

# Heard in the Room

March 2023



[www.diversityproject.com/neurodiversity](http://www.diversityproject.com/neurodiversity)



# Summary

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our roundtable discussions during Neurodiversity Celebration week on the 16th of March. Split between six different breakout groups, we were joined by around 50 people to discuss some of the key challenges in addressing Neurodiversity in the workplace.



- Discussing your experience with adaptations/adjustments
- Dealing with micro aggressions
- Disclosure of your diagnosis
- Whether you perceive Neurodiversity as a disability
- Accessing support in your workplace
- Building a network at your employer

We had a real mix of people from some who had been diagnosed and have disclosed to their employer to those that are only just at the start of their journey.

The level of support was fantastic, and we would like to share some of the notes our chairs made as well as their personal thoughts.

Two quotes from chairs of the breakout groups provide a brilliant summary:

“ I really appreciated the openness and honesty with which the group shared their experiences, both positive and negative. It seemed like the group took away some ideas from one another on things they could take away and put into practice, which was a great outcome from the discussion. It is also clear that there is a lot of variability in the maturity of the conversation around neurodiversity, across both companies and geographies. I can see that there is a lot more work which the Diversity Project could help to lead, that would make a difference for individuals and organisations across our industry. ”

“ People just wanted to have a space to talk about their experience with others who not only wanted to listen but who understood and made them feel seen. ”

“ Participants agreed there is a need to be raising awareness across the industry of neurodiversity as a competitive advantage, as there is a perceived lack of role models and success stories of differently able employees. ”

# Some of the key themes coming from the discussion were as follows:

## Topics

### Disclosure within the workplace

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On disclosure within the workplace we heard a mix of experiences. Many firms are trying to encourage self-disclosure, particularly for reporting or HR purposes. The method for being counted by one employer gave a range of descriptions for the employee to identify their neurodiversity with. However another employer categorised neurodiversity only within disability, so an employee would have to identify as disabled first to be able to report their neurodiversity. The need for more measures to reduce the fear of disclosure was discussed, and negative experiences of being subject to micro-aggressions after disclosure had a further adverse impact.

#### Awareness and Acceptance

On awareness and acceptance, it was good to hear a number of firms beginning their journeys by setting up neurodiversity focussed employee groups, and other firms having made good progress with internal networks. We discussed that measures to make workplaces more inclusive for neurodiversity almost invariably also improve inclusivity for other forms of diversity. Having a culture which makes it easier for neurodivergent people to be open about how they think and work well, is key to having workplaces which work better for neurodivergent people

### Support within the workplace

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On support within the workplace, we were pleased to hear examples where workplace adjustments were implemented effectively on request and the feedback was that HR departments generally understood the legal requirements when such a request was made. However, some participants shared their experiences that an understanding of neurodiversity among some peers and management is still lacking. It is particularly important that first and second line managers are comfortable that it is OK for them to allow some variations from 'standard' ways of working, to better enable neurodivergent colleagues to thrive. It was noted that a simple guide for managers as an introduction to neurodiversity would be beneficial, as would sharing further best practice examples.

The Diversity Project group will continue to reflect on these themes and the discussion as part of planning our forward objectives.

# Useful links

We also wanted to include some links to useful resources that came up in the discussion, which you can refer to



The Diversity Project conducted a survey of employees at member firms and summarised the findings in a report - Click the cover to open the full document or follow this link: <https://bit.ly/3ZnX2XY>



**GAIN** Group for Autism, Insurance, Investment and Neurodiversity

Individual membership of GAIN brings the opportunity to interact with many people facing similar issues. It's free and you can join - click here or visit [www.gaintogether.org](http://www.gaintogether.org)



Insurance Families Network

The Insurance Families Network (which includes a good proportion of people from the investment side of the industry) has regular live and virtual meetings of parents who have current, or relevant past experience.

Click here to go to their website:  
[www.insurancefamilies.org](http://www.insurancefamilies.org)



**Click here to head to the website for more resources or use this link**  
**<https://bit.ly/3M0gCGx>**

**If you have further questions, please contact us on email, we look forward to hearing from you.**



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