

New research calls for a greater understanding of neurodiversity in schools as generational knowledge gap emerges

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- As millions of children and young adults embark on the new academic year, healthcare experts are appealing for a greater understanding of neurodiversity after a report, released today, revealed a clear knowledge gap - especially amongst older generations.

As an innovator in health solutions for cognition, [SFI Health](#) surveyed 2,000 people between 16 and 65 years old to determine how people feel about neurodiversity. It was discovered that over three quarters (77%) of the UK population as a whole were unclear about what it actually meant, despite nine million people being estimated to be neurodivergent.



Robert Hendriks CEO SFI Health

In contrast, half (47%) of 16-24 year olds were familiar with the concept of neurodiversity and two thirds (64%) of young adults in that age category either identified as neurodiverse themselves or knew somebody that was. Less than a third (31%) of adults aged 45 to 54 claimed to know someone with a neurodivergent condition or had been diagnosed as neurodiverse themselves by a clinician.

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Robert Hendriks

A movement that recognises the wide spectrum of human behaviour and promotes people’s differences positively, neurodiversity is commonly used to describe people diagnosed with dyslexia, autism, attention deficit

hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dysgraphia and dyscalculia. It is estimated that 15% of the UK

population are neurodivergent and 20% globally.

According to the research it is Gen Zs who are leading the way in championing those with a neurodiverse condition as a clear generational age gap emerged throughout the data.

Around three quarters of people aged 16-24 believe that more needs to be done in schools (78%) and workplaces (75%) to support the neurodiverse, compared with around half of those aged 45 to 54.

Almost half of people aged 16 to 24 believe that it is new and emerging technology, (such as software that can read text aloud to help free up brain processing power by removing the need to visually decode words), that is key to assisting the neurodiverse in schools (vs. 36% of the population as a whole). Whilst a similar number of Gen Z respondents (48%) think that workplaces should be willing to make changes to support neurodiverse employees' productivity – these include flexible working, noise cancelling headphones and privacy rooms. This compares to just a third of those aged 45-54 (37%).

Robert Hendriks, CEO of SFI Health, who commissioned the report, said: "When it comes to physical abilities, it's easy to accept and celebrate that we all have different strengths. Some people are good sprinters, others run long distances, some people lift heavy weights and others are happy to stay away from sports altogether. These differences are widely accepted as part of being human. What would happen if we took a similar approach to the way our brains work? "Clearly there is a lot more to be done to educate the nation as a whole about what it means to be neurodiverse, as well as how to remove barriers in the classroom and workplace.

"Whilst it appears that the younger generations are further ahead with their knowledge, understanding and empathy of people with these conditions, there is a widespread appetite to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be neurodivergent, as well learning more about their unique skills and attributes and how best to support them in an education and workplace setting.

"Alongside the use of new technology, helping children to develop confidence and understand their strengths were key areas in which people believe schools should be supporting their neurodivergent students. With the academic year now in full swing across education settings in the UK, this is a crucial time to raise awareness and support pupils of all abilities.

"Facilitating the right kind of support at school level and creating neurodiverse-friendly workplaces and recruitment approaches would help promote diversity of thoughts and perspectives. As a result, neurodivergent individuals will be able to thrive in their lives rather than being viewed as individuals with disabilities.

"It is our hope that this report will help champion people diagnosed as neurodivergent by starting crucial conversations about how to make schools and workplaces as inclusive as possible."

ENDS

Research into 2,000 UK adults conducted by Censuswide, August 2022.

Notes to Editors

SFI Health is a global, natural healthcare organisation which develops products that focus on cognition and the microbiome: the two interconnected systems that lie at the heart of human health. Founded in 2001 in Australia, SFI Health today has a strong presence in Europe, North America, Africa and Asia.

Neurodiversity is a key focus for SFI Health; the company has been a strong supporter of the UK ADHD Foundation since 2016 and is one of the first companies worldwide to receive the Neurodiversity Friendly Accreditation Award.

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