



The Westminster
AchieveAbility
Commission for Dyslexia
and Neurodivergence
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Westminster AchieveAbility Commission (WAC) September 2017

The Westminster AchieveAbility Commission on Recruitment is user-led and focuses on adults with dyslexia and neurodivergence in the UK. It has been formed from a collaboration of AchieveAbility, the Autism Commission, the Dyslexia Adult Network and the Dyspraxia Foundation. Barry Sheerman MP is our Chair and Lord Addington, our Adviser. Our task is to investigate the barriers to employment in order to identify which recruitment processes disadvantage neurodivergent people (those with ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, autism and Asperger Syndrome). Since this population represents the highest percentage of adults who are disabled, the Commission is vital in order to represent the issues for this community, as well as revealing their value and strengths within the workplace. The work will provide much needed evidence and build on the research of recent reports such as 'Neurodiversity at Work' (ACAS) and Ahead of the Arc (Disability Rights UK).

In our first witness session, experts provided evidence to the Commission were: Nasser Siabi OBE, Microlink; Chris Rossiter, British Psychological Society; Margaret Malpas MBE British Dyslexia Association and Andrew Sutherland, the lead on the ACAS report. Two further key witness sessions took place early in 2017. 'Policy and Practice' which included employers such as the BBC and Transport for London, along with employability specialists. Followed by, the 'Neurodivergent Voice', which gave an opportunity for invitees throughout the Neurodivergent community to voice their points of view. Surveys to (potential) employees and employers have gathered further information. Our final session was an opportunity for the Department of Work and Pensions to respond to some of the issues raised. All this evidence will feed into our full report in 2018. Our overall aim is to find out how recruitment and probation processes might be improved and to highlight and disseminate good practice in these areas.

A Media Release providing the evidence headlines will be launched during Dyslexia Awareness Week October 2017. The full report is due in January 2018. The work of the Commission will provide other campaigning groups with a platform from which to push this agenda further, aligned with the government's stated aim of increasing the number of people with disabilities in employment as set out in the *Improving Lives* Green Paper. There could be no better time to highlight the abilities and workplace support needs of this large neurodivergent population and point to better recruitment and retention practices for the benefit of the national economy.

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