



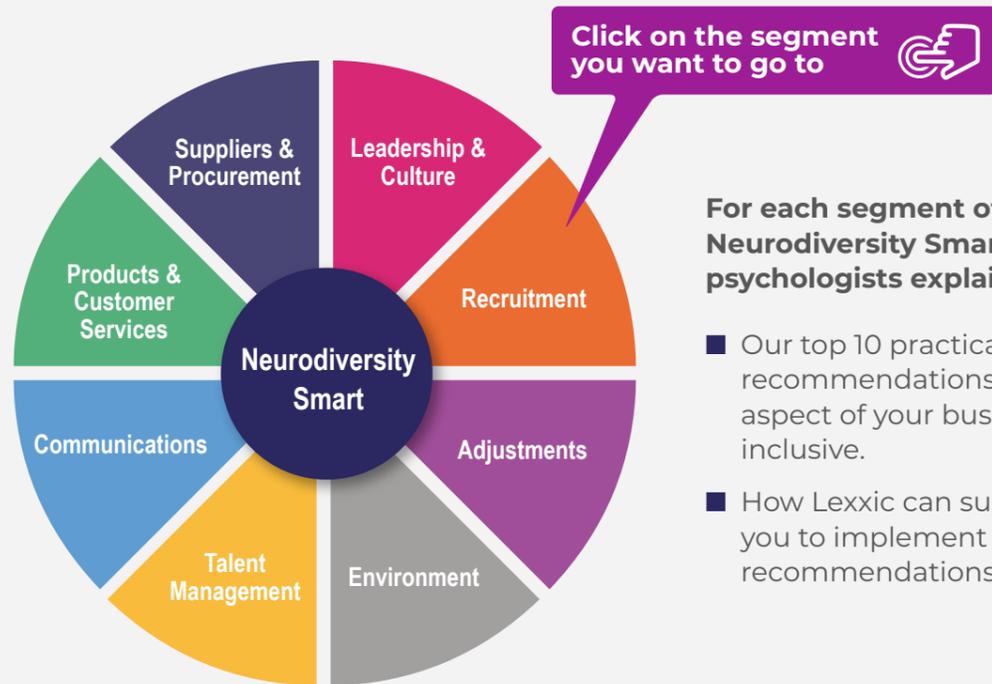
Lexxic
Empowering Neurodiversity

NEURODIVERSITY SMART EMPLOYER GUIDE



The purpose of this guide

This guide shares our **top practical recommendations for making your organisation neuro-inclusive**, based on Lexxic's Neurodiversity Smart model. Within the workplace, neuro-inclusivity means acknowledging, proactively supporting and empowering neurodivergence at every point of the employee life cycle and customer journey.



For each segment of the Neurodiversity Smart model our psychologists explain:

- Our top 10 practical recommendations for making this aspect of your business neuro-inclusive.
- How Lexxic can support you to implement these recommendations.

Who is this guide aimed at?

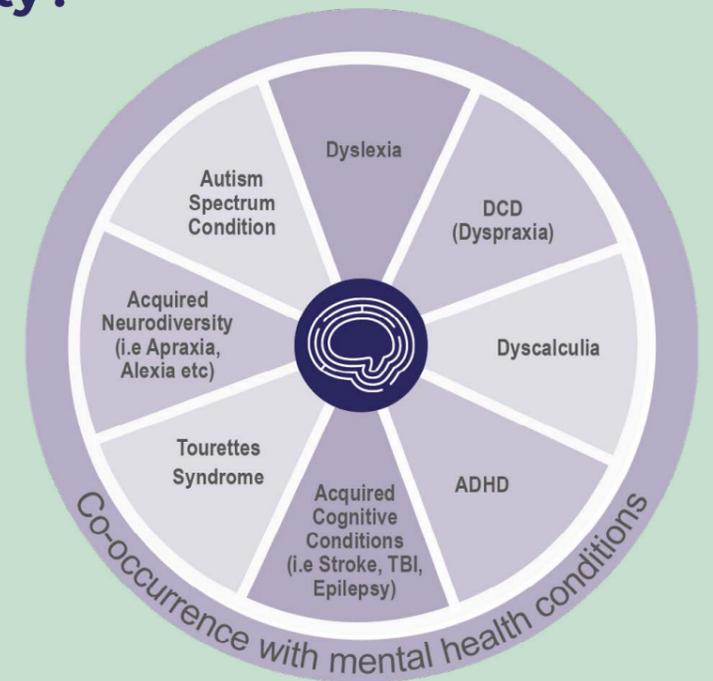
The guide as a whole is aimed at senior HR and people leaders and their teams. However, specific sections of the guide are also relevant to the following teams:

 Recruitment	 Talent management	 Communications
 Customer services	 Product design	 Procurement and supplier management

What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity refers to the different ways our brains are wired and process information. It is used to describe alternative thinking styles such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Autism and ADHD. Approximately 15-20% of the population has a neurological difference.

When it comes to inclusion, neurodiversity refers to a world where neurological differences are recognised and respected as other human variations. Instead of labelling people with 'deficits' or 'disorders', neurodiversity takes a balanced view of an individual's unique strengths and challenges.



The value of neurodiversity and neuro-inclusion to your organisation

There is a strong moral and legal case for neuro-inclusion, but there is also a strong business case. In a world where the competition for talent is fierce, creating a culture where all employees are understood, valued for their talents and treated equitably can increase talent acquisition, engagement, retention, and loyalty.

According to the Harvard Business Review, companies that embrace neurodiversity can also gain a competitive advantage. This is because **neurodivergent individuals often possess strengths which are critical to our future economy.**

These can include:



Creativity, innovation and big-picture thinking



Entrepreneurialism and leadership skills



Energy and hyperfocus



Attention to detail, logic, problem solving



New perspectives, honesty and integrity

Neuro-inclusive organisations which empower individuals to maximise these strengths and remove barriers to their success, **can increase productivity, revenue and reputation.** Leading organisations such as EY, Microsoft, GCHQ, Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan Chase are already recognising these benefits.

For example:

“ Compared to peers, the Autism at Work employees were **48%** faster and as much as **92%** more productive. ”
(JP Morgan Chase)

“ Neurodiversity is key to keeping Britain safe. At GCHQ, some of our most talented and creative people have a neurodiverse profile. ”
(GCHQ)

Becoming neuro-inclusive requires leadership, tenacity and systemic change across your organisation. This guide is designed to provide **practical advice which can help you translate positive intentions into practical action.** Lexxic can support you on every step of your journey, helping you understand what will work best for your organisation, implement solutions and evaluate their impact.





Leadership and Culture Top 10

1. Strategy



Develop a neurodiversity strategy, with clear objectives and actions across all segments of the Neurodiversity Smart model.

2. Accountability



Make a C-suite or equivalent person accountable for your neurodiversity strategy, with visible ownership, coordination and monitoring of implementation across your organisation.

3. Plans, policies and procedures



Include consideration of neurodiversity in relevant plans, policies, and procedures. Develop a neurodiversity policy setting out the support and adjustments available in your organisation.

4. Workforce Training



Ensure understanding of the value of neurodiversity in the workplace across your organisation, e.g. through company-wide training.

5. Senior leaders



Train senior leaders on how to create a neuro-inclusive organisation. Encourage them to actively celebrate neurodiversity and champion different working styles and ways of thinking.

6. Support



Promote the support available to neurodivergent employees and how to access it.

7. Employee Resource Group



Facilitate the creation of an employee led resource group (ERG) or network representing neurodivergent employees. Employee resource groups can be a source of peer support, as well as feedback for leaders in the organisation on the experiences of neurodivergent employees. They can also help to raise awareness about neurodiversity.

8. Share Stories



Provide a platform for neurodivergent individuals to share stories of their lived experience, including the support they have received and the success they have achieved.

9. Data



Collate and analyse quantitative and qualitative data that captures the representation and experience of neurodivergent staff and customers.

10. Commitment



Publicly celebrate neurodiversity and promote your commitment to neuro-inclusion to your customers, stakeholders, potential recruits and the wider sector.

How Lexxic can support you

- Co-create your neurodiversity strategy or policy.
- Support you to complete the Neurodiversity Smart Assessment and Accreditation process and achieve accreditation as a Neurodiversity Smart employer, demonstrating your leadership on neurodiversity to your employees and customers.
- Undertake a leadership and culture audit, including a comprehensive review by our expert psychologists and recommendations for action.
- Advise you on creating psychological safety in your organisation.
- Deliver workshops and webinars on the value of neurodiversity, inclusive leadership, and how to create a neuro-inclusive culture, tailored to your organisation.



Recruitment Top 10

1. Job Descriptions



Make sure the description is clear and concise. Check that the description matches the actual job in terms of tasks and experience, and minimise jargon – this allows people to accurately assess whether to apply and will allow you to base selection tools on this information. Be honest about what will be expected.

2. Application Process



Consider ways of applying and the option to reach out for support and adjustments if needed. Include Hiring Manager contact details on all candidate packs with multiple contact methods – this helps to reduce anxiety as there is a dedicated point of contact should someone require further information. Provide as much guidance as possible on timescale, process, expectations, and what selection tools are used/may look like. For example, consider providing interview topics in advance.

3. Interviews



Provide a guide on what to expect in the interview such as what might be covered, who will be present, the location or an agenda. Offer potential reasonable adjustments if required. Focus on the content rather than things such as eye contact, social skills and working memory as this could be challenging for the individual when in unfamiliar settings.

4. Interview questions



Ask specific questions, avoiding hypothetical scenarios or questions that could be misinterpreted. This allows candidates to demonstrate their real experience. Offer to rephrase or allow the candidate to ask questions to clarify their understanding. Allow for pauses while the candidate processes and formulates their response.

5. Reading & Writing Assessments



Offer flexibility around completion options where possible, such as free text boxes to accompany multiple choice/ranked answers, and additional time when completing tasks. Be clear what is required and potentially offer both written and visual instructions. Some reasonable adjustments could also be in place such as read aloud software and dictation options.

6. Assessment Centres



Provide information in advance so candidates know what to expect such as how many people will be there and clear directions. Consider the environment and potential quiet spaces and the opportunity to take additional breaks.

7. Policy



Create a Neurodiversity Policy – make sure this is visible and signposted in recruitment documentation and on your website to demonstrate organisational commitment. Ensure the policy is clear, fair, and inclusive to all.

8. Formatting



Use neurodiverse friendly formatting throughout, for example, size 12 sans serif fonts, reduce chunks of text, add line spacing and use clear language.

9. Adjustments



Offer adjustments every step of the way – job description, application, interview, assessments and onboarding. Ask candidates for their preferred ways of working and tailor accordingly with reasonable adjustments.

10. Onboarding



Ensure that neurodivergent appointees have a point of contact in their new team who can provide information about their new role before they start. Keep communication clear and concise. Where possible, discuss necessary adjustments so these can be put in place from the outset. Provide a thorough induction, including conversations about how the individual likes to work, sources of support and introductions to colleagues.

How Lexxic can support you

- Undertake a recruitment audit, including a comprehensive review of key job advertisements, application forms, selection and onboarding processes, and recommendations for action.
- Neurotalent Unlocked – interactive e-Learning modules for line managers to enable them to better support potential and new neurodivergent team members.
- Deliver awareness workshops and webinars on neuro-inclusive recruitment for recruitment teams and hiring managers with practical advice from our expert psychologists, tailored to your organisation.
- Our suite of one-to-one services for neurodivergent individuals, including workplace needs assessments, specialist neurodiversity coaching and skills-based e-learning.



Adjustments – Top 10

1. Workplace adjustments



Make workplace adjustments available to neurodivergent individuals at all stages of the employee lifecycle, including during recruitment (see recruitment top 10). Workplace adjustments are changes to the working environment or working arrangements that enable an individual to do their job as well as possible.

2. Policies, procedures and practices



Embed an adjustments process into your policies, procedures, and practices. Having a clear route for support can ensure that individuals' challenges are minimised, and they are able to thrive at work.

3. Signpost



Clearly signpost where individuals can access support, ensure that this is communicated across the organisation, and that line managers are aware of the procedures to follow to support neurodivergent staff.

4. Training



Support managers, HR and people teams with awareness training on neurodiversity in the workplace, as well as focused sessions on adjustments to support neurodivergent individuals at work. This should include the legal requirements related to reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act (2010).

5. Early conversations



It is important to have two-way conversations with neurodivergent individuals and listen to what they think they need, to ensure support is tailored to individual circumstances, challenges and strengths.

6. Workplace Needs Assessment



Offer neurodivergent individuals a Workplace Needs Assessment, delivered by psychologists with expertise in neurodiversity, to identify the adjustments appropriate for the individual, within their particular role.

7. Passport



Provide neurodivergent individuals with a 'neurodiversity passport' or 'tailored adjustments plan' to record adjustments and support agreed. This should be reviewed regularly by the individual and their manager, and adapted as required.

8. Changes to adjustments



When an individual's role or circumstances change, review adjustments to check whether any changes to adjustments may be appropriate.

9. Inclusive by design



Where appropriate, consider whether common adjustments (e.g. the opportunity to work remotely or flexible hours) can be designed into wider organisational working practices so they are available to all employees.

10. Review



Review your adjustments policies, processes and procedures regularly, including gathering feedback from employees and managers and collating data on impact.

How Lexxic can support you

- Deliver awareness workshops and webinars, such as bespoke training on adjustments in the workplace to support neurodivergent individuals, tailored to your organisation.
- Neurotalent Unlocked - Interactive e-Learning modules including courses for neurodivergent individuals on specific challenges, as well as line manager awareness training and general awareness about neurodiversity in the workplace.
- Undertake an adjustments audit, including a comprehensive review of your processes, policies, procedures, tools, resources, and training – providing recommendations for action.
- Our suite of one-to-one services for neurodivergent individuals; including screening and diagnostic assessments, workplace needs assessments, specialist neurodiversity coaching and assistive technology training.
- Provide a neurodiversity passport and associated guidance for neurodivergent employees.



Environment Top 10

1. Policies and guidelines



Include environmental design in your neurodiversity policies and guidelines, including allowances for adjustments in employee environments.

2. Universal Design



Build working environments with 'Universal Design' in mind, to ensure neurodivergent individuals are not adversely impacted by the built environment and that there is flexibility in the use of space. This includes all workspaces: office, warehouses, site visits, working from home etc. See Design for the Mind: Neurodiversity and the Built Environment guide for more details.

3. Training



Train all staff responsible for designing and implementing workplace environments in neuro-inclusive environmental design. This will help them to understand the challenges and barriers to neurodivergent staff in the built environment, and enable them to use the guidelines in their day-to-day work.

4. Building management and front of house staff



Ensure these staff understand how to create an inclusive environment for neurodivergent individuals.

5. Lighting



Avoid fluorescent lights and offer neurodivergent employees with sensory sensitivities desks near natural light sources with blinds to minimise glare.

6. Finishes



Opt for neutral colours and avoid certain patterns and surface materials which may create sensory challenges for neurodivergent employees.

7. Ventilation



Ensure adequate levels of ventilation and offer neurodivergent employees with sensory sensitivities desks away from the kitchen or eating areas.

8. Minimise distractions



Offer screen protectors, desk dividers, ear defenders, desks away from high traffic areas and quiet rooms to minimise distractions for neurodivergent employees.

9. Review all current workplace environments



Take account of feedback from neurodivergent employees to understand how these impact on current staff, and make relevant adjustments.

10. Psychological safety



Communicate all possible environmental design adjustments to employees so that neurodivergent employees feel welcomed and confident that their needs will be accommodated.

How Lexxic can support you

- Undertake an environment audit, including a comprehensive review of your working environment, facilities and environment adjustments, and recommendations for action.
- Consultation on the development of a Neurodiversity Policy and Environmental Design Guidelines.
- Deliver workshops and Webinars on neuro-inclusive environmental design, with practical advice from our expert psychologists, tailored to your organisation.



Talent Management Top 10

1. Training



Train all managers in onboarding and line managing neurodivergent individuals.

2. Conversations about support



Encourage managers to ask all new team members how they can support them to work at their best, and whether they require any adjustments to the working environment or working arrangements to succeed in their role (see adjustments top 10). Starting the conversation early can help the employee feel supported, get adjustments in place, reduce anxiety around their challenges, and enable them to thrive.

3. Passport



Invite neurodivergent individuals to record any adjustments and support agreed with their manager in a neurodiversity passport or tailored adjustments plan, which should be reviewed regularly with their manager.

4. Career development



Ensure that regular personal development and career progression conversations take place between managers and team members, using a strengths-based approach. Personal development plans should be drawn up, including development and career goals and any additional support the neurodivergent individual requires to meet them.

5. Feedback



Ensure that managers provide regular feedback on performance, covering both what has gone well and areas for development. Feedback should be specific, evidence based and action-oriented. Managers should ask individuals how they like to receive feedback and remember that a neurodivergent individual's confidence may have been affected by negative past experiences.

6. Learning and development



Design general learning and development activities (e.g. induction, face-to-face or online training, and talent/development programmes), along with any associated assessments, to be neuro-inclusive by default. This means that content is accessible, available in alternative formats and can be completed at the individual's own pace.

7. Coaching



Provide neurodivergent individuals with access to specialist coaching and training if required, to support them in maximising their strengths and addressing any challenges they face at work.

8. Wellbeing



Ensure that managers are aware of the potential wider impact of having a neurodifference on wellbeing, fatigue and mental health and ensure that neurodivergent individuals are aware of how to access support.

9. Performance and attendance



Equip managers to identify the potential implications of neurodiversity on performance and attendance and take supportive and sensitive action when required. Any formal performance or attendance plans must be justified and should only be enacted if concerns persist once adjustments and other support have been provided.

10. Data



Monitor data on probation completion, progression, performance management proceedings and development programmes to identify any differences in outcomes for neurodivergent employees, compared to non-neurodivergent colleagues.

How Lexxic can support you

- Undertake a talent management audit, including a comprehensive review of your processes, policies, tools, resources and training, and recommendations for action.
- Neurotalent Unlocked – interactive e-Learning modules for line managers to enable them to better support neurodivergent team members.
- Deliver awareness workshops and webinars for your line managers and talent management teams with practical advice from our expert psychologists, tailored to your organisation.
- Our suite of one-to-one services for neurodivergent individuals, including workplace needs assessments, specialist neurodiversity coaching and skills-based e-learning.
- Provide a Neurodiversity Passport and associated guidance for neurodivergent employees.



Communications Top 10

1. Standards and guidance



Develop in-house communication standards that must be adhered to, create accountability for creating neuro-inclusive communications and provide guidance on how to achieve this. These should be referenced in your neurodiversity policy.

2. Training



Train all employees in neuro-inclusive communications for internal and external communication, as well as in understanding differences in communication styles and how to create communications with neuro-inclusion in mind.

3. Formatting



Where possible, ensure that communications across the organisation use neurodiverse friendly formatting (e.g. bullet points, sans serif fonts, grey backgrounds, 1.5 line spacing). This includes email, intranet, website, systems, documentation and training.

4. Accessibility



Provide and advocate accessibility for communications internally and externally, e.g. options such as read aloud, dictation, recordings, screen readers, transcripts and subtitles. Provide guidance on how to use accessibility features to employees customers, and service users.

5. Language



Use inclusive language when talking about neurodiversity, e.g. choose language that promotes differences and strengths rather than deficits, and is sensitive to the different ways in which neurodivergent individuals may identify. In all communications, ensure language is as straightforward and unambiguous as possible. Say what you mean!

6. Communication preferences



Communication preferences can vary from person to person, and across different situations. Managers should ask neurodivergent individuals about their preferences, and accommodate these where it is practical to do so.

7. Alternative methods of communication



Where possible, ensure that you provide a range of alternative communication method options, e.g. email, written, face-to-face, video, text message, telephone and, if relevant, sign language. In addition, ensure that alternative methods of communication are clearly signposted and easy to access.

8. Early conversations



Create a culture that is proactive in engaging in conversations on neurodiversity from the beginning of the employee lifecycle and celebrate your dedication and commitment to supporting neurodiversity across communication channels to create psychological safety.

9. Feedback



Encourage feedback from employees and customers on your communications and provide a variety of feedback methods.

10. Continuous improvement



Regularly review feedback on your communications to understand what's working well and what could be improved, and update your communication practices as a result.

How Lexxic can support you

- Undertake a communications audit, including a comprehensive review of your internal and external communications such as, your website, documentation, guidance on neurodiversity, policies, tools, resources and training, and recommendations for action.
- Neurotalent Unlocked – interactive e-Learning modules for line managers to enable them to better understand different communication styles.
- Deliver awareness company-wide workshops and webinars in neuro-inclusive communication supporting staff in understanding how to create neurodiverse friendly communications as well as how to talk about and champion neurodiversity in a strength-based approach.
- Our suite of one-to-one services for neurodivergent individuals, including workplace needs assessments, specialist neurodiversity coaching and skills-based e-learning to support individuals in understanding their preferred methods of communication and to provide their team and manager with guidance on their communication preferences.
- Consultation on the development of an Neuro-inclusive Communications Policy and Communication standards & Guidelines.



Products and Customer Service Top 10

1. Neurodiversity friendly format



Where possible, provide neurodiversity friendly formatting across all systems and communication channels including social media, online portals and platforms, as well as physical documents and signage (see communications top 10).

2. Customer contact



Provide a variety of contact options for customers including email, letter, telephone and webchat. Where contact topics must be pre-selected, for example in a drop-down list, consider providing an 'other' option to allow for free text.

3. Customer environment



In physical locations, try and create an environment that minimises sensory overstimulation. Bright lights, loud noises and very busy environments can be very distracting and overwhelming for some customers, and they may take their business elsewhere (see environment top 10)

4. Training



Provide neurodiversity awareness training to all staff involved in product design and customer services. This will help minimise barriers to an excellent customer experience for all customers.

5. Guidelines



Create product and customer services guidelines to ensure your products, interfaces and processes are neuro-inclusive by design. In addition, consider integrating these guidelines into existing quality management controls, or creating these controls if they do not exist already. This could ensure that product design and customer service guidelines are adhered to.

7. Business ethics



Ensure your business ethics, such as customer charters etc are visible and include statements on neurodiversity. This will demonstrate your commitment to neuro-inclusivity.

9. Adjustments



Regardless of an inclusive approach/design, some neurodivergent customers may require individual help and support. Provide a clear process for accessing adjustments (see adjustments top 10).

6. Testing



Where possible try and regularly test neuro-inclusivity across interaction channels. This can be tested internally by neurodivergent colleagues and externally audited by an organisation such as Lexxic.

8. Feedback



Ensure there are opportunities for all (internally & externally) to provide feedback on the neuro-inclusivity of products, touch-points and customer services.

10. Continuous improvement



Use feedback to inform continuous improvement of your products and services.

How Lexxic can support you

- Undertake an audit of your products and customer services, including a comprehensive review by our expert psychologists and recommendations for action.
- Deliver awareness workshops and webinars for your product design and customer service teams, with practical advice from our expert psychologists, tailored to your organisation.



Suppliers and Procurement Top 10

1. Format



Where possible, ensure all documents and communications with suppliers are presented in neurodiverse friendly formatting. This applies to both physical and electronic documents.

2. Contact options



You have a variety of contact options for external stakeholders (such as vendors/suppliers) as well as internal stakeholders at the various stages of the supply chain. This will minimise barriers to communication that will facilitate consistency in output.

3. Selection



When assessing and selecting vendors, gather information on whether they are similarly committed to neuro-inclusive values.

4. Accessibility



Ensure vendors/suppliers can meet disability and neuro-inclusive accessibility requirements to ensure that the products and services they provide will be neurodiversity friendly.

5. Guidelines



Create guidelines to ensure your documents, systems and processes are neuro-inclusive by design. In addition, consider integrating these guidelines into existing quality management controls, or creating these controls if they do not exist already. This could ensure that guidelines are adhered to.

6. Training



Provide neurodiversity awareness training to all staff involved in procurement and supply chain management. This will help minimise barriers.

7. Business ethics



Ensure your business ethics are visible and include statements on neurodiversity. This will demonstrate your commitment to neuro-inclusivity and set an example for your suppliers and customers.

8. Adjustments



Regardless of an inclusive approach/design, some individuals using services provided by your suppliers may require tailored help and support. Ensure that your suppliers have a clear process for accessing adjustments (see adjustments top 10).

9. Feedback



Ensure there are opportunities for individuals, suppliers and vendors to feedback on areas your process could be more neuro-inclusive.

10. Continuous improvement



Use feedback to inform continuous improvement of your products and services.

How Lexxic can support you

- Undertake an audit of your approach to procurement and supply chain management, including a comprehensive review by our expert psychologists and recommendations for action.
- Deliver awareness workshops and webinars for your procurement and supply chain management teams, with practical advice from our expert psychologists, tailored to your organisation.

Contact us

Address

Lexxic Ltd
Unit CH3.20
Kennington Park
1-3 Brixton Road
London
SW9 6DE

 +44(0) 330 311 2720

 ndsmart@lexxic.com

 www.lexxic.com

