

# Neurodiversity Policy

## Our commitment to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DE&I)

At MAB we're committed to promoting diversity, equality & inclusion, and to preventing all forms of discrimination at work.

We celebrate the fact that everyone is different and we want to create an inclusive environment, where everyone takes pride in who they are and feels confident and comfortable to bring their whole self to work every day.

We encourage a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and given the opportunity to thrive by:

- doing what they're good at;
- sharing what they're proud of;
- speaking up about what goes on around them; and
- asking for support, time out or someone to listen to them when they need it.

## What is Diversity?

Diversity is all about acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each of us is unique and recognising our individual differences.

## What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is about engaging the unique abilities, talents, beliefs, backgrounds and ways of working of all our colleagues. It's also about working together to create a culture where we all feel we belong and are valued and respected.

Our commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion enables us to have the best people working at MAB, all playing an important role in our mission to be the leading financial partner through life's key moments.

## Neurodiversity

This document outlines the support available to colleagues who are neurodivergent, or who believe they may be neurodivergent.

## What is neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity refers to the different ways the brain can work and interpret information. It highlights that people think about things differently, and that everyone has different strengths and views of the world.

It's estimated that around 1 in 7 people (more than 15% of people in the UK) are Neurodivergent, meaning that their brain functions, learns and processes information differently to those that are Neurotypical.

This document makes reference to conditions including (but not limited to):

### **Autism Spectrum Condition (ASD)**

People with Autism may act in a different way to other people – they may find it hard to communicate and interact with others; find it hard to understand how other people think or feel, find things like bright lights overwhelming, stressful or uncomfortable; get anxious or upset about unfamiliar situations and social events; take longer to understand information; do or think the same things over and over.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**

A condition that affects people's behaviour – they can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse. People with ADHD may also have additional problems, such as sleep and anxiety disorders.

### **Dyslexia**

It primarily affects reading and writing skills but is actually about information processing. Dyslexic people may have difficulty processing and remembering information they see and hear, which can affect learning and the acquisition of literacy skills. It can also impact on other areas, such as organisational skills.

### **Dyspraxia**

A common disorder that affects movement and co-ordination – such as tasks requiring balance, playing sports or leaning to drive. It can also affect fine motor skills, such as writing or using small objects.

### **Dyscalculia**

A specific and persistent difficulty in understanding numbers which can lead to a diverse range of difficulties with mathematics. It's distinguishable from other maths issues due to the severity of issues with number sense.

Although we recognise that neurodivergence can cause difficulties in the workplace for affected individuals, we will always focus on the strengths and positives it brings and ensure that all employees are given the same opportunities to develop personally and professionally at MAB.

## **Our Commitments**

We're committed to taking all reasonable steps to make sure that we:

- Listen to you if you tell us you are neurodivergent;
- Support you if you are diagnosed as, or believe you are neurodivergent, making reasonable adjustments where needed;
- Keep information about your health confidential;
- Treat you with respect, and not make judgements or assumptions about you based on your behaviours, or because you've told us you're neurodivergent;
- Treat any issues of bullying and harassment in relation to neurodiversity seriously – please see our Bullying and Harassment Policy for more information.

## Our Responsibilities

We all have a responsibility to behave in a way that is respectful of others and to understand that our views and opinions may not always be the same as our colleagues.

Here are some things you can do to help us create an inclusive workplace at MAB:

- Try to understand other people's points of view and help them understand yours;
- Be aware of each other's differences and respect the benefits that diversity can bring;
- If you ever see inappropriate behaviour, challenge or report it;
- Respect the confidentiality of colleagues and customers;
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect;
- Take responsibility for your own actions;
- Look for solutions to problems and try to resolve issues constructively.

## Offer of Support

We recognise that many neurological conditions are on a 'spectrum', meaning that they can affect people differently, in a number of different ways. We will ensure that any support offered will be suited to the needs and wishes of each individual and we'll never take a one-size fits all approach or stereotype colleagues based on common characteristics associated with their neurodivergence. This document aims to highlight all the different ways that we can support you – so you can decide what works best for you.

## Letting us Know

If you have been diagnosed as, or believe that you are neurodivergent, we really encourage you to ask for support - speak to your manager or a member of the People Team, to let us know how it affects you and the impact this has on your work and daily life. We can then take a look at any support or adjustments that you might need, to remove the challenges and difficulties you're experiencing as a result.

## Confidentiality

Anything you discuss with your manager or the People Team about your neurodivergence will be kept confidential and this won't be shared with anyone, unless you say it's okay (except where we have serious concerns for your safety or that of others).

## Making Reasonable Adjustments

There might be some reasonable adjustments we can make at work to help you manage your condition. The adjustments we can make will depend on your circumstances, but the types of changes that might help could be:

- Changing your working hours – e.g. your start and finish times;
- Changing your working location, e.g. working from home;
- Offering you a permanent desk in the office;
- Providing a quiet place to work or take time out – e.g. our Wellbeing Room at HQ
- Redesigning your workplace or workstation;
- Providing you with noise cancelling headphones;
- Offering more breaks;

- Providing more visual/pictorial instructions or processes;
- Providing you with a locker and name labels to help you organise your work and equipment;
- Offering you a buddy or mentor to help you with new tasks, or when visiting new environments;
- Providing you with the information you need in advance of meetings or events;
- Encouraging you to provide verbal instead of written submissions in the case of survey feedback or award nominations.

This is by no means an exhaustive list and all available options will be explored with you to ensure any changes made or support offer is appropriate to your individual needs.

If you think you might need to change your working pattern as a result of your neurodivergence, please speak to your manager about this. Just so it's clear, we'll deal with this as a possible reasonable adjustment, so you don't need to make an application under the flexible working process.

Your manager might recommend you speak to our independent Employee Assistance Programme, to get some help and advice. They may encourage you to go to your GP for support, if you haven't already. They might also ask you if you're happy to be referred to occupational health. This is so we can get more information about how your neurodivergence is likely to affect you at work, and what adjustments we can make to help.

## Creating an Inclusive Environment for Neurodiverse Colleagues

At MAB, we're committed to ensuring that neurodivergent colleagues in our organisation feel comfortable to be themselves and to speak up and discuss their condition and its impact, if they wish to.

We will continue to raise awareness of neurodiversity by:

- Providing training to managers on supporting neurodivergent team members;
- Promoting campaigns from our DE&I focus group – MAB U'nity;
- Arranging wellbeing initiatives on neurodiversity for all employees;
- Creating a support network for neurodivergent colleagues, ensuring a safe space to discuss their ideas and opinions, as well as the challenges they face and any coping strategies they have;
- Encouraging key people in the business to share their own stories and personal experiences of neurodiversity with pride, as a means to encourage others to do so;
- Creating a team of Neurodiversity Champions.

At MAB we're respectful and kind to everyone at all times, and we look out for our colleagues. We positively encourage everyone to be themselves, and we deliberately look out for and support anyone who finds this difficult. If you feel that you have been exposed to unwanted behaviours because of your neurodivergence, please come forward and speak to your manager or a member of the People Team.

## If you need further support

If you have any questions about anything you've read in this document, please speak to a member of the People Team. You can contact us via email ([mablife@mab.org.uk](mailto:mablife@mab.org.uk)), call us on Teams, or visit us on the Ground Floor at HQ to speak to us in person.

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