

Neurodivergents Take a Stand (“the Charity”)

Accessibility & Inclusion Policy

Purpose

Neurodivergents Take a Stand (“the Charity”) is committed to ensuring that all neurodivergent individuals can access and benefit from our services. In this policy, “neurodivergent” refers to people whose cognitive functioning differs from what is considered typical. This would include autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette’s and other developmental/learning differences. This policy sets out our approach to accessibility, inclusivity and reasonable adjustments to support neurodivergent service users, volunteers and staff in all of the charity activities.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All service users, volunteers, trustees and staff engaged with the Charity
- All of the Charity’s events, services, materials and communications.
- Any physical or digital spaces operated or used by the Charity.

Core Principles of Accessibility & Inclusion

The following principles guide the Charity’s approach to accessibility and inclusion. They will be applied as far as reasonably practicable and within available resources.

- **Neurodiversity-Affirming Approach:** Recognising and respecting diverse cognitive styles and experiences.
- **Barrier Reduction:** Identifying and removing obstacles that prevent full participation in the Charity’s events, services and activities.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** Making accommodations to ensure equitable access to all of the Charity’s events, services, volunteering and employment opportunities.
- **User-Centered Design:** Ensuring accessibility in physical, digital and communication environments.
- **Practical Implementation:** Recognising that some digital accessibility features may not be immediately available due to funding constraints.
- **Mutual Consideration:** The majority of individuals representing or working for the charity are neurodivergent. Service users are expected to extend the same respect and consideration to them as they receive, including patience with different communication styles and respect for disclosed accessibility needs.

Communication & Information Accessibility

To ensure all individuals can engage with our services effectively, the Charity will, as far as reasonably practicable and within available resources:

- Offer alternative communication methods including email, chat, and video calls.
- Use plain language and clear formatting in written materials.
- Provide information in multiple formats such as easy-read, large print, plain text, audio and digital text-to-speech-compatible documents recognising that some formats may only be available if resources permit.
- Allow additional time for processing information when engaging with service users.
- Train staff and volunteers in neurodivergent-friendly communication techniques.

Sensory Considerations

Most of the Charity's services will be delivered online and we are committed to making these environments as sensory-friendly as possible. The Charity will, as far as reasonably practicable and within available resources:

- Ensure that online meetings allow camera/microphone optional participation.
- Provide advance notice of sensory elements of online meetings (such as use of slides, screen sharing or breakout rooms).
- Recognise and respect the use of personal sensory aids (e.g. noise-cancelling headphones, fidget tools) by service users, staff and volunteers during interactions.
- Where in-person meetings or events are held, the Charity will seek to use venues that provide clear information about sensory aspects (such as lighting, noise levels or seating arrangements). However, we recognise that suitable venues or dedicated sensory adjustments (such as quiet rooms) may not always be available. Where this is the case, the Charity will communicate known limitations in advance so participants can make informed choices.

Digital Accessibility

The Charity is committed to making its digital content and services as accessible as possible, in line with its values and future plans for growth. Our long-term aim is to work towards recognised standards such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA.

As a newly formed, small organisation without core funding, the Charity may not be able to implement all digital accessibility features immediately. However, we will, as far as reasonably practicable and within available resources:

- Apply accessible design principles in all new content we create (e.g. dyslexia-friendly fonts, high-contrast colour schemes, clear and intuitive navigation).
- Provide captions or transcripts for video/audio materials where feasible.
- Respond to requests for alternative formats (such as plain text, easy-read or audio versions) wherever possible.
- Prioritise funding applications and partnerships that will help us improve digital accessibility over time.

Physical Accessibility

For in-person events and meetings, the Charity will, as far as reasonably practicable and within available resources:

- Seek to use step-free and wheelchair-accessible venues wherever possible, recognising that this may not always be available in all locations.
- Provide clear information about venue accessibility features in advance, including any known limitations.
- Enable service users to request reasonable adjustments (e.g. seating preferences, access to quieter areas), which will be accommodated wherever practicable.
- Prioritise venues that include accessible restrooms and clear signage and communicate openly where these features are not available.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Charity recognises that individuals may have unique accessibility needs. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments, as far as practicable and within available resources, to ensure equitable access to the Charity's events, services, volunteering and employment opportunities.

Reasonable adjustments may include but are not limited to:

- Flexible response times and extended deadlines for processing information.
- Adjusted meeting formats (e.g., text-based discussions instead of verbal meetings).

- Respecting the involvement of support persons, interpreters or communication aides where service users choose to bring them.
- Considering flexibility in times worked for volunteers, trustees and others providing services to service users to accommodate varying needs and capacities.

Inclusive Volunteering & Employment

To support neurodivergent volunteers and staff, the Charity will, as far as practicable and within available resources:

- Consider and implement adjustments to working environments and schedules where needed.
- Provide basic training on neurodiversity awareness for staff and volunteers.
- Encourage informal mentorship and peer support among team members where possible.
- Ensure job descriptions and role expectations are clearly structured and communicated.
- Consider flexibility in work hours and task allocation based on individual needs.

Feedback & Continuous Improvement

- The Charity welcomes feedback from service users, staff and volunteers on accessibility and inclusion. Feedback can be given through the Charity's published contact channels (e.g. email or online form).
- Accessibility policies and procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis, taking into account user feedback, available resources and changes in law or best practice.
- Updates will be made, as far as practicable and within available resources, in response to user needs, legislative changes and evolving best practice.

Complaints & Reporting Barriers

- If any individual experiences barriers to accessibility, they are encouraged to report them through the Charity's Complaints Policy, using the published contact channels.
- The Charity will aim to review complaints within approximately 14 days and take reasonable actions to address the issue, as far as practicable and within available resources.

- Where more time is needed to investigate or respond, the Charity will keep the complainant informed of progress.

Policy Review & Amendments

- This policy will be reviewed by the board of trustees on a regular basis or as needed, for example if significant needs, resource changes or legal requirements arise.
- Substantive amendments must be approved by the board of trustees. Minor administrative updates may be made by staff or volunteers and reported to the trustees.
- Substantive amendments will be communicated directly to staff and volunteers, and the updated policy will be made publicly available (e.g. on the Charity's website) for service users.