



Neurodiversity Employers Index NDEI[®] Market Report

2024

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Introduction

We're delighted to share with you the first Neurodiversity Employers Index – NDEI® Market Report, which illustrates key insights and trends from organisations that participated in this gold-standard evidence-based framework.

At Autistica, one of our 2030 Goals is to double the rate of employment for autistic people, who still face one of the lowest rates of employment out of any disabled group. We wanted to make the NDEI® inclusive for all neurodivergent people because of the overlaps with autism and other neurodivergent conditions, and the broader challenges that so many neurodivergent people face. Many people are neurodivergent in more than one way, and sticking to the siloes of one diagnosis could limit the potential of the NDEI®. From there, we were able to deliver a tool that has the capability to transform organisations into leaders of workplace neuroinclusion.

Two fundamental principles underpin the NDEI®. The first is the importance of working with the person and not making assumptions about someone's neurodivergence. Each neurodivergent person has a unique combination of strengths and areas where they could benefit from additional support, so one-size-fits-all approaches rarely work.

The second principle draws on universal design. Changing policies and practices to be more inclusive of neurodivergence benefits everyone. When organisations implement the changes suggested in their respective NDEI® company reports, it doesn't just benefit the one in seven people in the UK who are neurodivergent.

These changes create a fairer and more inclusive environment for everyone, ultimately creating loyal, motivated and committed teams.

I would like to give my personal thanks to the many people who were involved with the creation of the NDEI®, all of whom are listed at the end of this report. Your expertise and guidance have been invaluable and have culminated in the creation of this gold-standard inclusion framework.

Finally, I would like to thank every organisation who has taken part in the NDEI®. You have taken a brave and important step in an emerging topic. We can't drive positive change without the commitment from organisations willing to learn, grow and become more inclusive.

I hope this report is a valuable resource for you on your journey toward creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace for your employees and colleagues. By observing current industry practices and trends, we can all shape the future of neuroinclusive workplaces that empowers all neurodivergent people to thrive.



Dr James Cusack

Autistica CEO



Executive summary

In today's workplace, nurturing an inclusive environment for neurodiverse teams is increasingly important. An estimated one in seven people are neurodivergent, so it is crucial for organisations who want to maintain a competitive advantage in their respective sectors to become leaders in workplace neuroinclusion.

The NDEI® was developed with neurodivergent experts by experience and industry professionals, is evidence-based and requires participation from both employers and employees. This ensures that it is one of the most accurate snapshots into neuroinclusive hiring and employment practices across the United Kingdom.

The purpose of the NDEI® Market Report is to provide both participating organisations and those with a keen interest in participating the NDEI® in future with a useful insights into workplace neuroinclusion. It highlights areas where organisations across the United Kingdom are performing strongly in neuroinclusion and areas where there is scope for change or improvement.

The 2024 Market Report gathers information from both employers and employees across 118 organisations¹. These organisations employ between five to 30,000 people and span 10 different sectors. From this year's data, we identified several differences between the experiences of neurodivergent employees compared to their neurotypical colleagues. NDEI® data also highlights common areas where organisations across the UK are not meeting best practice.

Most notably, through participating in the NDEI®, it was revealed that:

- Only 30% of organisations have a clear neuroinclusion goal and strategy in place.
- Almost one in three (29%) of participating neurodivergent employees have experienced discrimination in the workplace related to their neurodivergence.
- Neurodivergent employees are less likely to feel comfortable requesting accommodations than their neurotypical colleagues. Accommodations can make a crucial difference in a neurodivergent individual's chances of success in a role.
- There is a strong desire from employees to take part in neurodiversity specific training, so that they can better support their colleagues.

Throughout the Market Report, we provide insights into some of the best-practice recommendations to build a more neuroinclusive workplace. These recommendations can be implemented by organisations irrespective of whether they participated in the very first NDEI® or if they are considering doing so in future. These recommendations include:

- Focusing on improving access to appropriate employment readiness and training schemes.
- Offering staff from across the organisation the opportunity to participate in neurodiversity training, which can help each respective employee understand neurodivergence, build acceptance and support neurodiverse teams.

- Work with expert neurodiversity consultants who can facilitate training to ensure that organisations understand, support, and make the most of the unique strengths of their neurodivergent employees. Autistica's Neurodiversity Business Consultant, our expert by personal and professional experience, can help organisations identify areas for improvement and develop customised strategies for a more neuroinclusive workplace.
- Proactively seeking out opportunities to further expand the organisation's understanding of neuroinclusive practices. This includes publicly available resources designed by experts in neuroinclusion, such as the [Autistica Employers Guide to Neurodiversity](#), and further reading such as the Buckland Review of Autism Employment and Pro Bono Economics' report [Opening opportunities: Improving employment prospects for autistic people](#).

Ultimately, with the right support and understanding, neurodivergent people add immeasurable value to a thriving workforce.

The NDEI® is the first step in ensuring that all organisations, irrespective of size, can attract and retain the best talent in their respective sectors. Most importantly though, it ensures that workplaces are more inclusive for neurodivergent and neurotypical people alike.

1. 132 organisations completed the 2024 NDEI®. 14 were excluded from the market data analysis due to having fewer than five employees, not being based in the UK, or were a community rather than an organisation.

Helpful definitions

Although the term 'neurodiversity' was first defined in the 1990s, many people are relatively new to language around neurodivergence. We've put together some definitions that you may find useful when reading the Market Report, and when talking about neurodiversity.

We have also defined a few terms relating to workplace inclusion, and those specific to the NDEI®.

NEURODIVERSITY DEFINITIONS

Neurodiversity refers to natural variability in how brains work. The term acknowledges the variety of ways people can experience and interact with the world or learn and process information. The neurodiversity movement is a social movement, rather than a medical definition. It supports a 'differences, not deficits' understanding of the different ways our brains work.

Neurodiversity is typically used in a broad, societal sense and reflects the broader spectrum of how all human brains can function.

Example: The neurodiversity movement advocates for the acceptance and inclusion of people with different cognitive styles and abilities.

Neurodivergence refers to the condition or state of having a divergent brain from the neurotypical population.

Example: Jo researches neurodivergence, with a particular interest in autism and ADHD.

Neurodivergent is a term for an individual with a neurodivergent condition. Neurodivergent conditions include ADHD, autism, dyslexia,

dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), tic condition (including Tourette syndrome), anxiety, depression, learning disabilities, acquired neurodiversity, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and epilepsy.

Example: Someone who has bipolar disorder could describe themselves as neurodivergent.

Neurotypical is a term for a person who does not have any neurodivergent conditions and their brain functions in a way considered 'typical' by societal standards.

Example: Jo is neurotypical as they do not have any neurodivergent conditions.

Neurotype refers to someone's individual neurodivergent identity. This includes someone who is neurotypical or someone who has a single neurodivergent diagnosis. Or it could include the nature of someone's co-occurring neurodivergence, for example, being autistic with ADHD, informally known as AuDHD.

Example: My neurotype is AuDHD.

Neurodiverse is a term for a group of people with different neurotypes. Although you may have seen this term used for individuals, an individual is not neurodiverse; they are either neurotypical or neurodivergent.

Example: A workplace that employs people who are autistic, people who have dyslexia, people with ADHD, and neurotypical people is neurodiverse.

Neuroinclusive refers to being inclusive of people with neurodivergent conditions. Within employment, this refers to policies, practices and processes that developed to create a working environment that is suitable for people of varying neurotypes.

Example: Our organisation has started to provide interview questions in advance to be more neuroinclusive.

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES DEFINITIONS

Barriers are unhelpful or harmful organisational practices, policies or procedures that restrict, slow down or prevent neurodivergent people gaining and/or progressing in employment.

Example: A barrier to my career progression is that more senior roles require me to manage people.

Facilitators are helpful or supportive policies, procedures or adjustments that support neurodivergent people in finding and thriving in work.

Example: Employers providing interview questions in advance acts as a facilitator to a successful interview.

Policies, practices & procedures are the activities that organisations have in place that have been evidenced to have a positive impact on a neurodivergent person's experience in gaining and maintaining employment.

Example: An organisation has in place a policy to offer all staff training on neurodiversity.

NDEI® SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS

A **domain** is a section of the NDEI® framework where employers or employees answer questions.. There are three domains that contribute to an organisation's NDEI® score: Neurodiversity Management, Neuroinclusion Management and Neuroinclusion Landscape.

Example: The Neuroinclusion Management domain looks at the policies, practices and programs an organisation has in place to support its neurodiverse workforce.

A **sub-domain**: A sub-set of associated policies, practices or procedures within a domain.

Example: The sub-domain of Selection considers the policies, practices or procedures an organisation has in place when determining which candidate to choose for a role.

Neurodiversity Management (NDM) measures the policies, practices and processes that are in place to support the recruitment and onboarding of new colleagues.

Neuroinclusion Management (NIM) measures the policies, practices and processes that are in place to support an organisation's neurodiverse workforce.

Neuroinclusion Landscape (NIL) measures how supported and included employees feel at their organisation. This data is gathered via an employee survey.

NDEI® overview

“ We call on all employers to join us in this mission to create a more inclusive, diverse and effective workforce.

— DR AMANDA ROESTORF, DIRECTOR
OF RESEARCH, AUTISTICA



Why we need the NDEI®

Although many neurodivergent people have a lot to offer in the workplace, they can face barriers invisible to others, which can lead to neurodivergent people:

- missing out on roles that they are suitable for.
- remaining underemployed for their skill sets or expertise.
- struggling in roles where a few reasonable adjustments could help them succeed.

We know lots more organisations are becoming aware of neurodivergence and want to play their part in creating more inclusive workplaces that support and retain talent. And with good reason:

- National Bureau of Economic Research found that companies with neurodiverse teams exhibit 35% higher productivity compared to non-diverse teams.¹
- Deloitte reported that organisations with inclusive practices, including neurodiversity, are 83% more likely to achieve innovation goals.²
- Harvard Business Review study revealed that companies actively supporting neurodiversity have 18% higher employee retention rates.³



This survey had good questions, that will aid in the capturing the picture of the current situation. Hopefully the results gathered from this survey will help in making informed decision about helping individuals who are neurodiverse.

— DYSLEXIC ADULT, NDEI® ADVISORY GROUP

BENEFITS OF WORKPLACE NEUROINCLUSION

Improving inclusion for neurodivergent people in the workplace brings numerous benefits, both for employees and employers. These include:

- **Diverse perspectives:** Neurodivergent individuals often think differently, leading to innovative solutions and creative problem-solving that can provide a competitive edge.
- **Enhanced productivity:** When supported appropriately, neurodivergent employees can excel in various roles, often showing high levels of focus, attention to detail, and specialised skills.
- **Improved employee morale and retention:** Inclusive environments tend to have higher employee satisfaction and retention rates, reducing the costs associated with high turnover and recruitment.
- **Wider talent pool:** By creating an inclusive environment, organisations can recruit from a larger talent pool, which is especially important in fields facing talent shortages.
- **Positive company reputation:** Organisations known for their inclusive practices are often viewed more favourably by customers, partners, and investors, enhancing their brand and market position.

1. Jones, B. F., & Weinberg, B. A. (2017). *Age and productivity: Evidence from linked employer-employee data*. National Bureau of Economic Research.

2. Deloitte. (2018). *The diversity and inclusion revolution: Eight powerful truths*. Deloitte Insights.

3. HBR Ascend. (2019). *The business case for neurodiversity*. Harvard Business Review.





- **Compliance and risk management:** Many regions have legal requirements regarding workplace inclusivity. Proactively addressing neurodivergence helps ensure compliance and reduces the risk of legal issues.
- **Reflecting society:** A workforce that reflects the diversity of society can better understand and meet the needs of your organisation's customer base, leading to improved customer relations and service.
- **Ethical responsibility:** Promoting inclusivity aligns with ethical business practices and corporate social responsibility, contributing to a fairer and more equitable society.

“ I am just so glad that I don't have to hide and mask my symptoms as much as I did in the past. Being part of these surveys is really exciting and it really will help for neurotypical people to understand the neurodivergent community more and more.

— ADULT WITH ADHD, NDEI® ADVISORY GROUP

BENEFITS OF THE NDEI®

We know that most organisations want to be more neuroinclusive, but have concerns about getting it right. Some do not know where to start on their neuroinclusivity journey, and others want to build on the work they have already done.

That's why we developed the Neurodiversity Employers Index, or NDEI®. We wanted to create a gold-standard framework for employers to learn more about neuroinclusive policies and practices, based on the latest high-quality research evidence. The NDEI® enables organisations to become pioneers in inclusion, get the best out of their employees, and to not miss out on talent.

Highlights of the NDEI®:

- The first gold-standard assessment tool for neuroinclusion in the workplace.
- Tested with hundreds of companies and neurodivergent staff.
- Designed for organisations in all sectors, and of any size.¹
- Relevant to organisations with limited neuroinclusion knowledge as well as those with extensive strategies.
- Gathers anonymised data from a range of sectors² to create annual an annual Market Report to drive future best practice.

Ultimately, workplace policies and practices that are inclusive of neurodivergent people benefit all staff, creating a loyal team of motivated and dedicated employees who play a vital role in thriving organisations.

To take part in the NDEI® eligible organisations must:

1. Include at least five (5) employees.
2. Have a UK branch that includes HR and employee functions.

Methodology: how we created the index and this report

COMMUNITY CO-PRODUCTION

We co-developed the NDEI® with neurodivergent adults and industry professionals. The community advisory group consisted of neurodivergent adults with lived experience of varied neurodivergent conditions, working ages and employment industries. This also included people with different employment statuses, such as employed, self-employed or returning to work. The industry professionals included HR or diversity & inclusion specialists, and senior managers.

We co-created the content and the structure of the NDEI® with the advisory groups. This helped us to make sure that it focused on the needs of the neurodivergent community. Working with industry professionals helped us develop a program that was relevant to different organisations.

SCIENTIFICALLY CREATED

We developed and tested the NDEI® following rigorous scientific methods to create measurement tools. The stages of this development included:

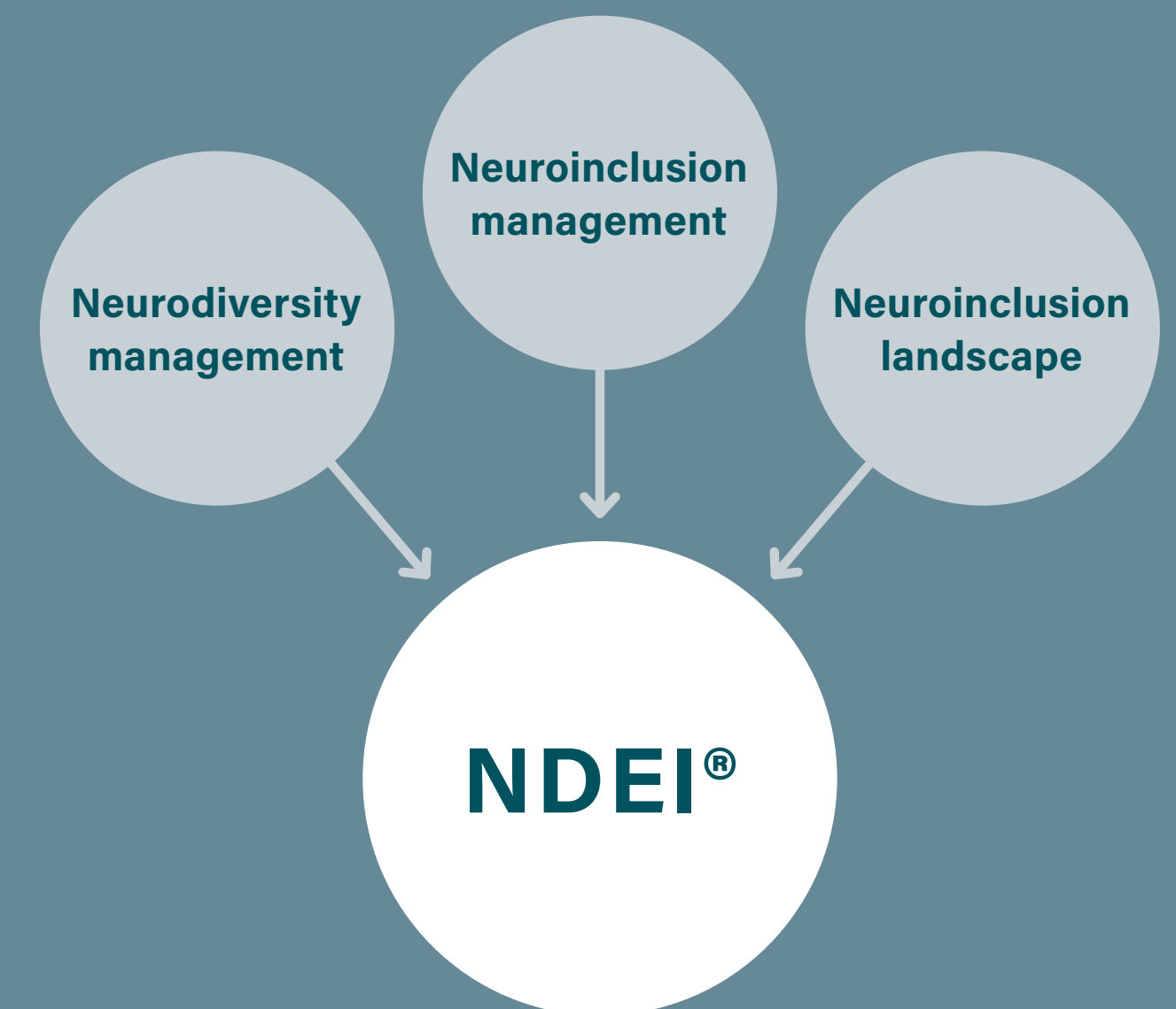
- Establishing a framework of what we needed to measure and how we would measure it.
- Identifying what best-practice activities organisations should be doing, based on research evidence and scientific data.
- Pilot testing.
- Early access trial launch.
- Reviewing the statistical properties of the NDEI®, confirming its final structure and validity.

DEVELOPMENT OF FRAMEWORK

The finalised framework of the NDEI® was made up of three domains (fig. 1).

Participating organisations answer the first two domains to report the policies and practices they have in place to support neurodivergent employees. Employees answer the third.

NDEI® FRAMEWORK (fig. 1)





Neurodiversity Management reflects the activities and practices associated with recruiting a neurodiverse workforce. This includes recruitment stages, such as advertising, interviewing and selection.

Neuroinclusion Management captures what an organisation is doing to support its neurodiverse workforce. This includes how it builds a neuroinclusive culture, and the adaptations and accommodations it has in place.

The final domain, **Neuroinclusive Landscape**, focuses on how neuroinclusive the workplace culture, defined by how included and supported employees felt. We measured this by surveying the employees of participating organisations.

BUILDING THE NDEI®

The NDEI® was developed to incorporate:

- Scientific evidence on best practices for fostering a neuroinclusive workplace.
- Lived experience of neurodivergent people who were seeking work, employed, self-employed and retired.

We carried out rigorous testing and validation of the framework using tried and tested scientific methods. We have created the NDEI® as a gold-standard measure for all organisations across sectors and sizes, to support and empower all neurodivergent people throughout the employment lifecycle.

PUBLIC LAUNCH

We launched the first annual reporting period of the NDEI® in August 2024. To participate in the NDEI®, organisations must be based in the UK and have at least five employees.

All data summarised in the Market Report consolidates data from submissions from the early access and the 2024 annual reporting periods. 43 organisations completed the early access trial launch of the NDEI® between October 2023 and April 2024. 89 organisations took part in the public launch of the NDEI® in August and September 2024.

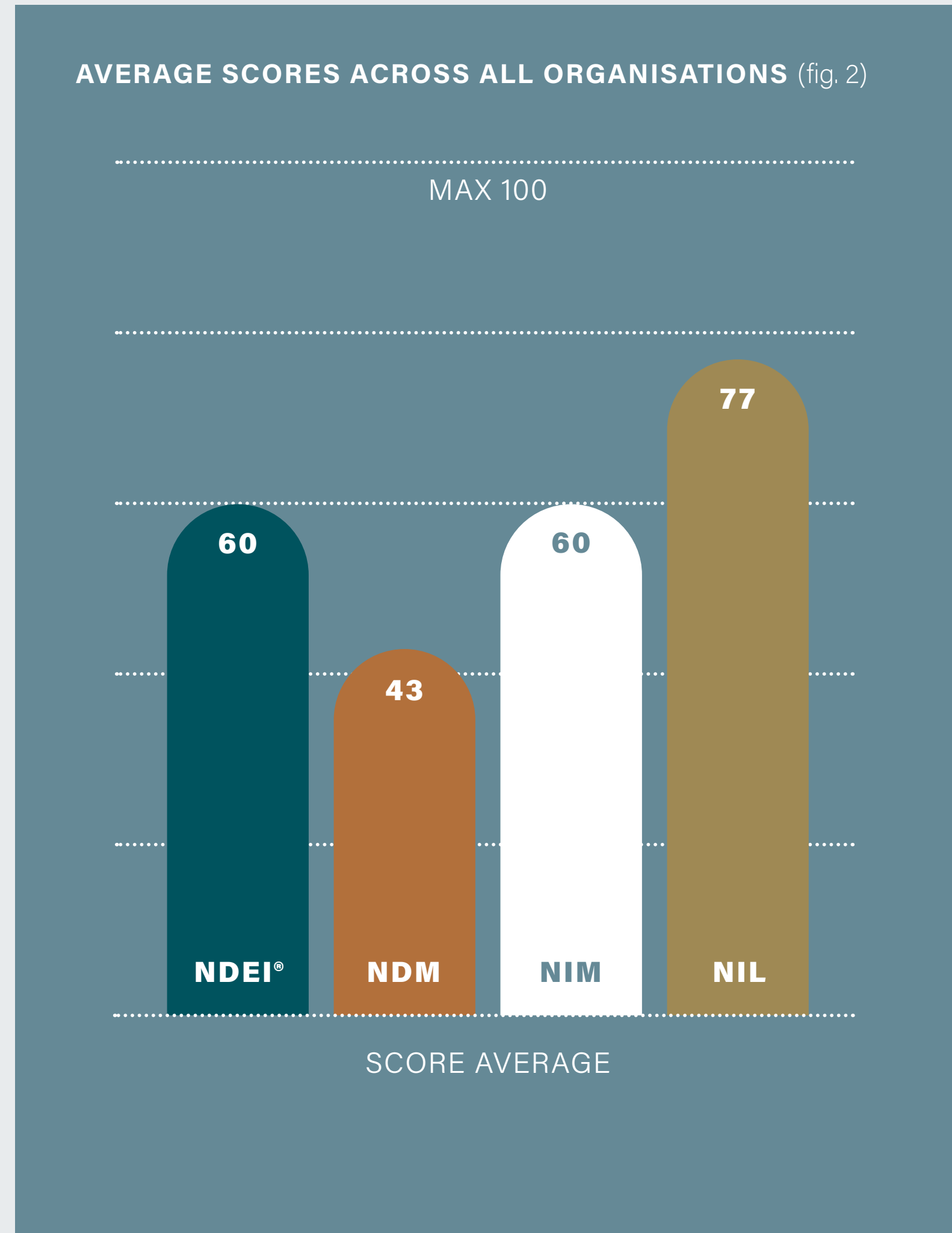
We excluded 14 organisations from the market data analysis. Five organisations were excluded due to having fewer than five employees. Seven were excluded as they were based outside of the UK. Two submissions were excluded as it was from a community rather than an organisation.

NDEI® at a glance

The NDEI® offers a comprehensive overview of organisational performance within neuroinclusion, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for change. Organisations are scored on three sub-domains which capture recruitment practices, neuroinclusive workplace practices, and culture. These scores are used to calculate an organisation's overall NDEI® score.

- Many organisations have not provided neurodiversity training to their workforce, despite there being interest for it from employees.
- Only 30% of organisations have a clear neuroinclusion goal and strategy in place.
- Almost one in three (29%) of participating neurodivergent employees have experienced discrimination in the workplace related to their neurodivergence.
- Neurodivergent employees are less likely to feel comfortable requesting accommodations than their neurotypical colleagues, when accommodations can make a crucial difference in a neurodivergent individual's chances of success in a role.

1. The Market Report data is reported on 118 organisations. 14 companies were excluded from the Market Report data analysis, who were international (n=7), had fewer than 5 employees (n=5) or were communities not single business entities (n=2).



132

Organisations participated in 2024, including **42** in our early access trial launch period¹

10

Different industry sectors

11

UK regions, as well as national organisations

5–30,000

Employees in organisations

6,512

Number of staff participating in the employee survey

2,241

Total number of neurodivergent staff participating in the employee survey

NDEI® in detail

In this part of the 2024 NDEI® Market Report, we look at the market data¹ in more detail. Here, we break down what participating organisations are doing to build a neurodiverse workforce and create a neuroinclusive workplace, and their opportunities for change.

First, we'll look at data from all participating organisations. Then, we'll explore what different sectors are doing and analyse the NDEI® data by size and geographical location.

1. The 2024 NDEI® Market Report includes organisations who took part in the early access reporting period and the inaugural 2024 NDEI® public reporting period.



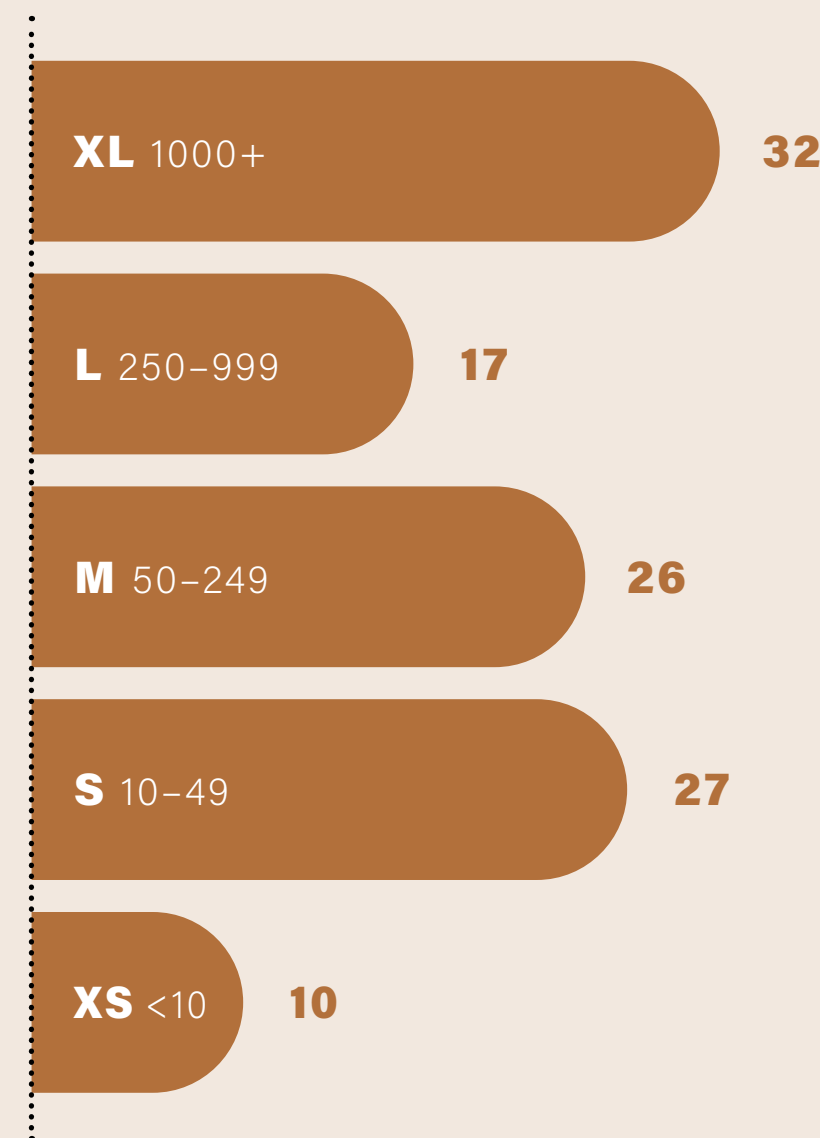
Who took part in 2024?

For the launch year, 132 organisations¹ participated in the NDEI® across the early access and first annual reporting period. From these organisations, 6,512 employees responded to the Neuroinclusion Landscape employee survey, including 2,241 neurodivergent employees.

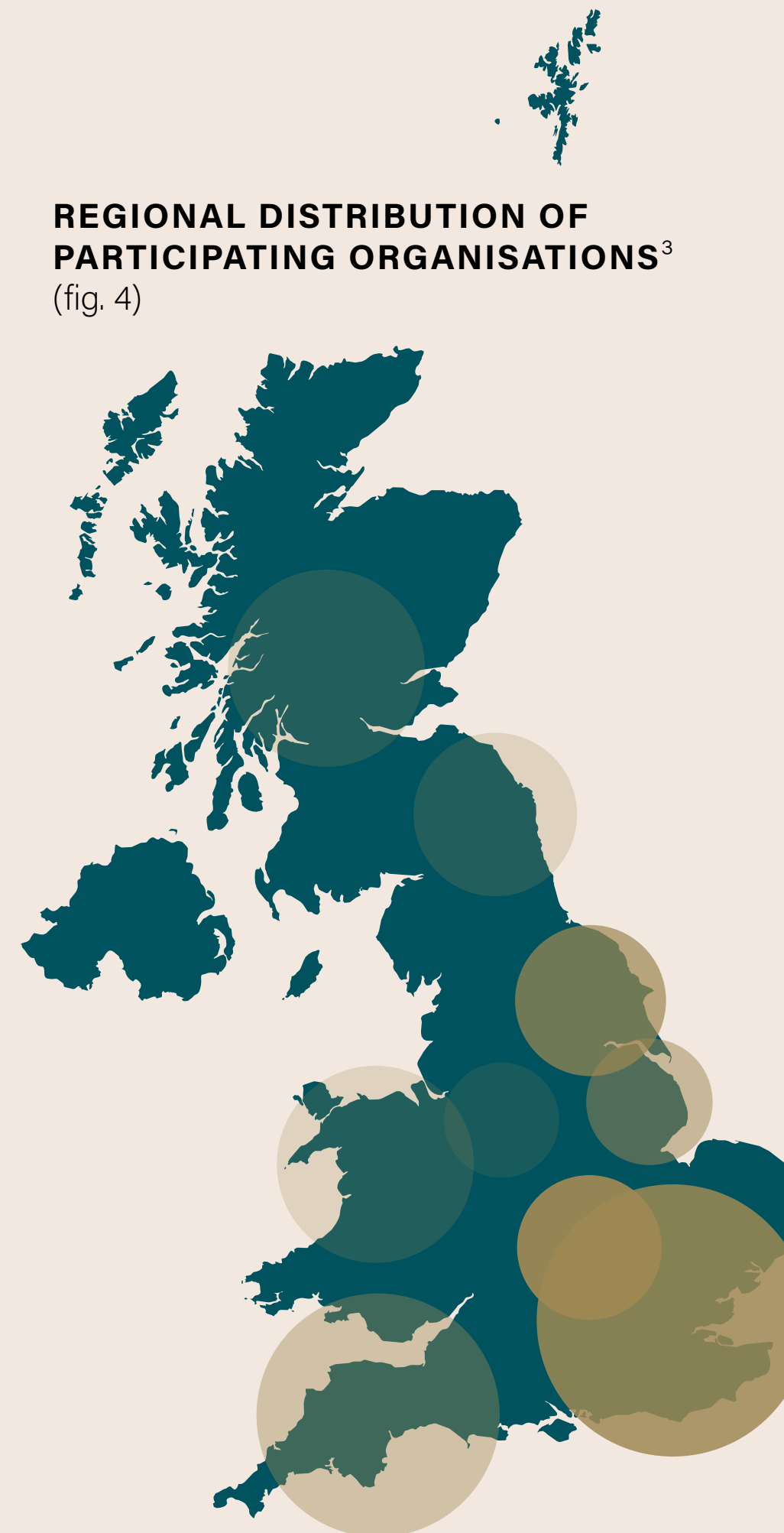
Organisations participating in this year's NDEI® spanned across varying sizes, sectors and locations. Size of organisation, indicated by number of employees, ranged from fewer than 10 employees to almost 30,000 (fig. 3). Organisations were based in 11 regions of the UK, including Scotland and Wales, as well as a number who operate nationally (fig. 4). We also saw organisations taking part from 10 different industry sectors (fig. 5).

1. The Market Report data is reported on 118 organisations. 14 companies were excluded from the Market Report data analysis. Five organisations were excluded due to having fewer than five employees. Seven were excluded as they were based outside of the UK. Two were excluded due to being communities rather than a single business entity.
2. Six organisations did not provide company size data. Therefore, data is reported on 112 participating organisations.
3. Illustration excludes organisations who reported as operating in more than one regional location.

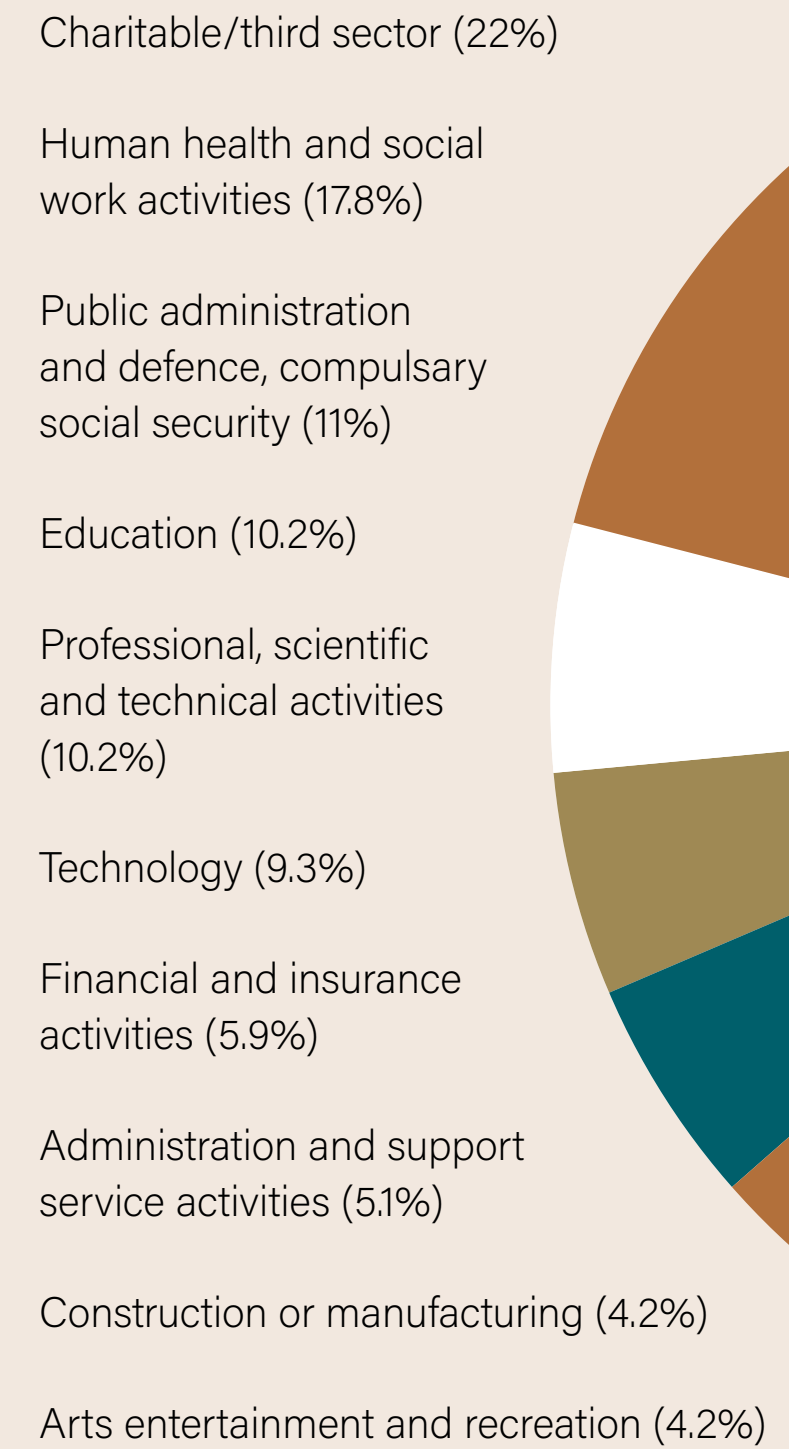
DISTRUBUTION OF PARTICIPATING COMPANIES BY SIZE (fig. 3) N=112²



REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS³ (fig. 4)



SECTOR REPRESENTATION OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS (fig. 5) N=118



Overall mean performance

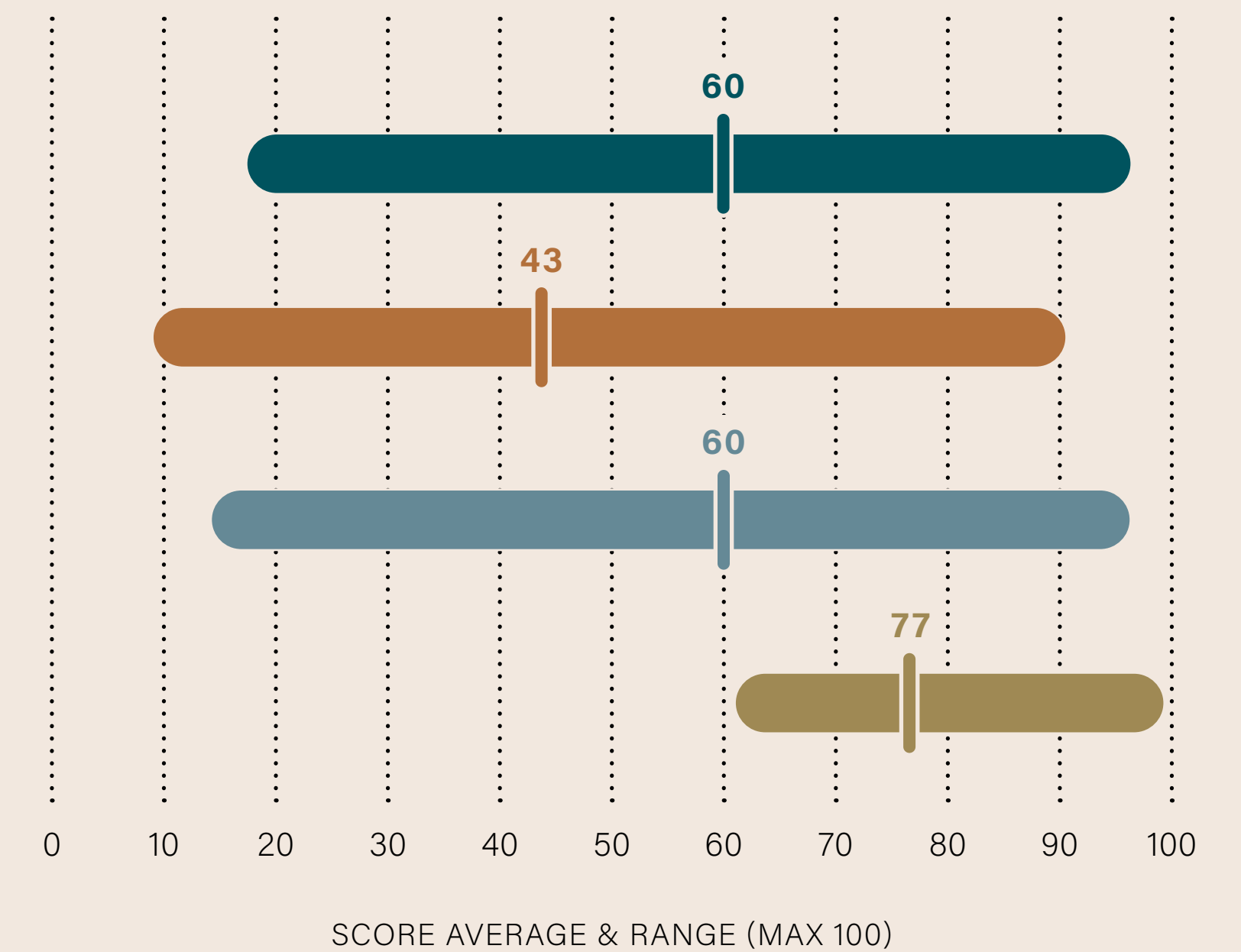
All organisations who complete the NDEI® are scored on the three domains: Neurodiversity Management (NDM), Neuroinclusion Management (NIM), and Neuroinclusion Landscape (NIL). We use the domain scores to generate the overall NDEI® score. The maximum score an organisation can be awarded for their NDEI® score and for each domain is 100¹.

In 2024, NDEI® scores ranged between 17 and 96². The average score across all organisations (fig. 6) was 60. Overall, organisations scored higher in the Neuroinclusion Management domain than the Neurodiversity Management domain. Neurodiversity Management scores ranged between 9 and 91, with an average of 43. For the Neuroinclusion Management domain, scores had a similar range with the lowest score of 14, and a highest of 97. However, the average score across all organisations was 60. Neuroinclusion Landscape (NIL) scores ranged from 61 to 99, with an average score of 77.

We observed a general pattern that companies are, on average, doing better at providing support for their existing workforce, than developing inclusive recruitment policies, practices and processes. This reflects what we hear from neurodivergent people that the recruitment process is a significant barrier to employment.

Employees from participating companies responded to a neuroinclusion survey. This survey provides an indication of the culture of the workplace, and how included and supported and organisations employees feels. Neuroinclusion Landscape (NIL) scores ranged from 61 to 99, with an average score of 77.

SUMMARY OF 2024 NDEI® SCORES (fig. 6)



- Overall NDEI® score
- Neurodiversity Management
- Neuroinclusion Management
- Neuroinclusion Landscape

1. The lowest possible score for the NDM and NIM domains is zero. The lowest possible score for NIL is 17. The lowest possible score for the NDEI® is 6.
 2. Based on NDEI® scores of 96 organisations. Organisations with no employee survey responses were awarded a score of 0 for the NIL domain. To avoid misrepresentation of mean averages and ranges, 21 organisations with NIL = 0 were excluded from market analysis of NDEI® scores and NIL scores. NDM and NIM scores are based on data from 118 organisations.

Performance by sector

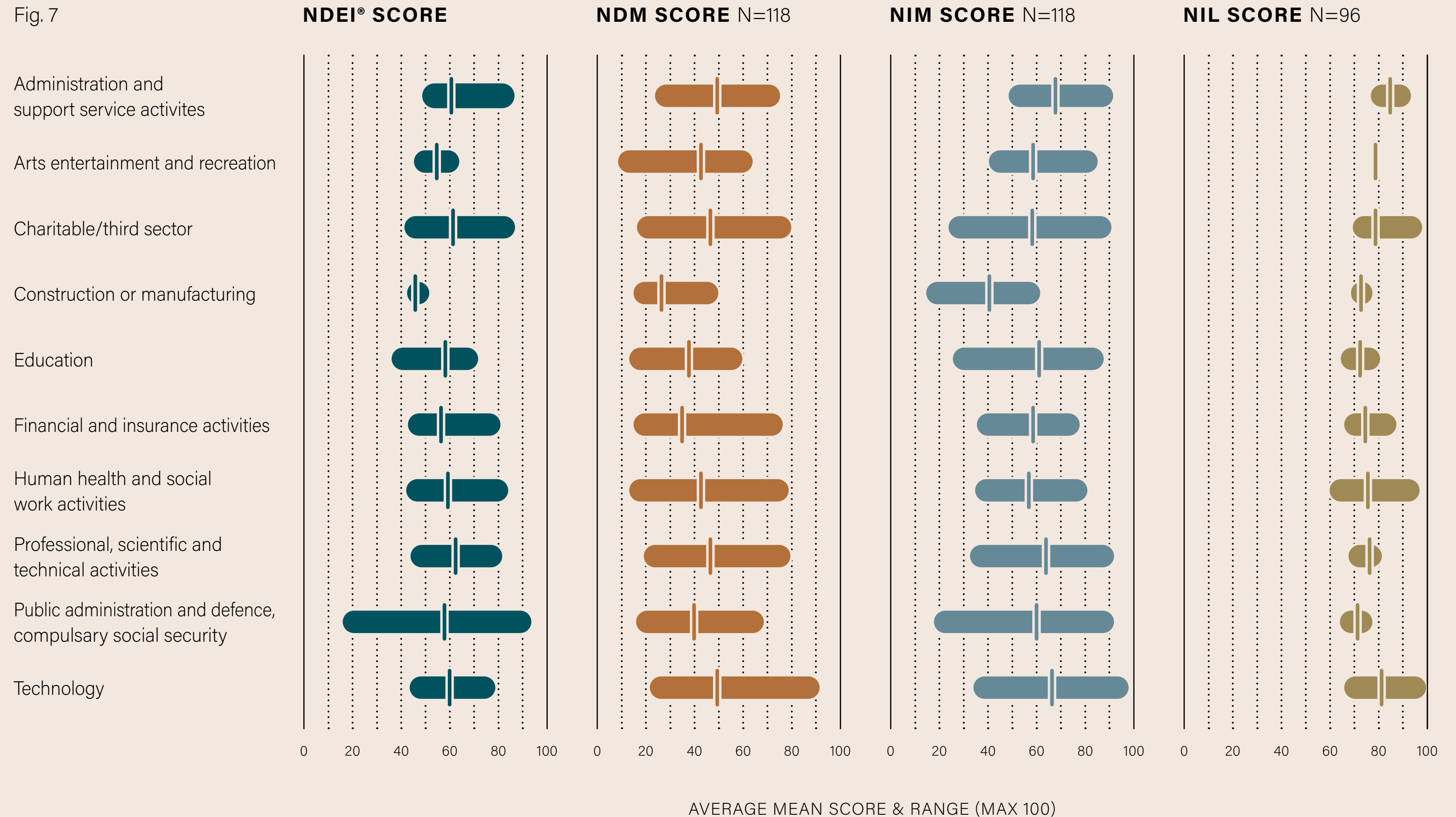
We asked organisations to indicate which industry sector they were in. For organisations who operate across multiple sectors, we used their dominant sector.

On average the Technology and Administration & Support Services sectors scored the highest on the NDEI® (fig. 7). Companies in these sectors are doing the most to build a neurodiverse workforce (NDM) and neuroinclusive workplace (NIM) of all industry sectors.

The Construction and Manufacturing sector has the most scope for positive change across all areas. The Financial & Insurance, and Education sectors typically have fewer policies, practices and processes to support the recruitment of neurodivergent people. The Health & Social Care and Finance & Insurance sectors report adopting fewer policies, practices and procedures to accommodate their neurodiverse workforces.

We also looked at working culture, and how supported and included employees felt. On average, the Charity/Third Sector, Technology and Administration and Support Service sectors scored highest. Whilst we recognise that there are differences in individual experiences, this suggests that employees in these sectors typically feel the most included and supported by their colleagues and employers.

Fig. 7



Organisational size & location

PERFORMANCE BY ORGANISATION SIZE

All organisations in the UK with at least five employees were eligible to take part in the NDEI®. As part of the NDEI®, all participating organisations are asked to indicate how many employees they have, among other diversity metrics. We grouped organisations by size based on number of employees. The groups ranged from micro (XS), with fewer than 10 employees, to super large, with over 1,000 employees.

The largest organisations had more scope for positive change, especially in the Neurodiversity Management domain, which measures inclusive recruitment practices. We do not currently have the data to establish why we are seeing these differences by size. Nevertheless, seeing so many larger organisations take part is an encouraging indicator that neurodiversity and neuroinclusion is a priority for these organisations.

Generally, the smallest organisations are leading the way in neuroinclusive practices, having the highest scores throughout the domains.

MEAN AVERAGE NDEI® AND SUB-DOMAIN SCORES BY ORGANISATION SIZE, AS INDICATED BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

	NDEI®	NDM	NIM	NIL
XS <10	73	63	75	87
S 10-49	61	44	58	82
M 50-249	60	43	59	77
L 250-999	61	44	62	74
XL 1000+	55	34	55	71

PERFORMANCE BY REGION

We asked all participating organisations to indicate where they operated from in the UK. There was a good representation, with organisations in 11 different regional locations, as well as several organisations who operate nationwide. Generally, regional averages

in NDEI® scores were similar across the UK. While the NDEI® is only available to organisations in the UK, we also received interest from several organisations from across the globe. We are considering an expansion of the NDEI® programme for a global market.

NDEI® AND SUBDOMAIN MEAN AVERAGES BY REGION

REGION	NDEI®	NDM	NIM	NIL
NORTH WEST ENGLAND	84	74	93	87
WEST MIDLANDS	70	39	87	58
WALES	68	53	72	78
SOUTH WEST ENGLAND	65	50	82	62
YORKSHIRE & HUMBER	61	49	76	58
GREATER LONDON	60	41	79	60
NORTH EAST ENGLAND	60	46	75	58
OTHER	60	42	71	65
SCOTLAND	60	45	79	71
NATIONWIDE	59	41	76	60
SOUTH EAST ENGLAND (EX. LONDON)	58	42	77	54
EAST OF ENGLAND	51	39	75	63
EAST MIDLANDS	43	22	74	34

A detailed look at the domains

NEURODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT: BUILDING A NEURODIVERSE WORKFORCE

The Neurodiversity Management domain reflects an organisation’s policies, practices and procedures to support building a neurodiverse workforce. Neurodivergent people have told us that there are many barriers and challenges to successfully applying for jobs. However, we also know that there are many practices that have been evidenced to break down these barriers. Across all domains of the NDEI®, recruitment practices is the area participating organisations have the most scope to be more neuroinclusive.

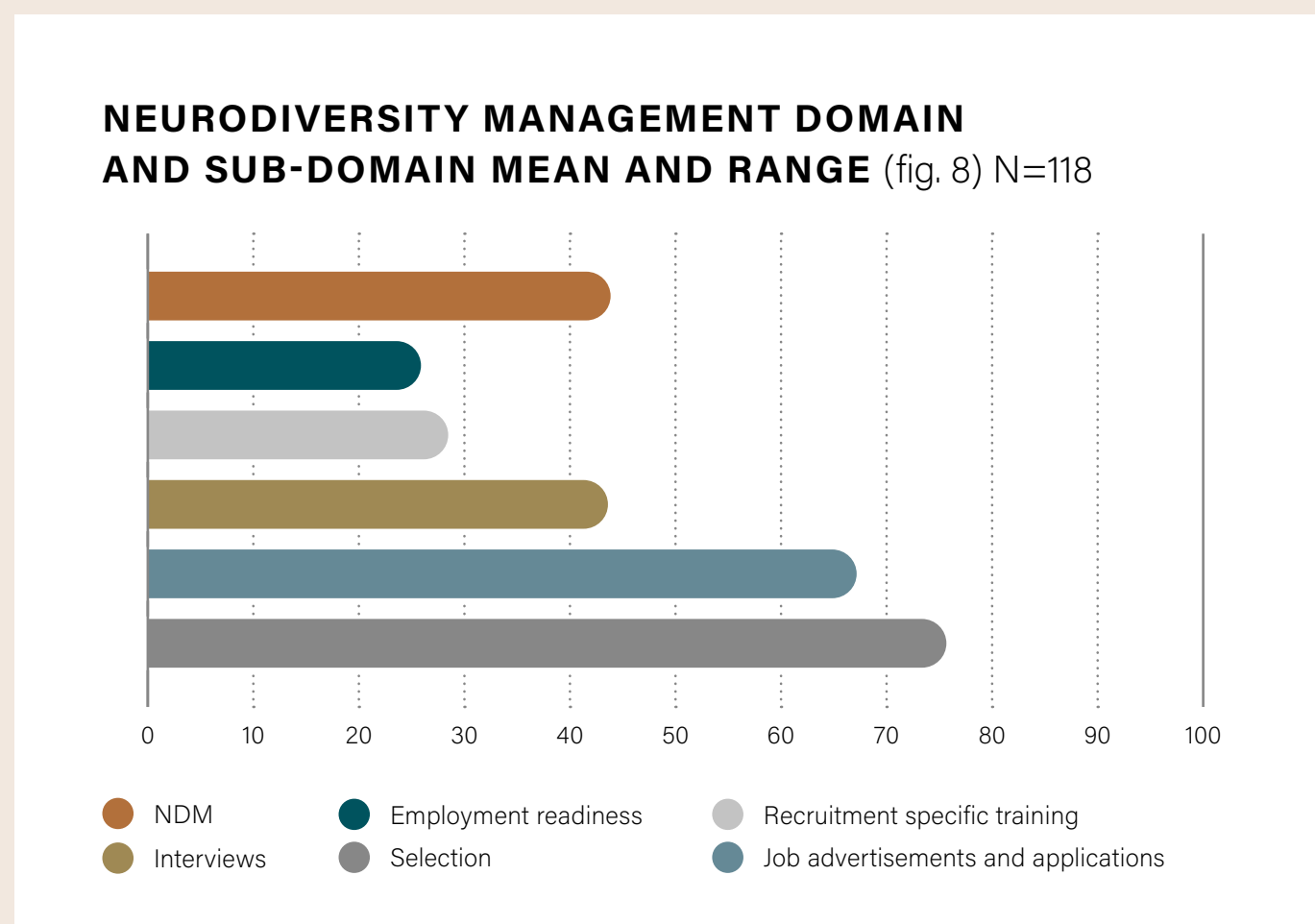
However, most organisations scored highly on the selection sub-domain, meaning their policies and processes for selecting the best candidate for the role are largely in line with the latest research evidence on workplace neuroinclusion. Most organisations report that they are selecting candidates based on their skills and knowledge to complete the role and offer clear feedback to help candidates develop for future roles.

The sub-domain with the most scope for improvement is recruitment-specific neurodiversity training. Recruitment-specific neurodiversity training creates a more welcoming and accessible recruitment process and an accommodating environment for neurodivergent job applicants. Comprehensive training ensures that recruiters and HR staff can recognise the potential of neurodivergent individuals. This approach increases the likelihood of employers selecting neurodivergent individuals for job opportunities.

Comprehensive neurodiversity training for HR staff, line managers, and the wider team improves recruitment processes. It ensures that all stakeholders involved in the recruitment process are better prepared to support neurodivergent candidates. Ultimately, recruitment-specific neurodiversity training supports more informed hiring decisions, improved candidate experiences, and a more diverse and talented workforce. One easily implementable solution to addressing an organisation’s gap in recruitment-specific neurodiversity training is to contact Autistica’s training and consultancy team for information about evidence-based lived-experience-led training (see [page 25](#)).

The data also reveals that only a handful of organisations offer alternative pathways into employment that reduce the emphasis on interviews. For example, trial periods allow both the candidate and the organisation to make a more informed decision before committing to a formal offer. Unlike probationary periods, trial days involved spending a day in the office to shadow the team ahead of a formal employment commencement date. This experience benefits both sides. Candidates get insight into the role and the culture to help them make a decision whether the job is right for them. For organisations, they can make an informed decision about the candidate’s skill set and experience.

On average, only 13% of organisations reported offering a work experience trial to some of their candidates. This is further reduced to less than 10% when considering organisations who offer this to all candidates, not just neurodivergent candidates. This is an important distinction to make, as many candidates do not feel comfortable disclosing their neurodivergent status, or may not be aware of their neurodivergence. By offering adjustments and neuroinclusive practices universally, it levels the field for all candidates, without the need to disclose, or be aware of their neurodivergent status.



NEUROINCLUSION MANAGEMENT: SUPPORTING A NEURODIVERSE WORKFORCE

Neuroinclusion Management measures the policies, practices and processes that are in place to support a neurodiverse workforce. Essentially, this looks at how organisations support existing employees. For example, this could include adjustments, the working culture, openness around neurodivergence, and training on neurodiversity. The flexibility and supportive environment from good neuroinclusion management, particularly where adjustments are universally offered, benefits both neurotypical and neurodivergent employees. Flexible and supportive environments get the best out of all employees, encouraging loyalty and reducing staff turnover. Importantly, it removes the onus to request adjustments from the individual, who may not know what is available or feel comfortable in disclosing their neurodivergence.

On average, participating organisations are performing the strongest regarding the adjustments and supports that they are offering their staff (fig. 9). Most organisations reported that employees are asked what adjustments they need and are involved in the decision-making process. Most organisations indicate that flexible hours are offered or are available.

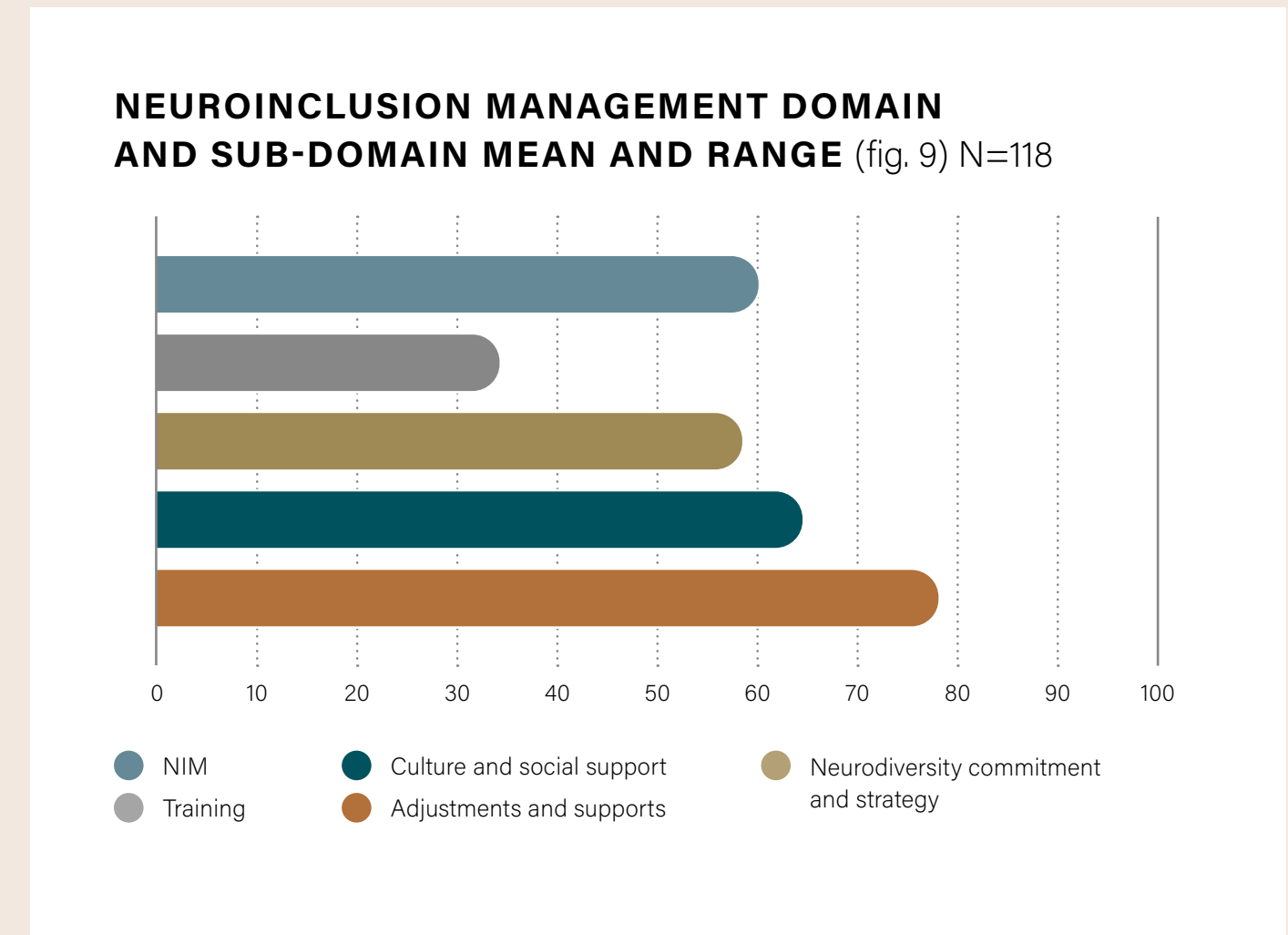
However, we have observed there is a gap in the number of organisations who have a clear neurodiversity goal and strategy, with only 30% of participating organisations indicating they have one in place.

By developing a neurodiversity goal and accompanying strategy, an organisations is showing its commitment to accommodating neurodivergent people. This helps organisations demonstrate their commitment to Environmental, Social and Governance credentials. It also makes clear to employees how they can be supported to thrive in their careers.

Another notable area for change was that more organisations could benefit from offering training about neurodiversity to staff. This gap was reflected in the employee survey as, repeatedly, employees requested neurodiversity training. At Autistica, we offer a suite of training packages, which we can deliver to your workforce to increase your colleagues' knowledge and confidence around neurodiversity (see [page 25](#)).

29% Less than a third of organisations report having a neurodiversity strategy and goal

Staff consistently reported that they would like more neurodiversity training



NEUROINCLUSION LANDSCAPE: EMPLOYEES SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON WORKING CULTURE AND AVAILABLE SUPPORT

Neuroinclusion Landscape (NIL) measures the neuroinclusive culture of an organisation. It captures how supported and included employees feel by their colleagues and their employers. This section is measured through the responses to the employee survey.

One positive finding is that many employees surveyed as part of the NDEI® reported that their employers are supporting them. However, overall organisations still have room for improvement as neurodivergent employees consistently scored their employers lower than their neurotypical colleagues.

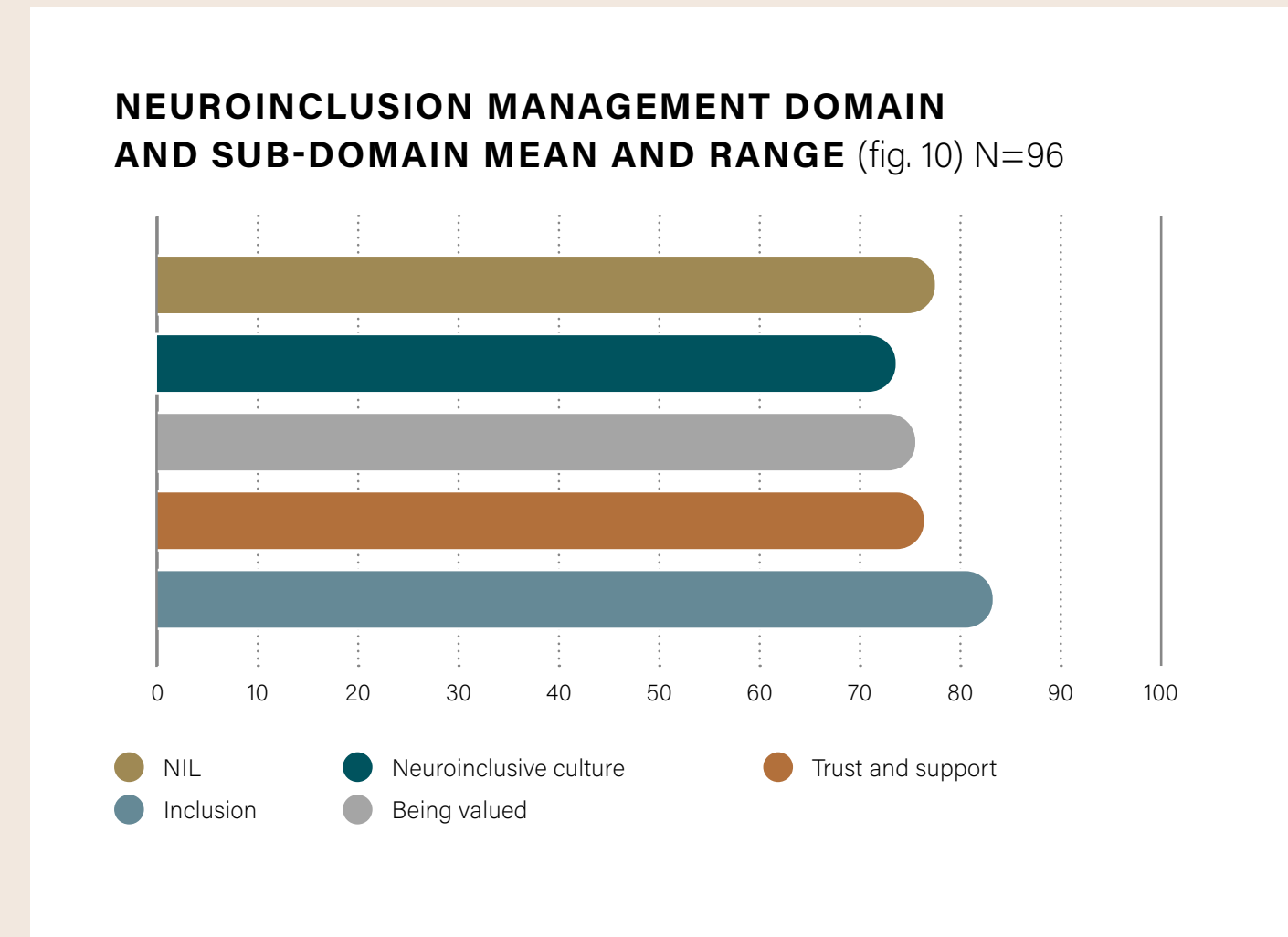
Overall, most respondents felt they were included by their peers, as indicated by the Inclusion sub-domain (fig. 10). However, on average, employees responded less positively on how valued they felt by the organisation, and about the culture built by the business. This suggests that organisations could do more from a top-down perspective to create a culture where everyone feels valued for their individual contribution.

Almost **3 in 10** neurodivergent employees experienced some degree of discrimination relating to their neurodivergence.

1. Calculated as percentage of responses indicating disagreement to some extent to whether they felt comfortable asking for adjustments.

One finding that particularly stood out to us was the extent to which neurodivergent employees had experienced stigma related to their neurodivergence in their current workplace. Of the 2,241 neurodivergent respondents to the NDEI® employees inclusion survey, 29% had experienced some degree of discrimination.

Another finding of note was with regards to asking for adjustments and supports. Neurodivergent employees (32.9%¹) reported feeling less comfortable asking for adjustments than their neurotypical peers (14.2%). This is an interesting finding, as organisations are reporting that they are offering a range of adjustments and accommodations. However, the people who would benefit the most from the adjustments are less likely to ask for them. This provides a strong case for a universal approach to how a workplace is designed and structured, so that there is no need to ask. It also demonstrates the importance of a workplace culture that is psychologically safe for someone to disclose their neurodivergence and ask for supports.



Championing workplace neuroinclusion



Taking an active role in workplace neuroinclusion

Helen Mariner, deputy chief executive of Active Oxfordshire, and her team took part in the early release of the NDEI®. Active Oxfordshire's results reassured her that they were making great progress in workplace inclusion, and generated new ideas for how they could deliver more.

Could you introduce yourself and your organisation?

Active Oxfordshire is one of 43 Active partnerships across the country. Our role is to improve our county's health and wellbeing by increasing activity levels. We work in partnership with a wide range of organisations to make the most impact and currently reach about 17,000 people every year.

Why did you want to take part in the NDEI®?

We took part in the NDEI® because we wanted to understand how well we're creating a neuroinclusive culture, but most importantly, how we can further improve.

We have a strong focus on equity, diversity and inclusion, both in terms of making sure that sport and physical activity is much more inclusive for the residents in our county but also looking inwardly across our organisation to make sure that we're fully inclusive.

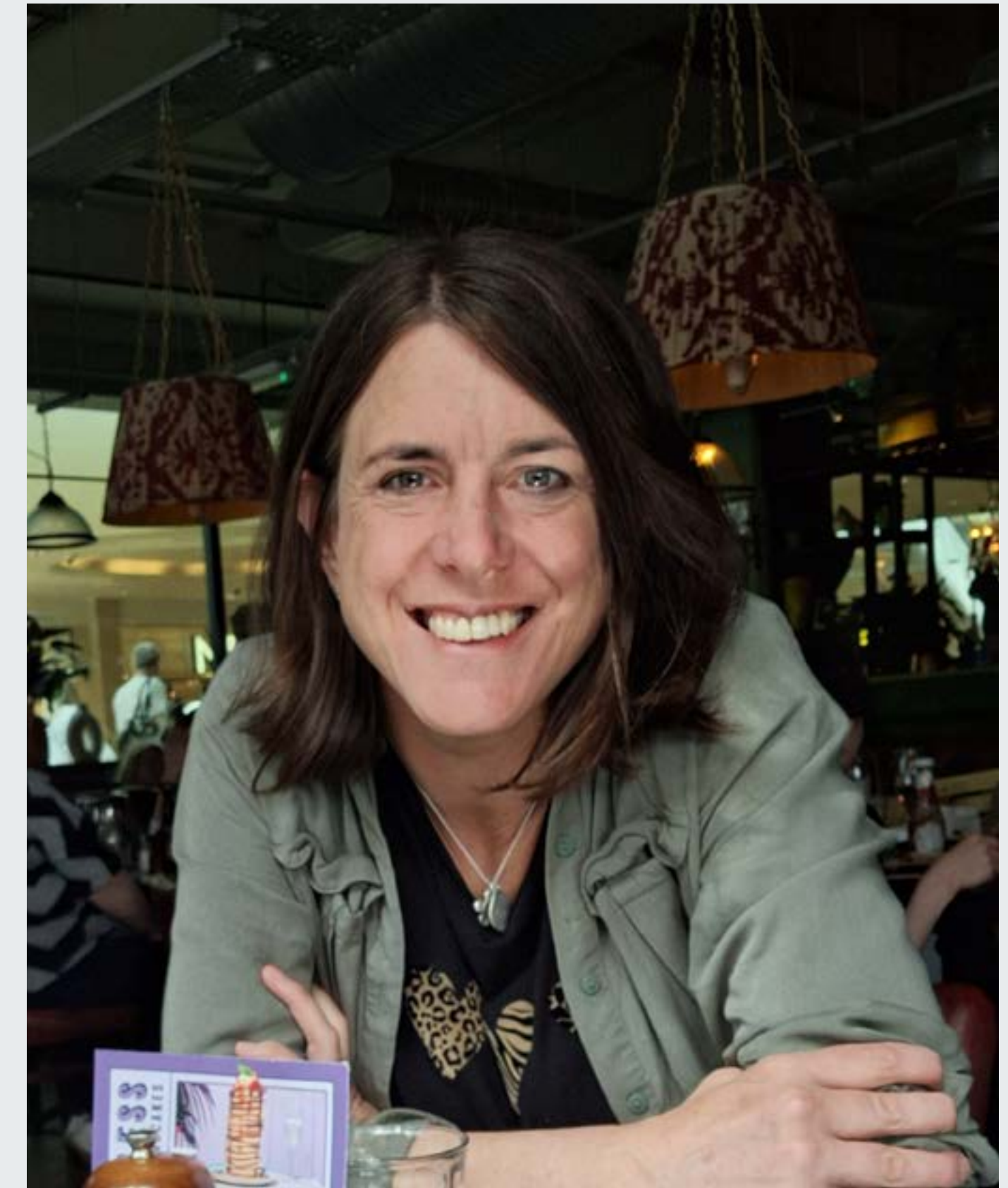
We aim to provide the most inclusive, accepting and welcoming environment for neurodivergent people. This ultimately benefits all staff, regardless of neurotype.

Another incentive for taking part was finding out how we could better support neurodivergent colleagues. I'm autistic and was diagnosed about four years ago. When I first joined Active Oxfordshire, I was incredibly nervous about disclosing I was autistic. But when I told my colleagues, they were overwhelmingly supportive and hugely excited because of the diversity of thought and the talents that being autistic can bring. That narrative shift is something I really want to keep encouraging.

Could you tell us about the neuroinclusion successes you had before taking part in the NDEI®?

We started making changes about eighteen months ago and the NDEI® really solidified that what we had started to implement was the right approach. We are proactive at offering reasonable adjustments, whatever that might mean for the individual. All our colleagues at Active Oxfordshire have neurodiversity training to improve our understanding.

As an example, one of the biggest changes we made were to our recruitment processes. We sent interview questions to candidates in advance, encouraged people to bring notes to interviews, and offered informal chats to shortlisted candidates.



We made a recruitment pack that gives examples of how inclusive we are as an organisation, so that by interview day candidates know more about us.

The feedback we've had from all candidates, whether neurodivergent or not, has been overwhelmingly positive. Candidates have told us how much difference it made and how much more relaxed they felt at interview. The perceived power imbalance between the person interviewing and the person being interviewed was gone. It now feels more like a conversation.

Culturally, I think it gives candidates a much better introduction to who we are as an organisation, and our recruitment processes have become stronger and stronger.

Since doing the NDEI®, what changes are you planning or starting to make? What are you most excited about?

Something that came out quite strongly in our NDEI® result was that we could look at pre-employment support for candidates, such as work experience, mentoring or internships. We're lucky as we work with so many different partners and youth organisations, so we're quite well set up to do this. We're actively looking at what we can do with that.

As a result of the NDEI® I've been involved in launching the first-ever neurodivergent peer group for the Active Partnership Network. It runs across the country for colleagues from across the 43 Active partnerships.

When we first proposed the idea, there was a very positive response from other Active partnerships saying that they would love that safe space to chat through challenges and successes and share learnings. We've had two meetings so far. It's early days, but I'm really excited about it.

On personal level, I'm excited about encouraging a change in narrative and understanding around the huge benefits that neurodivergent colleagues can bring to organisations.

What did you learn in the process of completing the NDEI®?

We learned a huge amount from participating in the NDEI®. It was reassuring to know that we are doing some really good work. Our high score confirmed that we were on the right track. Taking part gave us the right toolkit to build on our work. It gave us a roadmap for what's next and a sense of excitement for what was possible.

Our biggest learning was that we can be more intentional around creating a neuroinclusive culture. We also learned more ways we can ensure colleagues feel fully supported and have sense of belonging.

What would you say to other organisations that are thinking of taking part?

Go for it! I think it's a valuable way to see how you are currently doing as an organisation in terms of neuroinclusivity, but also understand how you can further improve. I found there were a lot of very tangible ideas and there was clear support available too, which I think was incredibly helpful.

Having been through the process, it means that as an organisation you can be more confident about saying, 'We now feel ready to attract neurodivergent talent. And we now have everything in place to be able to do it well.' And I think, increasingly, it's becoming more and more important to do so.

Celebrating inclusion: The NDEI® Awards

We are delighted to recognise the NDEI® gold, silver, and bronze awardees for their efforts in workplace neuroinclusion. These organisations have shown policies, practices and procedures that accommodate and value the talents and perspectives of neurodivergent employees.

GOLD AWARDS

Gold awards are achieved by organisations that demonstrate exceptional commitment to neuroinclusion, meeting the highest standards across all evaluated areas. This includes comprehensive policies, practices and procedures for neurodivergent employees. Employee feedback suggested a strong neuroinclusive culture at these organisations.

SILVER AWARDS

Silver awards recognise organisations that have made significant progress in neuroinclusion, implementing effective initiatives and policies. Employees gave positive feedback, reflecting a good cultural ethos of neuroinclusion.

BRONZE AWARDS

Bronze awards are given to organisations that have started their journey towards neuroinclusion. These organisations show a commitment to developing and implementing initiatives that support neurodivergent employees. However, they haven't established as many policies, practices and procedures that are also recognised by employees as making a positive difference.

Please note: the NDEI® gold, silver and bronze awards are not an endorsement of an organisation from Autistica, but an acknowledgement of its neuroinclusive practices.



NDEI® Award Winners 2024

Every qualifying organisation has the chance to be celebrated in the Market Report. These awardees have provided their consent to be featured publicly and are proud to be champions of workplace neuroinclusion.

Please note: Recognition of an NDEI® award in the Market Report is optional and on an opt-in basis. The list of awardees on this page is not exhaustive.



3SC

Digital
Advantage

Diversita

Monogram
Media



Amplifi Europe
Active Oxfordshire
CareTrade
Cubelynx
The Diocese of Sheffield
Academies Trust
Enable
HTG
Jamescape Limited
PatronBase UK Partners Ltd



26 Agency
AIR IT
Aviva Group
Baringa
British Geological Survey
Gloucestershire Rural
Community Council (GRCC)
Idox Software Ltd
Surrey Choices
Motionspot
MTM Bio
Next 15
Parkinson's UK
Teva UK
TRP Research



HOW WE CALCULATE THE AWARDS

As part of the NDEI® process, we set thresholds for gold, silver, and bronze awards for excellence in neuroinclusion. These are based on an organisation's commitment to and implementation of neuroinclusive practices. We offer participation awards to organisations that reported less defined practices for neuroinclusion, as new champions for neuroinclusion initiatives.

IF YOU MISSED OUT THIS YEAR

Not every organisation that takes part in the NDEI® will qualify for an award, but regardless of an organisation's score, taking part is an important step towards better workplace inclusion.

By taking part, organisations gain valuable insights into their current practices and opportunities for change.

With the key takeaways included in their bespoke NDEI® reports, they then have a range of recommendations and suggestion to focus their efforts to enhance neuroinclusion within their respective companies.

For the organisations who took part this year, we would say that inclusion is a journey. By continuing to assess and improve, your organisation can make significant strides. The feedback provided through the index company report can serve as a roadmap for your next steps, helping you to identify and implement best practices. Your commitment to this process shows that you are serious about building a more inclusive environment. And with sustained effort, you'll be well-positioned to achieve higher scores and recognition when you take part in the NDEI® in future.

The next step in neuroinclusion: our training and consultancy services

Our training consultancy services combine the latest evidence and lived experience to ensure you're at the cutting-edge of neuroinclusion.

By participating in the NDEI®, you will have already started to learn more about how to create working environments where both neurodivergent and neurotypical people can thrive. However, this is just the first practical step in creating inclusive workplaces that attract and retain neurodivergent talent.

We are in an unmatched position to offer training and consultancy services that uniquely combine the latest research evidence with insights from lived experience. This will help you and your colleagues confidently navigate neurodiversity in the workplace, while ensuring you're at the cutting edge of inclusion.

TRAINING

Our training is based on gold-standard research and is developed and delivered by experts by experience, guaranteeing that your newfound skills are based on the latest knowledge. We'll help you and your colleagues deepen your understanding about neurodivergence, for a more inclusive working environment that benefits neurodivergent and neurotypical people alike.

Our current training courses include (but are not limited to):

- An introduction to neurodiversity.
- Neurodiversity and mental health.
- Support for parents of autistic and neurodivergent people.
- Recruiting and retaining neurodivergent talent.

CONSULTANCY

When it comes to inclusion, every organisation is unique and will have different challenges and opportunities. If you are looking for bespoke guidance specific to your organisational needs, our consultancy service is for you.

Support may include a review of your current recruitment practices, guidance with creating a neurodiversity network or the creation of a neurodiversity strategy. If you want to learn more, we offer a free, no-obligation discovery call with our Neurodiversity Business Consultant.



RECEIVE EXPERT GUIDANCE FROM OUR NEURODIVERSITY BUSINESS CONSULTANT

One of the UK's leading autistic voices, Chris Pike has delivered hundreds of hours of training, consultancy, and public speaking on the topics of neurodiversity and disability across a wide range of sectors.

Chris has been teaching people about autism and neurodivergence for almost a decade. Chris' number one passion is making the world happier and friendlier for people like him.

If you want more information about our training and consultancy services, including fees and availability, contact us and one of our team will be in touch with you soon.

Working with the Government to tackle the autism employment gap

To create truly neuroinclusive workplaces, we need action both at organisational and governmental levels. That's why we were proud to be part of the core team producing Sir Robert Buckland's Review of Autism and Employment. This groundbreaking review made recommendations based on a range of roundtables with and written submissions from autistic people, employers and support services to learn more about the barriers to employment and how to overcome them.


WHY IT MATTERS

Autistic people have one of the lowest rates of employment out of any disabled group.¹ Currently, just three in 10 autistic people are employed, while three out of four unemployed autistic people would like to be in work.²

Although autistic people have a lot to offer employers, barriers such as outdated hiring and interview practices or inflexible working policies make it more challenging for autistic people to find and maintain meaningful employment.

The Buckland Review set out to explore the barriers to work for autistic people and make recommendations so that more autistic people can find the meaningful employment that they want and the independence that comes with it.

When autistic people are employed, many of them are underemployed for their skills and abilities. As the Buckland Review highlights, autistic graduates are twice as likely to be unemployed after 15 months as non-disabled graduates, with only 36% finding full time work in this period. Additionally, autistic graduates are most likely to be overqualified for the job they have, most likely to be on zero-hours contracts, and least likely to be in a permanent role.³

 *It's not that we should prepare autistic people to go to work alone, we should also prepare workplaces to receive autistic people.*

— ASHRAF, ROUNDTABLE PANELLIST

HOW WE SUPPORTED THE REVIEW

We were delighted to support the review, which contributes towards our 2030 Goal of doubling employment rates for autistic people. Together with other key organisations, we helped gather evidence for the Review, recruited experts by experience to support the project, organised round table discussions, and offered our expertise and guidance on the report.

We worked together with the autistic community to ensure autistic people's insights and lived experience were central to the discussion, creating meaningful involvement for more effective change.

One of the key recommendations from the Review was for organisations to take part in the NDEI®. The NDEI® offers organisations a way to measure their own inclusive practices and make positive changes to better support neurodivergent talent in the workplace.

THE IMPACT

The Review received widespread media coverage, with our CEO Dr James Cusack making multiple appearances across the BBC on launch day. In the month following the Review's publication, 200 employers signed up to our Employers' Guide to Neurodiversity. MPs discussed the autism employment gap in a debate on the Buckland Review in April.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Before the general election, the Department for Work and Pensions were poised to recruit a task group to drive forward the recommendations in the Buckland Review. In September, the new Government confirmed they had begun discussions to continue the work of the Review.

We are already engaging with Ministers and Parliamentarians to push for the task group proposed in the Review, to help make recommendations become a reality. If you are interested in getting involved, supporting our policy and campaign work for more inclusive employment for autistic people, contact georgia.harper@autistica.org.uk.

[Read the Buckland Review of Autism and Employment here](#)

1. [The employment of disabled people 2024, DWP](#)

2. [Pro Bono Economics Report for Autistica, 2023](#)

3. [What happens next? 2022, ACGAS](#)

Improving employment rates for autistic people benefits individuals and the economy

Employers are facing skills and talent shortages in numerous sectors. As a result, many companies are struggling to maintain productivity and drive innovation, which are crucial for staying competitive. This employment shortage is compounded by the fact that employers have historically overlooked a group who are ready and willing to work but are seldom given a chance to showcase their strengths and talents: autistic people.

Although every autistic person is different, many autistic people have qualities that will make them an asset to the workplace. These qualities include loyalty, honesty, focused attention, unique perspectives, attention to detail and creativity.

According to the Department for Work and Pensions 2024 figures, just three in ten autistic people are in work. This is one of the lowest employment rates of any disabled group.

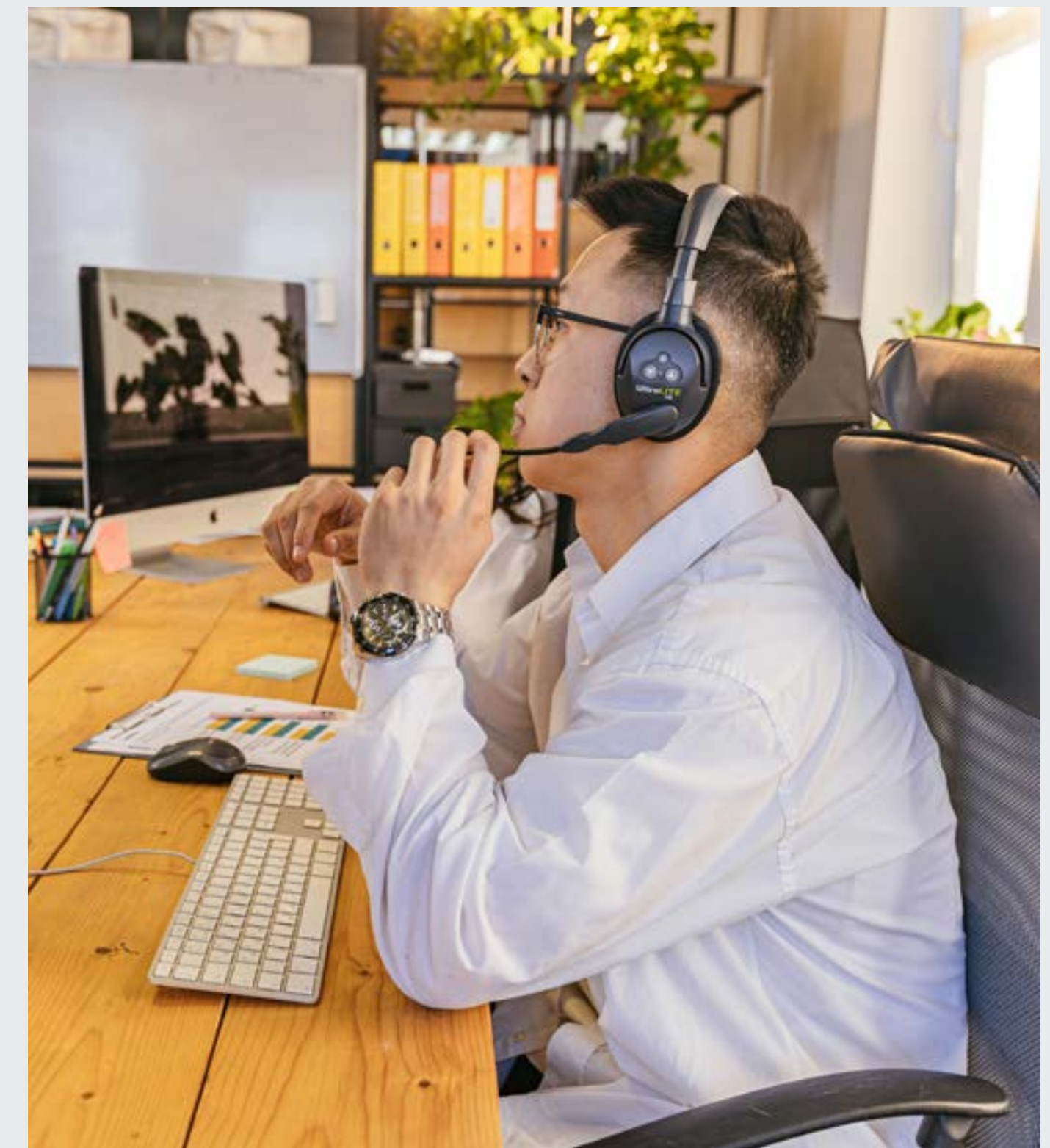
We sought independent evidence of how doubling employment could benefit the economy in addition to empowering autistic people. We approached Pro Bono Economics, a charity that uses economic expertise to help other charities improve their impact and value. They created the report *[Opening Opportunities: Improving employment prospects for autistic people](#)*.

Pro Bono Economics delivered several key findings, including:

- Just three in 10 autistic people are in work, while 75% of unemployed autistic people would like to be working.
- By doubling the employment of autistic people, this could add 100,000 people to the UK labour market, with economic benefits of £900m – £1.5bn each year that these employment levels were sustained.
- The average unemployed autistic person would be £9,200 per year better off in full-time employment.

Read the [full report for further insights](#). You'll learn more about autistic people's experiences in work, including some of the barriers autistic people face to gaining or maintaining employment, and numerous examples of small changes and reasonable adjustments that employers can make to create inclusive supportive environments.

Ultimately, creating more inclusive working environments is beneficial to autistic people, employers and society as a whole. It supports more autistic people into sustainable employment, helps employers get the best out of their autistic employees, and boosts the economy.



Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our contributors and partners who helped make the NDEI® a reality. Your support, guidance or expertise is already driving positive change in workplaces. And, in its first year, this is just the beginning of a step change towards more inclusive and supportive work environments for neurodivergent people.

LIVED AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE EXPERTS

Thank you to our neurodivergent experts by experience for shaping the development of the NDEI® through our advisory groups. Lived experience involvement is integral to our work and keeps neurodiversity research relevant and meaningful for the community it serves.

Thank you to our industry professionals for offering advice, insights and guidance during pilot testing and development of the NDEI®.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Thank you to our partners at the Centre for Clinical, Social and Cognitive Neuroscience, City St George's, University of London that provided help to the methodology and construction of the NDEI®, including Professor Danai Dima and Professor Sebastian Gaigg.

We would also like to acknowledge Predixus for their involvement in the NDEI® portal.

OUR FOUNDER

As always, a heartfelt thank you to our Founder, Dame Stephanie 'Steve' Shirley CH, DBE, FEng, DFBCS. As a business pioneer, passionate philanthropist and champion of autism research, it feels fitting that the work of a charity founded by Steve is helping to create more neuroinclusive workplaces.

And, most importantly, thank you to all participating organisations for the August–September 2024 cohort for pioneering workplace neuroinclusion. The NDEI® can only drive positive change if organisations take part and are willing to learn more about recruiting and supporting neurodivergent people. We're delighted that so many of you recognise the value of neurodiverse teams and diversity of thought.

