

'Neurodiversity in the workplace' e-learning module

An e-learning module to improve the workforce's understanding of neurodiversity, promoting a more inclusive workplace.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) Leadership, development and learning Productivity
Organisation	National Crime Agency
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Region	North West
Partners	Government department
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	October 2024
Scale of initiative	National

Key details

Target group	Adults Disability General public Workforce
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Aim

The aim of the module is to enable the workforce to recognise and support the needs of neurodivergent individuals, by implementing appropriate workplace adjustments and inclusive practices.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the module are to:

- increase staff awareness and understanding of neurodiversity and workplace needs
- improve the support provided to neurodivergent employees across teams and departments
- increase employees' confidence when discussing neurodiversity needs and requesting support
- reduce the number of human resource (HR) conduct or performance cases involving neurodivergent employees
- increasing managers' awareness of the use of appropriate workplace adjustments and inclusive practices

Description

The 'neurodiversity in the workplace' module was developed in response to findings from a disability survey conducted by the National Crime Agency's (NCA) Disability Network Advisory Group. The survey revealed that many neurodivergent colleagues felt unsupported in the workplace and were reluctant to disclose their condition due to fears of stigma and misunderstanding. In light of these findings, the National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) identified a need to strengthen awareness, understanding, and inclusive workplace practices across the organisation.

The purpose of the module is to move beyond a “business as usual” approach, which may have unintentionally overlooked the diverse ways people think, communicate, process information, and work.

Planning and development

The interactive e-learning module has been created by the NCCU and the NCA. The planning for the content involved the NCCU cyber skills and development team, the disability network advisory group, and the neurodiversity support group. Their role was to provide subject matter expertise, lived experience perspectives, and guidance on accessibility and inclusive learning design. Throughout the development process, accessibility has been a key consideration, to ensure the module is fully accessible to officers and staff with all abilities and learning needs.

Once developed, the e-learning module, was tested by three rounds of focus groups, which included neurodivergent officers. The focus groups made suggestions for addressing identified knowledge gaps and accessibility factors within the design choices. Prior to full rollout, the e-learning module was signed off by the senior leadership team.

'Neurodiversity in the workplace' module

The 'neurodiversity in the workplace' module takes 30 minutes to complete and covers the following conditions:

- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)
- Dyslexia
- Dyscalculia
- Dyspraxia
- Dysgraphia
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Bipolar Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)
- Tourette's syndrome

The module was designed to provide the workforce with an introduction to neurodiverse conditions and characteristics. Additionally, the module outlines some of the challenges neurodivergent

individuals may experience such as reading, writing, balance or spatial awareness, conventional social interactions and changes to structure routines.

While the module is optional, it is promoted to new starters via the onboarding literature as suggested training and is advertised to current officers through the Disability Network Advisory Group newsletters.

To support the implementation of the e-learning module, the NCA have created a memorandum of understanding. The document outlines the importance of the training and states that if the e-learning module is provided to a force, it must not be altered or further distributed without consent from the NCA. The wider distribution of the e-learning module is available on request and must be hosted on the force's learning management system, to enable the gathering of feedback.

There have been no costs in the development and implementation of the e-module.

Overall impact

Implementing the 'neurodiversity in the workplace' e-module has strengthened organisational understanding of the importance of inclusive practice and highlighted the value of engaging with staff networks and individuals with lived experience.

There has been positive feedback from the workforce who have commented that the module is well presented and offers an insight into neurodiverse conditions and characteristics. Neurodivergent staff have reported feeling more confident to approach their line manager for support and request reasonable adjustments.

The e-learning module has been shared with Cumbria Constabulary to support wider organisational learning and awareness.

Learning

- A key success of the initiative has been the collaborative approach during the planning and development phase. By working with different group and teams, this has ensured the content is accurate, meaningful, and reflective of real workplace experiences.
- A positive outcome has been developing the e-learning module internally, using existing resources and expertise. This has meant that there have been no major barriers relating to external funding or procurement processes. By utilising an in-house e-learning platform, this has

enabled the implementation process to be more straightforward and allowed the module to be distributed efficiently across the organisation.

- Responding directly to staff feedback is essential. The disability survey revealed that neurodivergent colleagues felt insufficiently supported and were reluctant to disclose conditions due to concerns around stigma. By addressing these issues transparently through training, the organisation demonstrated that staff feedback had been acknowledged and acted upon, strengthening its commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing.
- A barrier has been ensuring that neurodiversity is approached in a balanced and informed way. It is important to avoid stereotypes or presenting neurodiverse conditions solely through challenges, while also recognising the genuine workplace barriers some colleagues experience. Achieving this balance required careful consultation, review, and input from staff networks and subject matter experts.

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