use of technology, including dictation software. • Set-up report templates, where possible, to limit the need for writing. • Encourage the individual to take time to practice their typing skills to increase speed and accuracy. • Help the individual become organised by sorting paperwork, filing, organising their calendar and setting deadlines for work. • Explain how to do new tasks, and allow more time to practice and learn a new skill. • Write a list of actions / tasks down so they can see what needs to be done and cross them off as they are completed. • Provide guidance on what is expected, and show the individual how to best achieve this. • If new skills are introduced, allow additional time for practice. • Encourage the individual to list actions or tasks that need to be done at the beginning and end of every day.	• Discuss the use of a calculator on phone or computer. • Set up templates in Excel for specific tasks. • Discuss setting up direct debits for their wages in order to limit the need for calculating and online banking. • Discuss how to store PIN codes and passwords securely.