



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Digital, Data and Technology Recruitment Neurodiversity Review

Project Outcomes

August 2020

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Introduction

Around 1 in 7 people in the UK are diagnosed with a neurodivergent condition, and a high proportion of those struggle to gain employment. Only 16% of autistic adults in the UK are in full-time employment, even though 77% express a desire to work. A key barrier to employment for people with a neurodiverse condition begins at the early stages of recruitment (auticon project report, 2020).

The Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) Profession implemented a new recruitment process in 2018. The process differs from the standard Scottish Government process through the use of CV-based applications and technical exercises. It retains the use of a competency-based interview to test the Skills for Success competencies required by HR policy.

The DDaT profession is committed to increasing diversity and inclusion in digital roles in government. To do this we complete regular reviews of our policies and processes. We do this to uncover any biases or barriers that may be present and commit to removing these wherever possible.

In June 2020 the DDaT profession worked with auticon, an advisory service and IT consultancy specialising in neurodivergent conditions, to review the existing DDaT recruitment processes and documentation.

The aim of the neurodiversity review project was to:

- develop our capability and awareness of neurodiversity and conditions in the context of recruitment,
- create the ability to deliver training to others on neurodiversity and conditions in the context of recruitment, and
- identify flexible solutions to implement which lower barriers and increase the level of successful neurodivergent candidates.

An overview of the processes and supporting documents that were reviewed is shown in Annex A.

Key findings

From the review auticon advised that “the DDaT team are doing a lot in their recruitment processes that we would usually suggest [as] ideal levels of inclusivity for neurodivergent candidates... The team has many good and positive practices and processes that have helped to create a better than average working environment for neurodivergent colleagues.”

A number of recommendations for changes to our processes and supporting documentation were made. The recommendations varied from minor formatting changes to more fundamental ways in how to address the topic of inclusion in our recruitment.

The recommendations were grouped into themes for consideration and implementation, shown below.

Disclosure and adjustments available (27 recommendations)

- Ensuring applicants are able to disclose a neurodiverse condition with confidence that this will not be viewed negatively.
- Increasing awareness of the types of adjustments that can be requested and put in place for candidates with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia.

Education (5 recommendations)

- Increasing awareness of neurodiversity amongst recruiting managers, panels and those responsible for managing campaigns.
- Increasing the confidence to respond to candidates’ disclosure and requests for adjustments to processes.

Formatting (14 recommendations)

- Updating documents and communications to ensure they are accessible to all.

Inclusive processes (32 recommendations)

- Changing our processes to make them more inclusive for everyone.

Language (29 recommendations)

- Updating and changing the language used to clarify concepts and processes that may not be clear to everyone.
- Making wording clear and accessible and demonstrating our commitment to inclusion.

Providing information upfront (17 recommendations)

- Sharing relevant information as early as possible in the process to reduce uncertainty and anxiety.

All the recommendations have been provided as flexible options. This is to take into account that we may not be able to implement them all given current policies and rules we have to follow to remain compliant with Civil Service and Scottish Government recruitment principles.

The recommendations will not be taken in isolation. Whilst changes to processes recommended will benefit everyone, especially with those with neurodiverse conditions, they do not specifically address barriers faced by other groups. They do not currently take into account the intersectionality of people, especially those with neurodiverse conditions. This is something we plan to address in future reviews of our processes.

What we've changed

Having reviewed the recommendations, we have implemented some key changes across the DDaT recruitment process and guidance.

So far, we have:

- Updated all guidance and templates to meet the British Dyslexia Association style guide and guidance available on Saltire.
- Updated DDaT recruitment guidance to plain English and to remove ambiguous or unclear wording.
- Updated the telephone interview pack and technical exercise pack to include more information about how to be more inclusive for all candidates.
- Created an inclusion guide for recruiting managers. This explains what adjustments could be put in place for candidates if they request them and what to think about doing when running recruitment exercises to make them more accessible to everyone.
- Created a new DDaT Person Specification and guidance on how to write job adverts and essential criteria to be accessible.
- Created a new Candidate Guide to share with candidates so they know what to expect and how to prepare.
- Agreed changes to how attachments are presented on Work for Scotland to make it easier for candidates to access the information they need.
- Committed to making awareness training on 'Person Specifications and Essential Criteria', 'Encouraging and Managing Disclosure', and 'Inclusive Interviewing' available on a regular basis.

Things outside of our control

A number of recommendations from the review were for processes or documents that are not owned or maintained by the DDaT Profession.

Specifically, we received recommendations on:

- the Work for Scotland website,
- competency based interviewing,
- the Skills for Success competency framework, and
- the Equalities Statement.

These recommendations have been shared with HR colleagues and we are committed to working with them to make changes where possible.

What next

The Digital, Data and Technology Profession in Scottish Government is committed to identifying and removing barriers that people may face when they engage with us.

This review is a key part of the wider diversity and inclusion agenda.

Our work to deliver a digital future for Scotland must truly reflect the diversity of people living in our communities. Meeting their needs is core to our mission and without a diverse workforce, we will struggle to do that.

Put simply – unless we take action to increase the diversity of our workforce, we will struggle to ensure that we are driving an inclusive and accessible Digital Scotland which benefits everyone fairly. Diversity in our workforce is key to ensuring that inclusion and accessibility are at the forefront of the work we do.

Which is why recruiting, supporting and retaining a diverse workforce that reflects the population of Scotland is so important to us.

We will continue to seek out new ways to improve our policies and processes as well as identify targeted interventions to increase diversity and inclusion in the profession.

If you have any recommendations, have identified any barriers, or simply want to share your experiences please get in touch via the profession mailbox at ddat@gov.scot.

ANNEX A – Processes and documentation reviewed

Process	Role profiles & job adverts	Work for Scotland Website	CV & statement applications	Sifting	Telephone interviews	Technical exercises	Competency interviews
<p>Supporting documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role profile templates • Person specification document • Candidate guide • Example adverts 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone interview pack • Telephone interview script 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical exercise pack • Technical exercise guidance • Example exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for Success framework • Competency interview guidance • Competency questions
<p>DDaT Recruitment Guidance</p> <p>Recruiting Manager Guidance</p> <p>Lead Panel Member Guidance</p> <p>Candidate Communications</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Statement</p>							

Key

HR Owned Process / Guidance

DDaT Owned Process / Guidance



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