

Tech Talent Charter (TTC) Signatory Spotlight: Scottish Government Open Playbook Chapter [2.1.9: Welcome Neurodiversity](#)

The Problem

Around 1 in 7 people in the UK are diagnosed with a neurodivergent condition and a high proportion of those struggle to gain employment. Under 25% of autistic adults in the UK are in full-time employment, even though over 75% express a desire to work. A key barrier to employment for people with a neurodiverse condition begins at the early stages of recruitment.

Overview

The Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) profession in Scottish Government implemented a new recruitment process in 2018. It differs from the standard Scottish Government process by using CV's, personal statements and technical exercises. There's still a shorter competency-based interview to test Skills for Success competencies required by HR policy. The DDaT profession is committed to increasing diversity and inclusion in digital roles in government. We do this by regularly reviewing our policies and processes to uncover, mitigate or remove any biases or barriers that may be present.

Method

In June 2020, the DDaT Profession Team worked with [auticon](#), an advisory service and IT consultancy specialising in neurodivergent conditions, to review our existing DDaT recruitment processes and accompanying documents. The aim of the 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
- identify flexible solutions to implement which lower barriers and increase the level of successful neurodivergent candidates.

Result

The review report from auticon found that we had many good and positive practices and processes that have helped create a better than average working environment for neurodivergent colleagues. auticon also said we had ideal levels of inclusivity for neurodivergent candidates in our recruitment processes, but they gave us over 100 recommendations ranging from minor formatting changes to more fundamental ways to improve on ideal.

Having reviewed the recommendations, we have implemented some key changes and so far we have:

- Updated all DDaT guidance and templates to meet the British Dyslexia Association style guide
- Updated DDaT guidance to plain English and removed ambiguous wording and implemented most of the formatting recommendations from the review
- Created an Inclusion Guide for recruiting managers which explains all the adjustments that can be made to help candidates perform at the best at each stage of the recruitment process.
- Created a new inclusive Candidate Guide that lets candidates know what to expect at each stage of the recruitment process
- Created a new DDaT job specification and guidance on how to write inclusive job adverts
- Agreed changes to how attachments are presented on Work for Scotland making it easier for all candidates to access the information they need.

We're not done yet, the Inclusion Guide will continue to be updated as we include more information on diversity and inclusion that will help other people who have barriers to employment.

Shared by Maryanne Mcgoldrick at Scottish Government, 2 December 2020.