

Inclusive interviews

This guide aims to help you think about changes you can make before, during and after an interview to help autistic candidates. If you interview someone who is autistic they may find the interaction difficult, struggle with the uncertainty of going somewhere new or have added sensory differences. By taking away these barriers you can find the best candidates.

These recommendations are based on research by Autistica and UCL.

Provide detailed information in advance

Think about everything a person might need to know when they attend an interview. More information can reduce anxiety about the uncertainty of visiting your office and the interview. For example: you could provide information such as biographies of the interview panel, travel routes, where to wait, where the toilets are. You can ask if there is anything in particular they would like to know before they attend.

Think about the environment

Candidates may be extra sensitive to the sensory environment, especially if it's new place and they are nervous. Help them to be comfortable before, during and after an interview. For example: you could offer a quiet room to wait in rather than a busy reception. Or a video call might work best.

Question your format

Ask yourself is a standard interview format necessary for the job? Could a trial or task tell you more about a person's ability? If you want to know

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more about them, can you find a less formal way to talk that might be more relaxed? Some candidates may prefer to meet face to face, whilst others may prefer phone or on video chat. Could you offer different options?

Give candidates time to prepare questions

Providing the questions for an interview a week in advance allows candidates to fully prepare. It can relieve a lot of anxiety, enabling them to perform to their best. Like many adjustments, this benefits all candidates – whether they are neurodivergent or not.

Make questions clear and simple

Too many standard interview questions expect candidates to know how to answer them. Instead of launching into a question, set the scene, then break the question down into topics you want the candidate to talk about.

For example: Instead of asking *'What experience do you have of managing high workloads?'* Say: *'Think of an example of when you've had lots of tasks to complete in a limited amount of time. Please tell me: What was the situation? What management strategies did you use? Were these strategies effective?'* Ask each of these questions separately, not all at once.

Offer adjustments

Ask your colleague if there is anything that could help them at work in terms of adjustments to the environment, communication styles or management. This may be too broad a question for some people, so you may want to talk them through some of the adjustments we suggest in one of our other guides: *'Making your workplace accessible.'*

Learn more

This is one part of the Autistica Employers Guide to Neurodiversity. If you haven't already registered for our other guides and updates, visit: autistica.org.uk/employers-guide