

PRESS RELEASE

Monday 22nd January 2018



The Westminster
AchieveAbility
Commission for Dyslexia
and Neurodivergence
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REPORT LAUNCH **Neurodiverse Voices:** **Opening Doors to Employment**

Ground-breaking report on systemic barriers to employment

A ground-breaking report is being launched TODAY on Monday January 22nd by the Westminster AchieveAbility Commission (WAC) and then released into the public domain. Over the period of a year, WAC has gathered evidence on systemic barriers to employment for millions of potential employees who are neurodivergent (i.e. dyslexic, dyspraxic, autistic and/or with Attention Deficit Disorder).

This significant study from the Westminster AchieveAbility Commission on Recruitment is aligned with the government's stated aim of increasing the number of people with disabilities in employment, set out in the *Improving Lives* Green Paper (2016) and Command Paper (2017). There could be no better time to highlight the abilities and workplace support needs of the large neurodivergent population and point to better recruitment and retention practices, for the benefit of the national economy

The resulting data has highlighted a widespread lack of awareness, failures in government support and workplace discrimination - but also many examples of good practice as most neurodivergent people are able and skilled - it is recruitment processes that disable them. All of this has fed into the Commission's report, an embargoed copy of which is attached.

The report launch on January 22nd, will be followed by a second event, also in Westminster, on Thursday 25th, to celebrate the creativity of the neurodivergent community (DETAILS BELOW).

WAC recommendations include widespread awareness training, accessibility of written employment information and an end to inappropriate testing as part of the selection process. We call for the improvement of government support programmes and disability initiatives.

HEADLINES FROM THE REPORT

- 43% of survey respondents felt discouraged from applying by job application processes.
- 52% claimed to have experienced discrimination during interview or selection processes.

- 73% did not disclose their condition during interview – of those that did, 58% regretted it, feeling this led to discrimination.
- On-line job applications which don't allow assistive technology and use of spellcheckers bar neurodivergent applicants from accessing jobs.
- Employers are breaking the law (Equality Act 2010) when they fail to implement reasonable adjustments for disabled people

QUOTATIONS FROM THE REPORT

“My first few staff reports started with the words “this officer will never be suitable for promotion as he is dyslexic.”

“Employers cannot make reasonable adjustments if they do not begin from the premise of acceptance.”

“All psychometric tests are impossible for me, however in many cases I know I would be very good at the job and that these test don't reflect my capabilities.”

EDITOR'S NOTES

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Details of Events

1) Monday 22 January in the Wilson Room at PortCullis House 4-6pm

Formal launch of the Commission Report, profiling findings and recommendations. There will be speakers and a Q and A session.

2) Thursday 25 January in the Jubilee Room in the Palace of Westminster 1-3pm

Celebration of dyslexia/ neurodivergence, speakers, short films and projects

Please find the following attached to this email:

The WAC Media Release, which provides further details

An embargoed copy of the WAC Report

About the Commission www.achieveability.org.uk

The Commission is chaired by Barry Sheerman MP, with Lord Addington as Advisor and led by AchieveAbility. The Commission includes representatives from the Dyslexia Adult Network, the Dyspraxia Foundation, the Autism Commission and a specialist in ethnic minorities/ND.