



DIVERSITY PROJECT

# NEURODIVERSITY SURVEY 2024



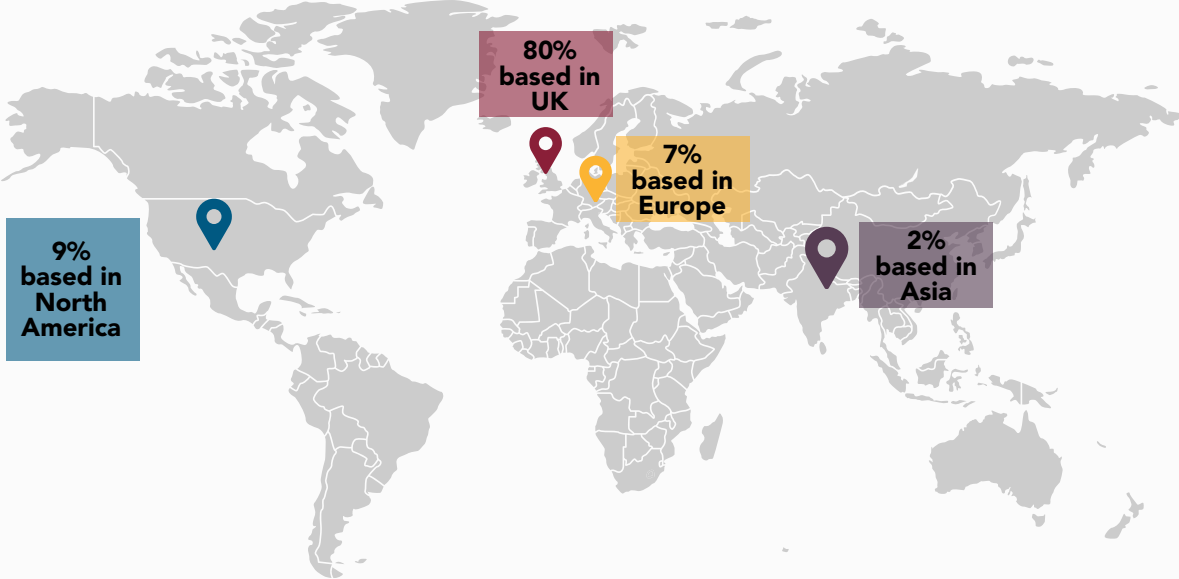
During Autumn 2024, the Diversity Project conducted our third annual survey of neurodivergent individuals, and allies, working in the investment and savings industry. Our objective is to better understand their experiences, provide useful insight to those individuals on how those experiences compare with others, and help improve the understanding of our member firms and the industry overall.

This year, we received 337 responses, a 10% increase on last year. While still a relatively small sample size compared to the many Neurodivergent individuals known to work in our industry, the ever growing number of responses this year provides further valuable insight into the views and experiences of neurodiverse employees, and their workplace allies, on some important workplace issues.

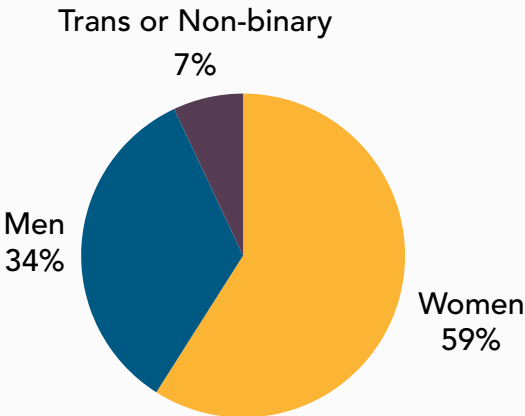
This report provides the key takeaways, the full findings and guidance to firms looking at to become more neuroinclusive.

## Our respondents

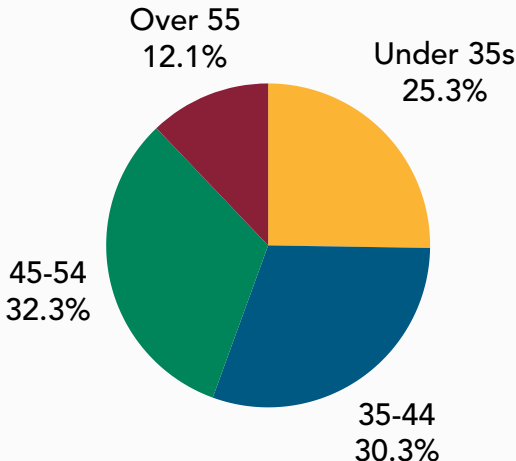
### Location



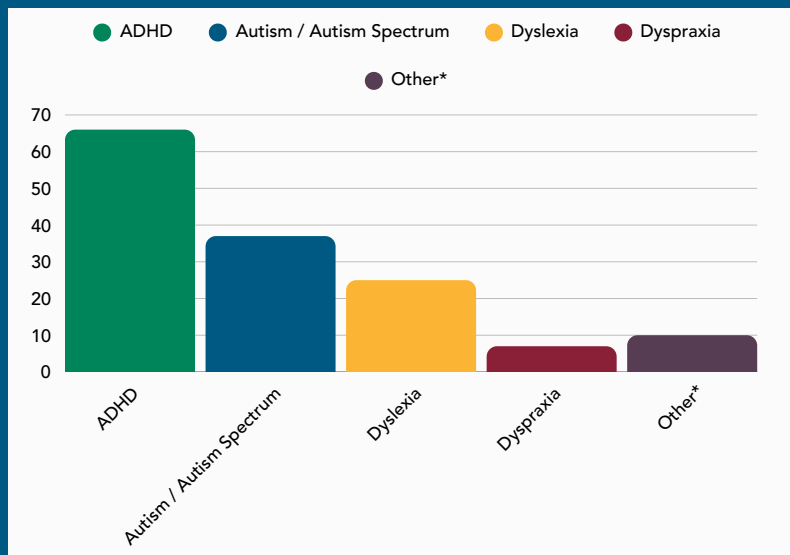
### Gender



### Age



Amongst our neurodivergent respondents, many associated with more than one condition (average 1.4 per person). The most common are ADHD (66 per cent); autism/autism spectrum (37 per cent); dyslexia (25 per cent); dyspraxia (seven per cent); and other answers been given by 10 per cent (including OCD, ADD, dyscalculia, anxiety, PTSD and depression).



\*including OCD, ADD, dyscalculia, anxiety, PTSD and depression).

## Overall



of our respondents have received a formal diagnosis.

## Disclosure, recruitment and disability

Fifty-eight per cent of our respondents have declared their neurodivergence to their employer. Of those that have disclosed, two thirds described either a mildly or very supportive response, with 17 per cent receiving a neutral response. Disappointingly, thirteen per cent received an unhelpful response from their employers.

For those who have not disclosed, the main reasons include: concern about it limiting career prospects (43 per cent), preferring to keep it private (42 per cent); and concern about colleagues' potential reaction (15 per cent).

A large majority of respondents (74 per cent) said their neurodivergence had caused difficulties finding employment in the past. Some of the main reasons include difficulties with the application or interview process, communication within the job and also during the hiring process,

organisation and time management, and feeling like job opportunities are missed due to struggles with networking.

Interestingly, exactly half of respondents described their neurodivergence as a disability and half did not. At the same time, two-thirds stated they saw their neurodivergence as being of benefit in their role. Key themes of how neurodivergence benefits their role include the ability to think outside the box/problem solving, hyper-focus/intense focus on things of interest, increased empathy and understanding (helps with both client relationships and work relationships), attention to detail, creativity, the ability to notice patterns and connections between things that others may not, and being able to work on multiple projects at once and switch between tasks.

# Reasonable adjustments

41 per cent of our respondents have asked for reasonable adjustments at work. Some of the main adjustments requested included, in order of frequency, where:

## ✦ Flexible Working

Flexible working hours/working from home (25 per cent);

## ✦ Workplace coach

Provision of a workplace coach (16 per cent);

## ✦ Assistive technology/software

(e.g. audio transcription software or software to help with organisation) (15 per cent);

## ✦ Physical changes to working space

(like bright lights removed from above cubicle, or a cubicle put around desk) (14 per cent);

## ✦ Hardware

Hardware such as noise-cancelling headphones (13 per cent);

## ✦ Support

Support getting a diagnosis (9 per cent).

Very encouragingly, 80 per cent stated that their requests for adjustments were approved, which is much improved on last year. Albeit where approval was given, a 27 per cent of respondents stated adjustments were difficult to achieve. Around half of employers were described as supportive or very supportive, 34 per cent "neutral", and eight per cent unsupportive.

# Employee Support groups and culture

Almost three quarters of our respondents (73 per cent) noted that their employer had a specific employee support group for neurodivergent employees; whilst another 11 per cent said the topic was included in a wider group. Comments were made about how when it is included in a wider group the focus and effectiveness of the actions and messages get lost.

However, when asked if the employer adequately addressed potential barriers to career advancement, 78 per cent of our neurodivergent respondents had a negative reply. Furthermore, from all our respondents, when asked if senior leaders in their organisations encouraged Neuroinclusion, only just over half (53 per cent) were positive; showing there is still a considerable way to go for organisations. Those that were positive noted that having a senior leader as sponsor or champion of the Neurodiversity employee group was seen as a very supportive step.

This was particularly impactful if a senior person has disclosed as being neurodivergent themselves. Some comments that were less positive noted that often there were positive statements of intent from employers, that were not always backed by specific actions or plans, or the resources available to make important changes.

## Allyship

The topic of how neurotypicals can support neurodivergent colleagues in the workplace received a very varied and insightful set of comments and feedback. From neurodivergent colleagues there was praise for the efforts being made, but concerns expressed about people not being given adequate training and support to be truly able to be effective allies was supported by comments from allies themselves who stated they were very keen to receive more training and guidance, especially in the context of recruitment.

## What our respondents want to see change

When asked what “one change” the industry might make to be more supportive of neurodivergent colleagues, we received a wide range of responses, including:

- Increased awareness and education, with specific training and guidance being provided across businesses;
- More emphasis on the positives of employing neurodiverse employees; and less need for everyone to “fit-in” to a neurotypical model, e.g. don’t require everyone to “network”;
- Greater support for reasonable in-work adjustments, such as: flexibility with hybrid/remote working; quiet working spaces/workplaces designed with neurodiversity in mind; improved access to specialist software.
- Changes to recruitment process (interviews, job adverts, more neurodivergent interviewers).
- Encouragement and support for people to disclose; including provision of support for obtaining formal diagnosis through private medical schemes.

# Key takeaways for employers

As we have stated before in each of our annual reports, Neurodiversity is complex, with many aspects often unique to an individual, requiring care and attention from colleagues and employers. And as a somewhat “invisible” disability or situation, managers and colleagues need training and guidance to recognise the wide ranging scope of the issues involved.

Employers should especially note only just over half of the respondents had disclosed their neurodiversity. Therefore companies almost certainly employ far more neurodiverse employees than they realise. With half of our respondents not considering their neurodivergence as a disability, questions asking candidates if they are disabled is unlikely to “capture” those that need adjustments and support.

Employers can also do more to recognise the benefits the unique skills and ways of thinking of neurodiverse individuals can bring to the workplace – and consider how these can be best realised. One option to do this would be to make the process of asking for, and then receiving, reasonable adjustments easier and more inclusive than it is currently.



# Calls to Action

- Establish a senior or executive level ally to support Neuroinclusion and build a culture that enables all employees to reach their full potential.
- Provide training and guidance, including a clear policy, for the entire business and especially team leaders who play an incredibly important role in supporting all members of their team.
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- In particular we continue to encourage all organisations to think about how they can make the process of requesting and receiving reasonable adjustments much simpler, more effective, less stressful, and more inclusive for all;
- And finally, there is a growing call for more cross industry actions and events on this topic, which, with our member firms, the Diversity Project will continue to support and champion.
- For more information and contact details, please see the Neurodiversity page on the Diversity Project Website: [diversityproject.com/neurodiversity](https://diversityproject.com/neurodiversity).

