

## SC4 Carpenters Ltd



### Neurodiversity in Construction - Toolbox Talk

**Goal:** To understand that many critical construction skills are linked to neurodiversity, and how small actions can support our colleagues and improve site performance.

#### (5 minutes) The Setup: Why Are We Talking About Brains?

"Good morning everyone. We're here to talk about something that's probably already on this site, and it's one of our biggest strengths: **how our brains are wired.**"

"Every single person here is a brilliant problem-solver. You look at a 2D drawing and see a finished 3D structure. You can spot a pattern in a mountain of data, or figure out a creative fix when the plans go wrong. That ability—that special kind of thinking—is often linked to something called **Neurodiversity.**"

**"What is Neurodiversity?** It just means there's a natural variation in the human brain. We have different heights, different hair colours, and we have different ways of processing information."

"Most people are 'neurotypical,' but a significant number are '**neurodivergent**'—meaning their brains are wired differently. This often leads to pronounced, exceptional strengths, alongside specific challenges. Think of conditions like **ADHD, Dyslexia, and Autism.**"

"Here's the astonishing stat for our industry: In the general population, about 1 in 7 people are neurodivergent. **In construction, it's closer to 1 in 4, and possibly as high as half on some sites.** This is a massive part of our workforce."

#### (5 minutes) The Advantage: Our 'Superpowers'

"These conditions aren't a weakness; they are why some of the best people are in construction. We call it a '**spiky profile**': areas of incredible strength next to areas of genuine struggle."

"Let's look at the strengths we rely on every day, which are often linked to neurodiversity:"

1. **3D Thinking & Spatial Awareness:** "Who here can look at a set of blueprints and immediately see the finished, complex 3D pipe run or steel structure in their head? That ability to mentally rotate and visualize is a massive advantage—and it's a hallmark of many neurodivergent thinkers."
2. **Pattern Recognition:** "Who's the person who always spots the tiny error in the spec, or sees the risk forming before it even becomes a problem? That ability to

spot patterns others miss is how we maintain quality and prevent massive delays."

3. **Hyperfocus:** "When the pressure is on, who can lock in and dedicate intense, sustained attention to finish a complex task perfectly? That intense focus is an invaluable skill on deadline."

"We need these strengths. We shouldn't try to change the brain; we need to **change the environment** to let those strengths thrive."

### **(5 minutes) Actionable Support: What Can We Do Today?**

"The struggles for neurodivergent colleagues are real, but often invisible. It could be difficulty with planning, getting overwhelmed by a loud site, or anxiety from sensory overload."

"We can make huge a difference with **simple adjustments**. This isn't about massive paperwork; it's about good teamwork and communication. I need everyone to commit to two things:"

1. **Be a 'What If' Leader:** "When someone is struggling with time management, a new process, or a noisy area, don't just jump to judgement. Instead, ask: '**What would make your job easier right now?**' The answer might be a small thing like noise-cancelling ear defenders, or getting written instructions instead of a verbal list."
2. **Promote Openness:** "Let's create a culture where people feel safe to ask for support. If you or a colleague needs something—a quiet break space, a different way of receiving instructions—you have a **legal right** to reasonable adjustments, and we have a **moral responsibility** to help. **If you need support, please talk to your supervisor or Foreman/woman.** We are here to help."

**Conclusion:** "Construction is built by brilliant minds. By understanding and supporting our neurodiverse colleagues, we're not just being inclusive, we are making our site **smarter, safer, and more productive**. Thank you."

### **Sign-Off/Discussion:**

- *Ask:* "Does anyone have an example of a small adjustment they've used that made a big difference to their focus or job?" (Use this to drive home how simple these changes can be).
- *Action:* Distribute a brief leaflet with key contact numbers (e.g., Construction Industry Helpline) for anyone who needs confidential support.

### **Resources for Help and Support**

If you or someone you know is struggling, help is available:

- **[Construction Industry Helpline](#)**: Provides a **24/7 safety net** for all construction workers and their families.
- **[ADHD Foundation](#)**: The UK's largest user-led neurodiversity charity, offering support for conditions like ADHD, autism, dyslexia, and Tourette's syndrome.
- **[National Autistic Society](#)**: Provides support and resources for autistic people and links to services for other neurodivergent individuals.
- **[ADHD UK & ADHD Girls UK](#)**: Focus on providing resources and support from people with ADHD, with a specific focus on women and AuDHD (Autism and ADHD) for the latter.
- **[The Neurodivergent Collective](#)**: Offers support in areas such as employment, well-being, and burnout recovery, with a team made up of neurodivergent individuals.
- **[British Dyslexia Association](#)**: BDA is the national charity and voice for dyslexic people, working to influence society and provide support so that individuals of all ages can reach their full potential.