

An Employers Guide to ADHD in the Workplace

This guide is to help support employers who are employing or are considering employing someone who has told you they have ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Not everyone with ADHD will need extra support within the workplace, however those who do may need small changes to be made at little or no cost, these are known as reasonable adjustments within the Equality Act 2010.

People with ADHD often talk about lack of support from their employer as a reason why they may struggle to keep employment. However, with support in overcoming difficulties, understanding, and making some small changes to capitalise on their strengths and talents, they are likely to be a great asset to your organisation. The information provided aims to answer the many questions you may have about ADHD:

What is ADHD?

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition affecting brain structure and neurotransmission: the way in which messages are communicated around the brain and different areas of the brain are activated. ADHD is thought to be caused by a complex mix of environmental and genetic factors. ADHD is present from childhood, but an increasing number of adults are now being diagnosed with ADHD for the first time as the condition was not as well understood as it is now.

How will it affect my colleague?

The three main symptoms of ADHD are inattention, impulsiveness and hyperactivity, and ADHD will affect each individual in varying degrees. People diagnosed with ADHD often have problems with sleep. They may present fidgety, fast paced during conversation, moving quickly from one task to the next, or unable to complete a task particularly where there is a long deadline.

How will it affect the rest of the team and organisation?

Working with a colleague with ADHD can be an enriching experience, however the right support is required to make this a success. People with ADHD often show strengths in the following areas:

- Ability to 'hyperfocus' on things they are interested in
- Willingness to take risks
- Spontaneous and flexible
- Good in a crisis
- Creative ideas – thinking outside the box
- Relentless energy
- Often optimistic

- Being motivated by short term deadlines – working in sprints rather than marathons
- Often an eye for detail

What can I do to support them?

Employers have a responsibility to protect employees and potential employees from discrimination and harassment, and to make reasonable adjustments to assist them to do their jobs. Offering support will help the person with ADHD to perform to their very best and this is positive all round. Examples of support that can be offered:

- Assign tasks based on strength
- Consider flexible scheduling and allow regular movement breaks
- Reduce environmental distractions e.g., allow the use of headphones.
- Have visible prompts and physical reminders, including a clock
- Provide regular support and training, such as supervisions, mentoring and coaching.
- Clarify the expectations of the job, making sure instructions are concise and specific.

As an employer you have the ability to lead the way in making the world a more inclusive place. By making adaptations to practice, thus promoting business growth, helps people with learning difficulties lead a more fulfilling life of their choosing.

Further Information:

<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/An-Employers-Guide-to-ADHD-in-the-Workplace-Scottish-ADHD-Coalition-1.pdf>

<https://adhdwork.add.org/help-adhd-employees-succeed/>

<https://adhduk.co.uk/adhd-work-welfare-pack/>