



for a
better
tomorrow



Neurodiversity and performance management.

An essential part of your role is managing the performance and development of all your employees, whether or not they're neurodivergent.

If you notice a problem with performance.

If you notice a problem with an employee's performance, a good first step is to ask them if they need any adjustments. Disabled employees – including neurodiverse employees – may seem to have problems with performance because the proper adjustments have not been put in place. Many well-qualified and experienced people are blocked at recruitment and throughout their career by working practices that are not inclusive.

It's important to remember that many neurodivergent people don't have an official diagnosis or don't realise that they are neurodivergent.

The law about adjustments.

You have a legal duty to make an adjustment if someone you manage appears to be facing barriers at work that might be related to a disability. That doesn't mean you should unilaterally make adjustments without the consent of your employee – but it does mean that you could be failing your legal duty if, when you spot an employee with a problem, you go down a performance management route before making sure they have any adjustments they need.

If you make an adjustment.

If you make adjustments, ensure enough time to assess whether the issues that were concerning you have been resolved. If they have, then this wasn't a performance management issue but a question of implementing the right adjustments.

However, if the problems persist even after you've made all the adjustments it's reasonable for you to make, then you may need to consider a performance management route.

Next steps after looking at adjustments.

If you've looked at adjustments and either made any reasonable ones that they need, or they insist they don't need any adjustments, you may have to consider performance management proceedings.

The person must understand that if they refuse to consider any adjustments and their performance or conduct does not improve, you will have to pursue the performance management route. They must also understand that if their performance does not improve, they are at risk of losing their job.

Ensure that they understand that this is not your preferred course of action and that you would like to help them improve, which might mean considering an assessment and-or adjustments.

Suppose you have to pursue the performance management route with a neurodivergent individual. In that case, it's important that they know you're happy to accommodate their needs reasonably at every stage – for example, the dates and timings of meetings and the format of any papers.

Informal process.

Before pursuing a formal process, try to fix the issue with an informal conversation. They may be unaware of an issue, even if it seems obvious to you. Be sensitive and non-judgemental.

Formal process.

If an informal conversation doesn't fix the problem, you will need to seek expert advice from HR who may refer you to the following:

- D&I professionals in your organisation
- Occupational Health - An external organisation specialising in their form of neurodiversity.

These experts may be able to give you further guidance on how best to pursue the formal performance management route without discriminating against your neurodiverse employee.