

# EDNA

**Employee Disability and Neurodivergent Advice**

**Presented by:** Lisa Richardson & Alice Morris  
EDNA Disability and Accessibility Advisors

NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight  
Health and Wellbeing Programme

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## What is EDNA?

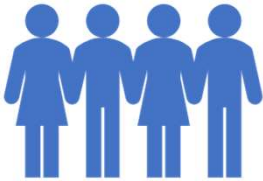
EDNA stands for Employee Disability and Neurodivergent Advice Service

A confidential information and advice service for NHS colleagues in Hampshire & Isle of Wight, who are living with a disability, long term condition and/or are neurodivergent

EDNA offers support and advice for workplace reasonable adjustments, information, signposting, advocacy, provision of manager training and more

The service is provided by a specialist team, who offer one-to-one advice and a safe space to talk, as well as help with areas such as: employment rights and HR advice

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### What is EDNA'S aim?

- Provide a comprehensive advice service
- Create a healthier and comfortable working environment
- Build a more inclusive culture within the workplace
- Empower colleagues with timely and accessible information

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### What makes us different?



**Advocacy**  
A tailor-made service that is tailored to the individuals need

**Ease of Access**  
Employees do not need to have a formal referral made to us; they can self-refer to EDNA

**EDNA provides consistency and partnership**  
We deliver knowledge and expertise

**Support with Access to Work**  
From the start to finish


**EDNA can create easy pathways**  
We can signpost our people to staff networks, charities and additional resources

**Build networks**  
By working together, we build networks, help break down barriers, help create a joined-up service

**Inclusion for all**  
We can help celebrate positive practices and provide support and advice for all, when needed most


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## MEET THE TEAM



*A little bit about the EDNA Team*

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**Lisa Richardson**  
Disability & Accessibility Advisor

Lisa has 14 years' experience working within the NHS With the first two years working within the community looking after patients with complex needs and end of life care. She has worked in a clinical background working on the wards both in Surgery and Specialist Medicine working as an Associate Nurse Practitioner. She provided a service to patients and supported colleagues who were living with a disability, long term condition and or who were neurodivergent.


Lisa studied at Solent University in 'Class 2015' where she was diagnosed with Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia, this didn't stop her, she sourced support for reasonable adjustments towards her studies and came out of university with a distinction.

For the past seven years Lisa has worked for the Occupational Health Department within UHS as an Accessibility and Disability Officer where she provided advocacy, advice and support for reasonable adjustments in the workplace for employees who lived with a disability, long term condition and/or neurodivergence.

**Lisa believes in a sense of belonging and acceptance and wants to share this journey with you and make it be the best it can be, so that we all feel a sense of achievement and as a whole being, where inclusivity is all.**

Lisa was nominated a hospital hero for her determination, commitment and her remarkable success in creating a valuable service for her colleagues. She is proud of her achievements in making it evolve to what it is today and has clear passion for her colleagues and a real sense of drive to take the EDNA service forward across many other organisations within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight region.

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**Alice Morris**  
Disability & Accessibility Advisor

Alice has worked within the NHS for four years; within the first two years Alice worked for the Children & Families Service as a Speech & Language Therapy Assistant where she worked within various settings; organising and delivering therapy activities. Alice has supported individuals who have a disability and those who are on the autistic spectrum.

For the past two years Alice has been working as part of the Operational Management Team in Solent NHS Trust's Vaccination and Health Inequalities Service. Alice was involved in the development and coordination of vaccination centres across Hampshire & IOW and within a variety of community settings.

Prior to Alice's time working for the NHS, she has enjoyed working in a range of different roles supporting people with social and physical learning disabilities. This led Alice to pursue a degree in Special Educational Needs & Disabilities which has given her a broader understanding of how to better support individuals with a disability and/or long-term condition.

Alice believes that a sense of belonging ties diversity, equality, and inclusion together. Ensuring that colleagues are respected, valued, and understood whilst being their authentic self.


*"Alice is excited and passionate about the service and looks forward to offering support and advice to NHS colleagues and helping them flourish in the workplace."*

Alice was diagnosed with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia & Dyscalculia during her time at university in 2015 where she sourced support for reasonable adjustments towards her studies and has continued to use these in everyday life.

Alice talks openly about her disability as it is an important part of who she is.

*"Good friends will stop seeing condition or impairment as a barrier but just an aspect of your life. It won't be the only thing they know about you."*

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**Jacqueline Holt**  
EDNA Administrator

Jacquie has many years' experience of working in Childcare. Jacquie has 5 children, 1 who became deaf following meningitis at 16 weeks, 1 who had severe asthma and eczema and then at 16 her eldest son unfortunately took his own life. This has led to Jacquie having multiple health issues, including depression and anxiety, following his death.

Jacquie had a very simple accident whilst away on a Scout camp, which left Jacquie with chronic pain and has undergone many spinal operations. She is now registered disabled and has mobility issues.

Jacquie vowed never to let any of her disabilities stop her and worked hard to stay in work and learnt to walk again. Her goals are to stay at work even if its 1 day a week, and Jacquie has the support and assistance of her main carer (her husband) and her therapy Maine Coon Cat.

Since her accident Jacquie has achieved several NVQ3 qualifications and says her proudest moment was when she achieved her HNC in business management – through distance learning whilst also holding down a full-time job and her busy family life.

**Jacquie believes for us to put "patients first", we must firstly put our staff first.**  
**She believes, if we look after our staff, we will have less sickness, reduced turnover of staff, therefore creating a more inclusive workforce.**

**We want our staff to be able to do their roles alongside their colleagues along a level playing field.**

Jacquie worked closely with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team to set up a new staff network to support employees with a disability and/or long-term condition.

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**Aims and Impact**

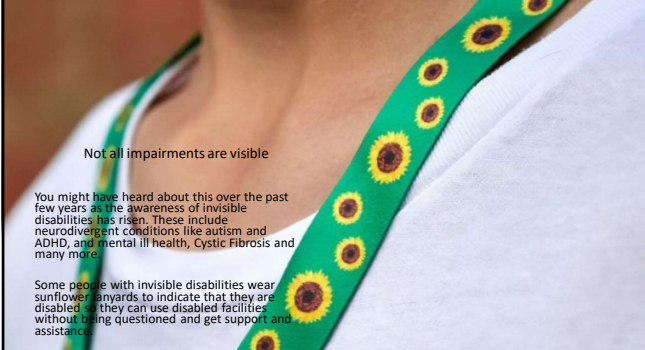
- ❖ Keep staff supported
- ❖ Improve staff retention, and morale
- ❖ Benefit our employees' Health and Wellbeing
- ❖ Focus on employee's experience within the workplace
- ❖ Solve problems before they impact our colleagues and the service

**Employees who experience burn out are less productive, incur more health costs and are at greater risk of serious illness!**

Unless employees feel their best both physically and emotionally, they can never be fully engaged with their organisation!

**EDNA is about employee engagement, with its overall aim to improve the wellbeing of the workforce.**

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Not all impairments are visible

You might have heard about this over the past few years as the awareness of invisible disabilities has risen. These include neurodivergent conditions like autism and ADHD, and mental ill health, Cystic Fibrosis and many more.


Some people with invisible disabilities wear sunflower lanyards to indicate that they are disabled so they can use disabled facilities without being questioned and get support and assistance.

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Let's look further into what we can offer support with!




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Neurodiversity in the Workplace

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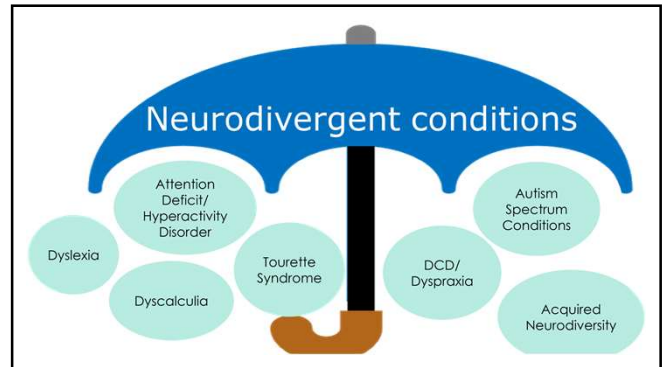


## WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

"Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways"

"There is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits"


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What can we do as a workforce on a personal level?

- ✓ Get to know each other
- ✓ Use person centered language
- ✓ Question your own thoughts and attitudes towards individuals who have a disability
- ✓ Say or do something if you see discrimination
- ✓ Support inclusion



*Grow Your Awareness*

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*"Organisations must consider the broader picture; inclusion is more than simply 'including' diversity – it is about individual experience and work, and creating a positive environment in which everyone can influence, share knowledge and have their perspectives valued"*

(The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, December 2022)


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## EDNA

- ✓ Listens to our employees, which can make the organisation a great place to work
- ✓ Can help our employees feel valued
- ✓ Focuses on creating an inclusive environment

The **stronger** we are **together** the more likely we are to **attract and retain!**

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## Access to Work


Making work possible

Access to Work: get support for reasonable adjustments if you have a disability or health condition

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Access to Work can usually provide a grant to pay for the cost of the support, for example it can provide funds towards:

- Special aids and equipment
- Adaptations to equipment
- Travel to and from work
- Communication support at interview
- Support workers
- Mental Health support





*You are considered disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect - beyond 12 months - on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities (Equality Act, 2010)*

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**Help with the extra costs disabled people face in work**



*Many reasonable adjustments involve little or no cost and could include:*

- Making changes to an individual's working pattern
- Providing training or mentoring
- Making alterations to the workplace premises
- Ensuring that information is provided in accessible formats
- Modifying or acquiring equipment and/or software
- Allowing extra time during exams



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**We can guess what some of you might be thinking!**

"I don't really understand the Access to Work process!"

"I have received a report from Access to Work for my employee, but I still don't know what to do next, where do I start?"

"Are all of these adjustments required?"

"How much will this cost me?"


"Are there any other adjustments that could be considered?"

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Let's talk about the support managers can help with?




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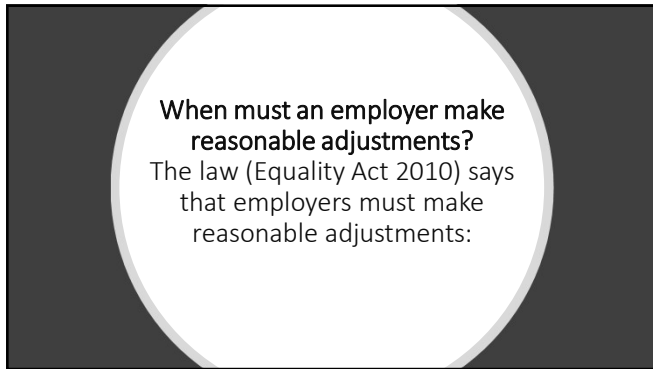
**Reasonable Adjustments at work**  
*What are these?*

Changes an employer can make to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to someone's disability. Such as:

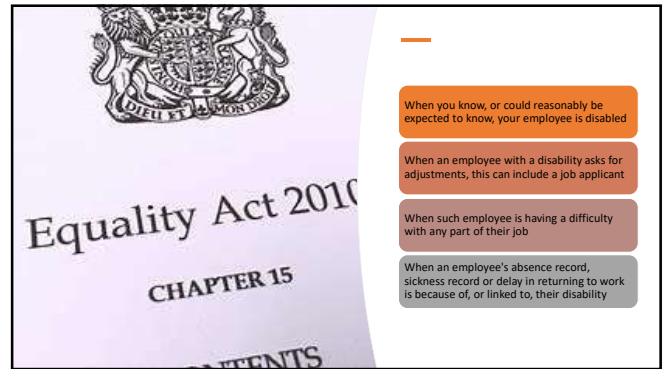
- ✓ Make changes to the workplace
- ✓ Change an employee's working arrangements
- ✓ Finding a different way to do something
- ✓ Provide equipment, services or support



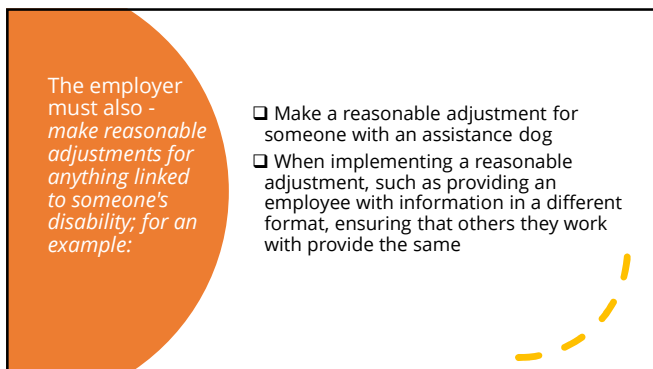
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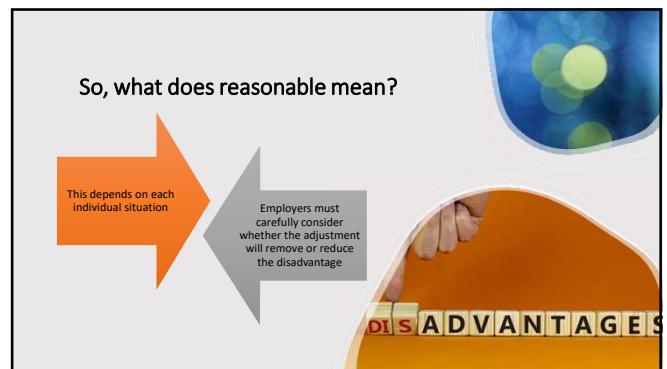
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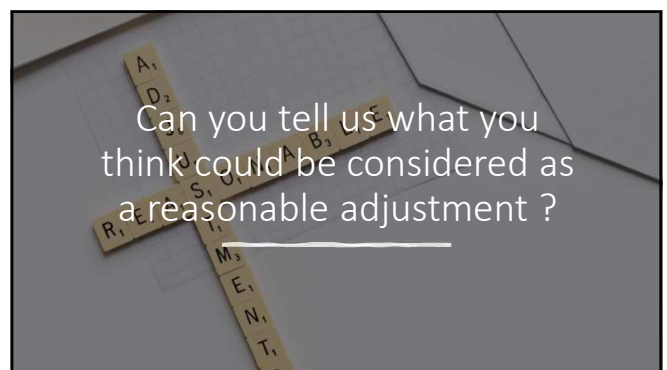
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**Can you think of some requests for adjustments that might not be reasonable?**

Please use the chat field, to share some of your thoughts!



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**An example of when an adjustment is not reasonable**

*A wheelchair user asks for a lift to be installed into the work premises so they can have access to work on the third floor!*

*The employer makes enquiries and finds that there is no space for a lift to be installed or, the cost of installing a lift would be damaging to the organisation*


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**Who pays for reasonable adjustments?**

- ✓ The employer

*Many adjustments may cost very little and can be affordable*

- ✓ Not all requests are possible or may not be reasonable



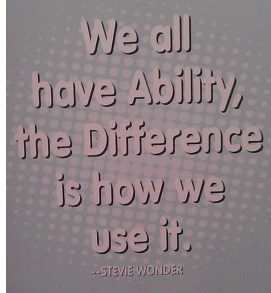
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**When to talk about a disability**

When an individual tells their employer or potential employer they're disabled, the employer has a legal responsibility to:

- support them, including making reasonable adjustments
- protect them from disability discrimination, including harassment and victimisation

An employer has the same legal responsibility if they could reasonably be expected to know someone has a disability, even if the person has not told them.



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**Let's look at an example**

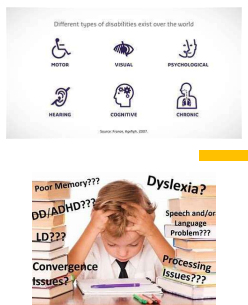
**Case scenario**

*An employer notices an employee within their team has difficulty with remembering instructions and has difficulty with spelling. They also observe that they take longer to read things.*

It's reasonable for the employer to consider whether the person might have a disability.


- The employer should not ask directly "Do you have a disability like dyslexia?" The employer should not try and diagnose someone - only a medical professional can do that.
- The employer should focus on the support they can provide and encourage the employee to ask for any adjustments that they might need.

(ACAS, December 2022)



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**When can an employer ask about a disability?**




*"Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful."*  
- Anonymous

- To prevent health and safety risks
- To avoid disability discrimination
- To monitor the number of disabled people in the organisation

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## Employers must use the right language

- Use appropriate language when talking about a disability
- Banter or jokes are not acceptable
- Be sensitive in terms that are used
- Do not use words such as: handicapped or wheelchair bound



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## How else can I be a supportive manager?

It is absolutely vital to ensure you're actively recruiting and supporting employees with disabilities.

Embed accessibility into every part of your recruitment process. Being an accessible recruiter goes far beyond simply stating on job specs that you can adapt your interview processes to meet different candidates' needs.





**8.1m** working age people in the UK have a disability  
If you're not actively recruiting talent your competitors probably are



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## Together we can be supportive, we can help ensure our employees feel inclusive

- ✓ EDNA is here to help breakdown any challenges or barriers you might face as a manager!
- ✓ We can work with you, the employee and other networks such as: Occupational Health, Human Resources and so on, to ensure everyone's needs are met.
- ✓ Signpost your employees to us if they are struggling, might need support, and have a disability, long term condition and/or neurodivergence.
- ✓ We are here to help you continue to be that supportive manager! We can help simplify difficulties and challenges, we can explore and help you achieve positive outcomes

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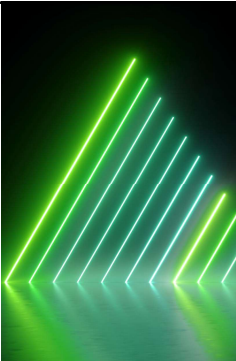
**“The only relevant part of any disability, is ability.”**

Robert M. Hensel

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## What can general accommodations look like?

- Help identify strengths instead of focusing on weaknesses
- Reinforcing creativity
- Pointing out any signs that the individual is overworked – not taking holidays, using their annual leave, staying at work late frequently, not having a lunch break etc
- Providing a coach to suggest ways to increase productivity and maintain a healthy work-life balance



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## In what other ways can EDNA help?

- Explore limitations that the employee is experiencing.
- Look at how these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance.
- Explore what specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations.
- Identify what accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems. Explore if all possible resources are being used to determine possible accommodations.
- Once accommodations are in place EDNA can follow up with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed.
- We can support managers or their team and help raise awareness and/or understanding.


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**Let's work together to develop strategies to ensure all NHS employees have a voice!**

- EDNA can work with staff network groups to facilitate two-way conversations about equality and diversity
- We aim to cater appropriately for the needs and preferences of individuals and work in partnership with the employee and their manager/employer
- The service advocates inclusion in a safe space




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Happy employees are proven to be more productive. Loyalty to our employees results in a strong reputation which attracts great talent that fosters powerful growth and opens the talent pool.

By breaking barriers of the old-fashioned work environment, we make room for an innovative atmosphere, where new ideas, new methods, new ways of working are celebrated and welcomed!

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# EDNA



*Wants to help change the workplace culture and reduce turnover!*  
**We aim to support our employees so that their talents can shine!**

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~~DISABILITY~~

Thank you for your time!

Any questions?

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