

## Sensory Environment Checklist

This Sensory Environment Checklist can be used as a guide to help consider the different sensory responses to an environment that some people may experience. In the same way that environments such as workspaces and public buildings are usually audited to consider physical accessibility, if sensory responses and preferences of Neurodiverse communities are better understood it will be possible to create shared environments that more closely meet everyone's needs. Sensory distractions can make it really challenging for staff and visitors with Neurodivergent conditions to concentrate and focus in some office environments. We need to make reasonable adjustments for these visitors and staff.

- The checklist is designed to help identify things like busy patterns, lighting, acoustics and layout, which should be considered when thinking about environment accessibility.
- The checklist can be used when assessing an existing environment for cognitive accessibility and to inform accessible design considerations for new environments.
- The checklist can also be used to help people talking about environmental factors when considering reasonable adjustments in the physical workplace.

### Instruction

'Yes' or 'No' options have been provided to identify whether action is required as a reasonable adjustment following an introductory workplace interview. A rating system is provided to indicate the extent to which evidence for appropriate reasonable accommodation in the workplace is available for each criteria. The rating system is from 1 to 5, where (1 – *Not at all*, 2 - *Not much*, 3 - *Neutral*, 4- *Fairly*, 5 – *Very*). Actions that may be taken can be noted in a comment column.

### Assessment of organization's index of inclusive physical environment








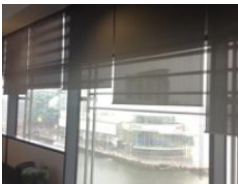
The questionnaire consists of 18 criteria. Rate each criteria with a score from 1 to 5. After completing the questionnaire, sum adds up the points of all criteria. You will get a score where the minimum number of points is 18, the maximum is 90. Then estimate your organization's index of inclusive physical environment by dividing the number of points by the number of questions 18.

- Minimum index for inclusive physical environment - 1
- Maximum index for inclusive physical environment - 5.

## VISUAL



Many neurodivergent people are sensitive to light levels, flickering lights, strong reflections, bright bold colours and busy patterns. Lighting and reflection can also be difficult for those who are neurotypical.

### Lighting

Type of check	What to look for	Undesirable	Desirable	Environmenta I Score	Action Required?	Reasonable Adjustment
Lighting quality is very important to those with neurodivergent conditions.	Is the illumination in the room suitable for members of staff and visitors? Can you choose lighting and furnishings which minimise reflection? LED lights are often a better choice.			1	YES	YES
				2	NO	NO
				3		
				4		
				5		
Flickering lights can be very distracting.	Are fluorescent lights checked regularly?			1	YES	YES
				2	NO	NO
				3		
				4		
				5		
Light levels can cause problems.	Is it possible to alter light levels?			1	YES	YES
				2	NO	NO
				3		
				4		
				5		
Strong sunlight can be painful	Are plain blinds available to shade strong light? Blinds which throw patterns can cause difficulty.			1	YES	YES
				2	NO	NO
				3		
				4		
				5		

Type of check	What to look for	Undesirable	Desirable	Environmenta I Score	Action Required?	Reasonable Adjustment
Glass meeting rooms can be difficult with distractions from the outside.	Are all glass meeting rooms fitted with blinds?			1 2 3 4 5	YES NO	YES NO

### Décor

Type of check	What to look for	Undesirable	Desirable	Environmenta I Score	Action Required?	Reasonable Adjustment
Bright colours and reflective, shiny surfaces can be overwhelming.	Minimise or avoid use of strong or abrasive colours (Bright colours on shiny surfaces, Fluorescent or Neon colours).			1 2 3 4 5	YES NO	YES NO

### Signage and Layout

Type of check	What to look for	Undesirable	Desirable	Environmenta I Score	Action Required?	Reasonable Adjustment
Signage needs to be simple, clear and visual.	Are signs easy to understand? Could areas be colour coded, or symbols/graphics added? Avoid misleading arrows and maps.			1 2 3 4 5	YES NO	YES NO

Type of check	What to look for	Undesirable	Desirable	Environmenta I Score	Action Required?	Reasonable Adjustment
A neat layout is easier on the eyes and easier to negotiate.	Clean lines, space between furniture and no clutter.			1 2 3 4	YES NO	YES NO

Quiet spaces and screened areas are good.

Are there few screened off areas that staff can use when they need a quiet space, or designated sensory/quiet rooms.



5







1  
2  
3  
4  
5

YES  
NO

YES  
NO

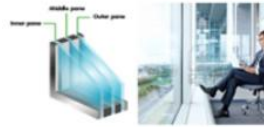
## Auditory

Some noises can cause difficulty and distress (some people use noise cancelling headphones to help).

Type of check	What to look for	Undesirable	Desirable	Environmenta l Score	Action Required?	Reasonable Adjustment
Are there sounds from equipment.	Hot water taps, lights, electrical equipment, copiers and computers can all hum. Set them to power off when not in use.		Auto 	1	YES	YES
				2	NO	NO
				3		
				4		
				5		
Are there sounds from squeaky chairs and feet.	Sudden squeaking noises and the noise of chairs on hard floors can be very loud. Fit carpets where possible. Use padded feet on hard floors.			1	YES	YES
				2	NO	NO
				3		
				4		
				5		
				1	YES	YES
				2	NO	NO
				3		

Are there sounds from traffic noise.

Can be difficult for everyone. Check glazing.



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Are there sounds from meeting rooms.

Need to be soundproofed if possible so outside noise is not a problem.



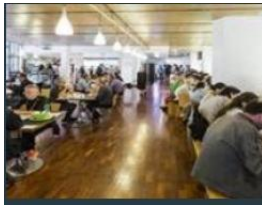
1  
2  
3  
4  
5

YES  
NO

YES  
NO

Are there sounds from crowded areas.

Shielded space in busy areas can help to reduce noise.



1  
2  
3  
4  
5

YES  
NO

YES  
NO

## Olfactory

Unexpected odours can be a problem.

Type of check	What to look for	Undesirable	Desirable	Environmenta l Score	Action Required?	Reasonable Adjustment
Unexpected odours from toilets.	Are all toilets sited away from working areas and do they have extractors? Hand Dryers can be noisy, consider paper towels instead.			1 2 3 4 5	YES NO	YES NO

Unexpected odours from food.

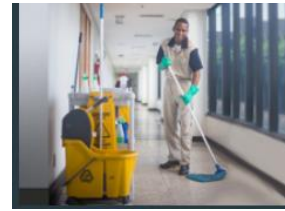
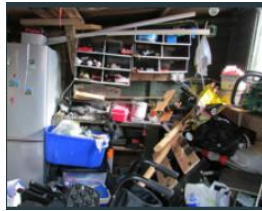
Ensure food preparation be separated from working areas. Are microwaves and kitchen areas screened off?



1	YES	YES
2	NO	NO
3		
4		
5		

Unexpected odours paint and cleaning materials.

Are paint and cleaning materials stored separately and not used during the busiest working hours





1	YES	YES
2	NO	NO
3		
4		
5		

1	YES	YES
2	NO	NO
3		
4		
5		

## TACTILE

Are all the furnishing fabrics/sources of visual stimulation minimised and comfortable to touch?

Type of check	What to look for	Undesirable	Desirable	Environmenta l Score	Action Required?	Reasonable Adjustment
Materials used in seating and soft furnishing..	Textured materials can cause discomfort, distraction or pain responses. Consider smooth, soft materials, check for individual preferences.			1 2 3 4 5	YES NO	YES NO

References:

<https://bbc.github.io/uxd-cognitive/>