**An employee’s guide to ADHD in the workplace**

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a lifespan neurodevelopmental disorder that affects the way people behave and it is protected under the Equalities Act 2010 if it manifests itself in a way which is disabling.

This document has been put together for anyone who has ADHD and wants help with work. People with ADHD may struggle to get adequate support from their employer and many end up leaving their job but are legally entitled to support. With support, understanding and small changes to help support your behaviour traits, you are likely to be as great an asset to your organisation as any employee.

ADHD and workplace protection

Under the Equality Act 2010, an employee with ADHD may be considered to have a disability if the condition has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long term’ negative effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This means that employees have a right to ‘reasonable adjustments’ to make their working environment safe and productive. These adjustments should be things that don’t pose any undue hardship to your employer (i.e., they must be reasonable). These will include providing support that isn’t outrageously expensive or burdensome to your employer.

There are two main routes to getting assistance at work:

1. Have an occupational health assessment to identify the support they need (driven by your employer)
2. Apply for [Access to Work](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work) to be assessed by the Department of Work and pensions to see what support you need (driven by you, the employee). Access to Work will agree to pay for the majority of costs after the first £1,000 of spending on reasonable adjustments, and if you apply in the first 6 weeks of a job the items purchased belong to you, and not your employer.

After these assessments have happened, a report will be generated which will suggest reasonable adjustments that can be made to support you.

Reasonable adjustments.

So, what might reasonable adjustments in the workplace look like? ADHD is often associated with an inability to focus (or to choose what to focus on) and/or hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour and therefore adjustments taking these behaviours into account may be helpful.

1. Focus/attention-based adjustments

1. Allow staff to take short breaks throughout the day. The frequency should be agreed with your employer.
2. Provision of bullet pointed key points or actions from meetings. Some people with ADHD have issues with working memory and focus and meetings can be challenging.
3. Allow you to focus on one job at a time and avoidance of multi-tasking.
4. Provision of assistive technology where appropriate - software like MindView, Asana and Trello can help organise tasks, apps like Todoist or Microsoft To Do can help with priority setting
5. Provision of a quiet space or a “do not disturb” door sign, and any equivalent function on telephone and email, especially when you have a specific task that requires intense concentration.
6. Provision of noise cancelling headphone, dictation software, a Dictaphone, text to speech software and transcription software.
7. Optimisation of the sensory environment. Many adults with ADHD also have photophobia so allowing you to adapt their work environment to limit sensory stimulation.
8. Allowing you to work from home where possible, especially if you have anxiety issues.

B. Hyperactivity-based adjustments

1. Allowing you room to move if you need it. If you need to move a lot, perhaps provision of a chair with a wide range of movement or a rising desk allowing you to stand.
2. A stress ball or fidget toy may satisfy your need to move.

C, Organisation (some are already covered above)

1. Provision of a workspace that is quiet and as free from distractions as practical.
2. Support for working from home occasionally, where appropriate.
3. Provision of physical organisational supports, such as a whiteboard or a wall planner that can visually highlight tasks.
4. Provision of clear, short reminders of important tasks and deadlines and regular reviews of priorities and projects.
5. Use of Microsoft Outlook calendar (or alternative) diary invites to help reinforce deadlines.
6. Provision of or access to organisational software such as Asana or Trello.
7. Support to create a daily/weekly “To Do” list and support the use of apps such as Todoist or Microsoft To Do to manage this (paper also works!).
8. Support for breaking work up into manageable chunks where appropriate.
9. Provision of templates for detailed work, such as structured reports.

D. Other factors

ADHD in adults is associated with several co-existing conditions which can impair your ability to work effectively. These include anxiety, mood disorders, sensitivity to rejection, migraine, and others.

Some adjustments for this might include:

1. Identification of a staff mentor/buddy –they can help defuse difficult emotional situations before they become significant.
2. Support for time taken off should a crisis arise. Disability leave is a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. It is paid leave from work for disabled employees who need treatment, rehabilitation or assessment related to their disability. It can usually be planned and is for a fixed period.