



**UNIVERSITY
OF WARWICK**

Neurodivergence and Employment

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A pause

‘An invitation:

Be present, prioritise self-care, with attitudes of:

- ▶ *kindness*
- ▶ *curiosity*
- ▶ *and non-judgment*

Notice your ‘gut feeling.’



Health Promotion Principles

- ▶ Fundamental conditions, rather than just medical care, to improve and sustain population health:
 - ▶ peace,
 - ▶ shelter,
 - ▶ education,
 - ▶ food,
 - ▶ **income,**
 - ▶ a stable ecosystem,
 - ▶ sustainable resources,
 - ▶ social justice,
 - ▶ and **equity.**



[Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion](#)

Health Promotion at Work

- ▶ Work is a key social determinant of health.
- ▶ Promoting mental health at work helps to:
 - ▶ reduce health inequalities
 - ▶ advance social justice
 - ▶ support health across the life course.
- ▶ Requires reasonable adjustments for neurodivergent people.

[IHPE-Position-Statement-Health-Promotion-17th-May-2021.pdf](#)

[IHPE-Position-Statement_Mental-Health-at-Work_Jan-2026.pdf](#)

Health Promotion Principles and Neurodiversity



Meet people equally, where they are



Enable individuals and communities



Develop strengths and assets



Develop personal skills



Create supportive environments



Be an advocate

Laws to Support Neurodivergent people at Work

Statutory framework:

- ▶ The Equality Act 2010
- ▶ Carers Leave Act 2024
- ▶ The Autism Act 2009
- ▶ Employment Rights Act 2025

Strengths of Neurodivergence at Work

- ▶ Hyperfocus
- ▶ Creativity
- ▶ Problem-solving
- ▶ Systematic thinking
- ▶ Empathetic



[How neurodiversity in the workplace drives business success | World Economic Forum](#)

[Is Neurodiversity The Next Talent Opportunity For The Digital Workplace? | World Economic Forum](#)

Awareness and Emotional Wellbeing

- ▶ 4 'core dimensions' of emotional wellbeing:
 - ▶ **Awareness or mindfulness**- internal and external environment
 - ▶ **Insight**- self-knowledge
 - ▶ **Connection**- supportive relationships and caring interactions
 - ▶ **Purpose**- meaningful aims and values



[Born to Flourish: Science-Backed Book for Better Habits](#)

Purpose: Meaningful Aims and Values



Hospitality



Retail



Healthcare



Media



Gaming



Fitness



Research



Education

Looking for Work

- ▶ **Disability friendly employers**
 - ▶ e.g. [Job Search | Indeed](#)
- ▶ **Word of mouth**
- ▶ **Supportive environments**
 - ▶ Wellbeing schemes (cycle to work, gym membership)
 - ▶ Flexible working (carers, body clock)
- ▶ **Location**
 - ▶ Travel time and journey
 - ▶ In person vs. hybrid



Transition from Education to Work



Neurodivergent students may not have the capacity to work alongside their studies, unlike peers.



Opportunities to learn workplace skills at university is helpful.



A clear passport of strengths and needs can ease the transition to the workplace.

Young carers- barriers to employment

- ▶ Young carers are 1.5 x more likely to be neurodivergent than their peers.
- ▶ 75% of young adult carers said caring role made it difficult to take part in training or education.
- ▶ 38% have either had to turn down, or not apply for, a job because of caring responsibilities.
- ▶ ***Young Carers Covenant outcome (1 of 10):***
Can access and succeed in employment/training opportunities.

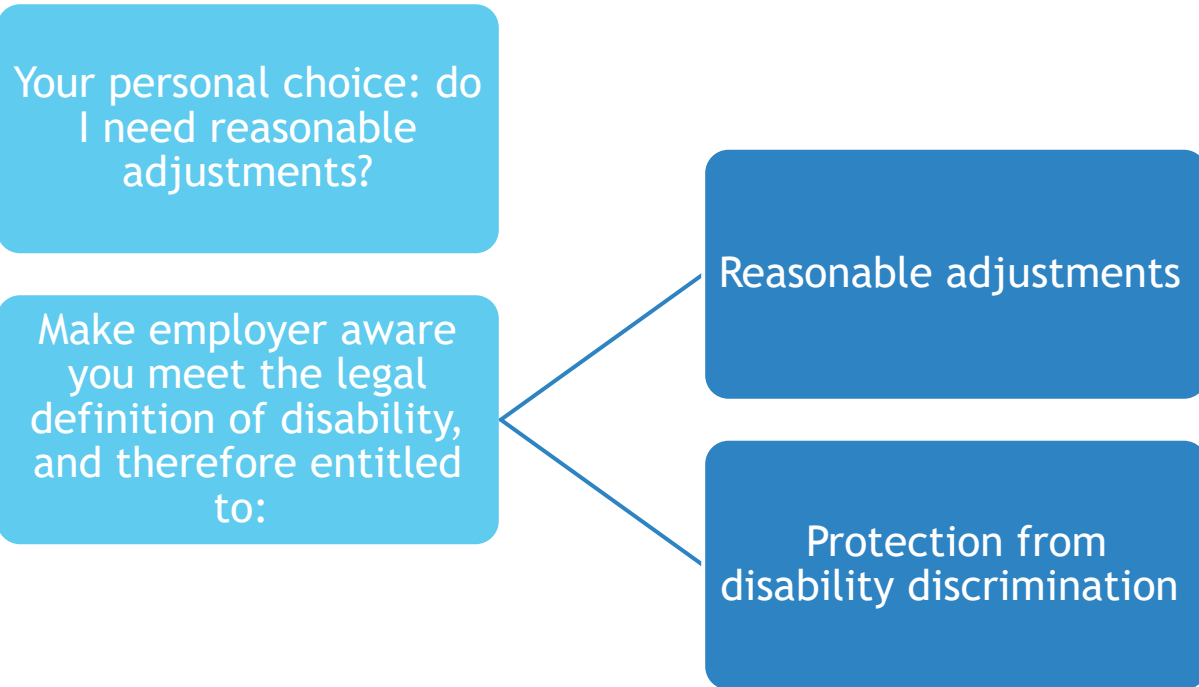
[Young carers face daunting barriers to opportunities in education, training and employment - Carers Trust](#)
[The Young Carers Covenant - Carers Trust](#)
[IHPE-Position-Statement-Young-Carers-and-Young-Adult-Carers-UK.pdf](#)

Work coaches

- ▶ Help match skills to opportunities
- ▶ Build confidence
- ▶ Help writing CVs
- ▶ Support/signposting when something goes wrong

Caution

- ▶ Not always trained in neurodivergence
- ▶ Need to be clear about support needs
- ▶ Masking can lead to inappropriate advice



Deciding whether to tell employers you are autistic

Pros and Cons of Disclosure

Pros and Cons of Disclosure

- ▶ Timing:
 - ▶ Before interview or following appointment?
 - ▶ When an issue arises?
- ▶ Partial disclosure
 - ▶ Autism or ADHD
 - ▶ Be clear how it affects you and what you need



[Example Workplace Adjustment Passport-Neurodiversity-July2025.pdf](#)

Pros and Cons of Disclosure

Risk of increased pressure
to mask autistic characteristics

Increased risk of burnout

Flexibility and days off sick?
Long term condition?

Small adjustments can make a
big difference

Self-care

- ▶ **Notice** where you are on the kindness barometer
- ▶ **Consider** social energy
- ▶ **Allow** for change:
 - ▶ Environment
 - ▶ Routine
 - ▶ New relationships
- ▶ **Tools** that might be needed
 - ▶ Time management plan
 - ▶ Reminders

Wrong placement?



Humans make mistakes

What is here and what does this need?

This too will pass.

It is what it is.



Reflection

What skills did I learn?

What did I learn about myself?

What would I do differently next time?

Case Study-1

Poor mental health and low self-esteem

Strengths and assets and support needs identified

Diagnoses increased understanding and self-awareness of neurodivergence

Job vacancies considered alongside strengths

Sensory environment of workplace met need

Employer understanding of neurodivergence

Confidence grew and new skills opened up further training opportunities

Case Study- 2

Poor mental health and low self-esteem

Strengths and assets alongside support needs

Depression treated but confidence remained low

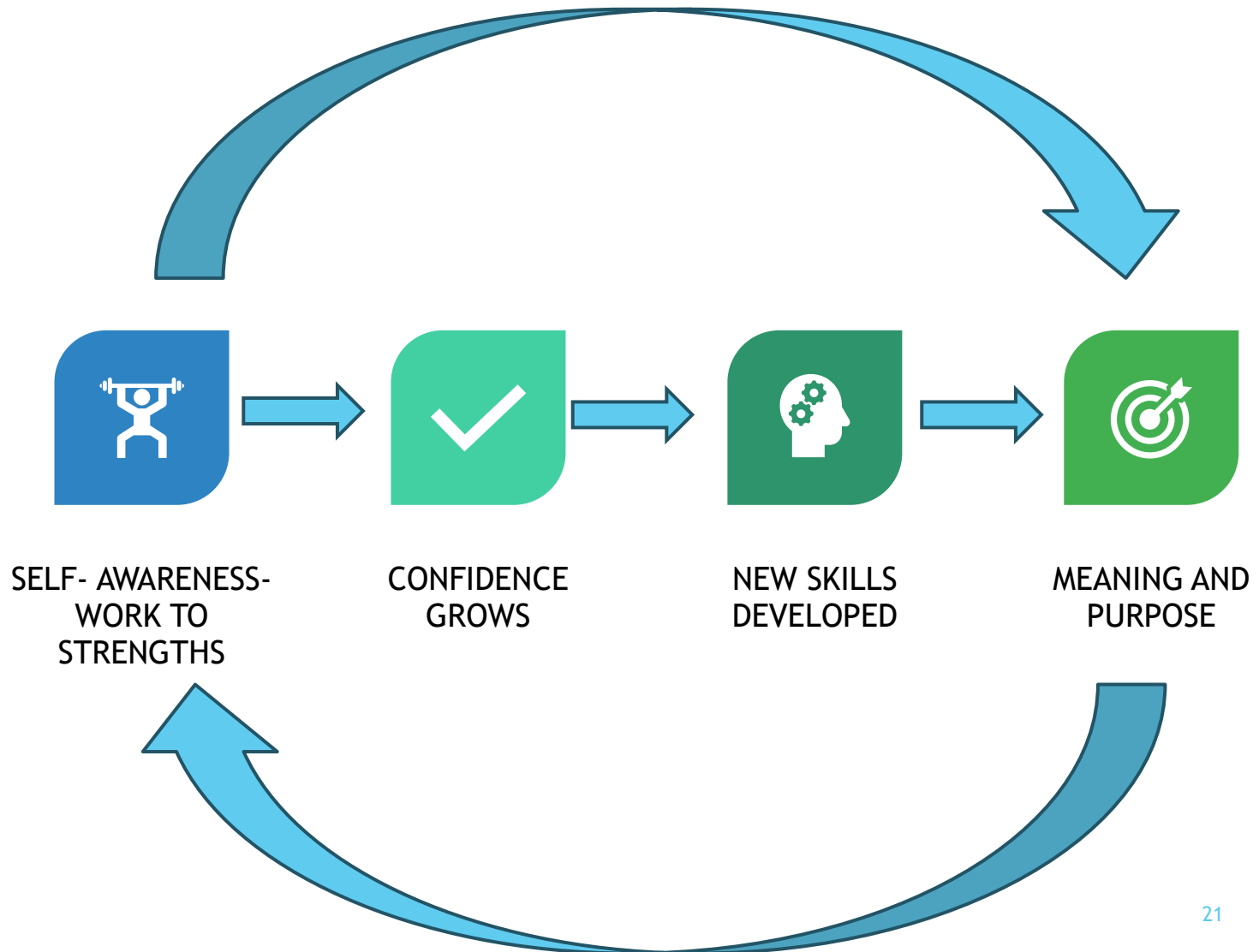
Voluntary work considered alongside strengths

Sensory environment of workplace met need

Employer understanding of neurodivergence

Confidence grew; clearer understanding of future work aspirations

Positive Cycle



Summary Points



Income and equity are fundamental conditions for health.



Neurodivergent people have many valuable skills to bring to the workplace.



Legal frameworks are in place to protect and support neurodivergent employees.



Reasonable adjustments, and connection with meaning and purpose can ensure thriving at work.

Education and Training support

- ▶ <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>
- ▶ [What support can I get at work](#)
- ▶ [Working carers - Carers Trust Heart of England](#)

- ▶ [Home | Futures Advice](#)
- ▶ [Support to find employment | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)
- ▶ [Employment - Autistic Nottingham](#)



Other Links

- ▶ [Embracing neurodiversity in the workplace | NHS Employers](#)
- ▶ [Autism and Neurodiversity Toolkit | DWP](#)
- ▶ [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#)
- ▶ [Adjustments for neurodiversity - Reasonable adjustments at work - Acas](#)



Thank You :)

May you find meaningful
work and flourish.