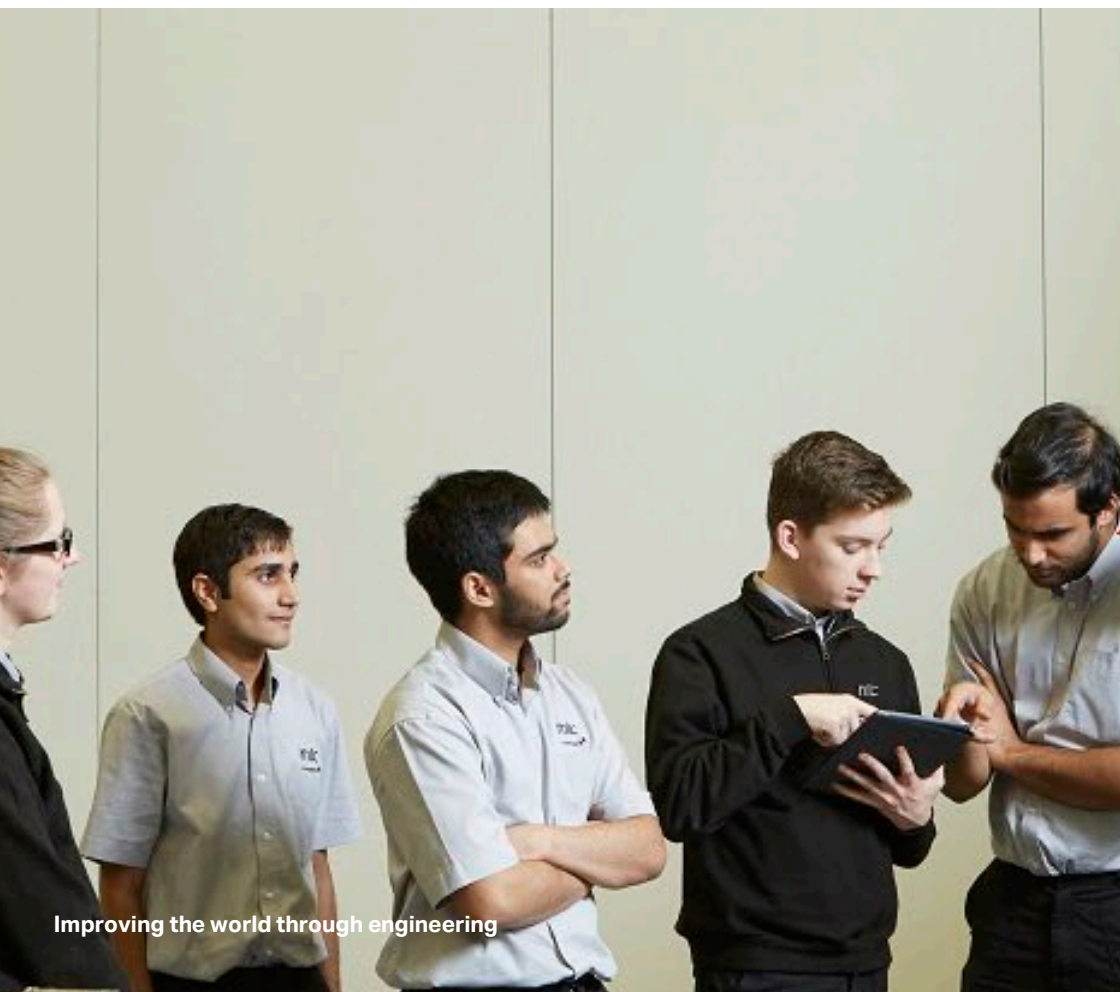


NEURODIVERSITY FACTSHEET

Institution of
**MECHANICAL
ENGINEERS**



Improving the world through engineering

NEURODIVERSITY FACTSHEET

An Introduction

What is neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is an approach to understanding and addressing the unique spectrum of biological, neurological, and physiological traits unique to all individuals. It is based on the understanding that there is no one "normal" or "right" way of thinking, behaving, or learning.

It is a celebration of the neurological differences found in individuals who have been labelled with learning disabilities, autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other cognitive differences.

What does neurotypical mean?

Neurotypical is a term used to refer to people who do not have any visible neurological differences, and generally have the same way of thinking, behaving, and acting as others in their culture.

They are not affected by any recognised neurological conditions, and it is important to distinguish that neurotypicality does not refer to someone's IQ, but rather their neurological state.

What types of neurodiversity are there?

Neurodiversity comes in many forms and along a very wide spectrum, so whilst we cannot list all of them, the most commonly known are ADHD, Aspergers, Autism, Tourette's Syndrome, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia – please refer to additional factsheet named 'Different Types of Neurodiversity' to learn more about each one.

Engineering and Neurodiversity

How does Engineering link with neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity and engineering are closely linked in several ways. For example, engineering processes and design require problem-solving abilities, creative thinking, and a variety of skills that those with neurodiversity's such as autism spectrum disorder may possess, or that can be adapted to fit their needs.

Neurodiversity can also be beneficial to engineering teams due to the different perspectives that come from having workers of different backgrounds, believing and thinking differently.

Additionally, multiple studies have found that engineering teams can benefit from the inclusion of neurodiverse members, who are often structured and detail-oriented, and can help to ensure that the team reaches its goals in a timely and efficient manner.

How can I support neurodiverse colleagues at work?

1. Establish open lines of communication. Regularly check in with neurodiverse colleagues as well as reach out to offer support, depending on their individual needs.
2. Offer accommodations such as flexible schedules, visual aids, extra breaks, and a comfortable working environment.
3. Allow alternatives to traditional meetings, such as using virtual meetings, email, or text messaging.
4. Stay informed about neurodiversity and its potential workplace effects.
5. Create a respectful and supportive atmosphere that encourages neurodiverse colleagues to express their needs, emotions, and ideas openly.
6. Offer additional training and resources when needed.
7. Respectfully challenge any behaviour or comments that may be offensive to neurodiverse colleagues.

Learning More About Neurodiversity

How can I build my understanding further around neurodiversity?

There are numerous resources available online to help you understand more about neurodiversity. Some helpful resources include Exceptional Individuals website, which provides resources, information, and support networks, as well many articles, videos, podcasts and TED Talks which can be a great way to gain further insights about neurodiversity.

Also take some time to read [this article](#) from our own website from back in 2014 surrounding a Cambridge University study, showing how engineering is the most autistic profession.

Finally, please be aware that whilst one person who is neurodiverse may function and or behave in a certain way, that is not an indication that all people with that particular level of neurodiversity will be the same. Neurodiversity is a spectrum; every individual is different and therefore their needs are different.