



The Westminster
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PRESS RELEASE

Ground-breaking report on systemic barriers to employment

A ground-breaking report is being launched on Monday 22 January 2018 by the Westminster AchieveAbility Commission (WAC). 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.

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.

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 tests don’t reflect my capabilities.”