AkzoNobel

# COLOUR DESIGN FOR NEUROINCLUSIVE SPACES

## CURATED PALETTES FOR COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS







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# UNDERSTANDING NEURODIVERSITY

Neurodiversity recognises that people experience and interact with the world in different ways. Variations in perception, sensory processing, attention, memory and cognition mean that the same environment can feel comfortable and intuitive for one person, yet challenging or overwhelming for another.

This guide brings together colour palettes designed to support a broad range of sensory and cognitive needs across the built environment. Drawing on research, professional expertise and lived experience, these palettes aim to create spaces that feel comfortable, legible and inclusive for as many people as possible.

There is no single colour palette that works for everyone. Some people may seek calm and reduced sensory stimulation, while others benefit from greater visual clarity, contrast or environmental cues. Thoughtful colour selection can help create environments that support choice, comfort and wellbeing for a diverse range of users.



**Neurotypical**

Individuals whose neurological profile aligns with that of the majority population and who are not considered neurodivergent or neurodegenerative.

**Neuro-degenerative**

Individuals experiencing changes in cognition, perception or sensory processing associated with neurological conditions that develop over time, such as a dementia or Parkinson's disease.

**Neurodivergent**

Individuals whose neurological profile differs from that of the majority population. This may include Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia and Tourette's syndrome, among others. There is no definitive list of conditions associated with neurodivergence.

# UNDERSTANDING SENSORY PREFERENCES

Many neurodivergent people experience sensory information differently. Some may be hypersensitive, while others may be hyposensitive and benefit from greater sensory input. Individuals may experience a combination of both across different senses. Successful neuroinclusive design considers these different sensory preferences, creating environments that balance comfort, clarity and choice.



## HYPERSENSITIVITY

May prefer...

✓ Softer, more muted colours

✓ Calm, predictable environments

✓ Reduced visual clutter and complexity

✓ Gentle colour transitions and carefully considered contrast



## HYPOSENSITIVITY

May prefer...

✓ Stronger colour and clearer contrast

✓ Increased colour intensity where appropriate

✓ Greater visual definition and clear wayfinding cues

✓ Spaces that provide appropriate sensory stimulation

# COLOUR & DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Thoughtful colour design can help create environments that feel comfortable, legible and inclusive for a broad range of users. When considered alongside lighting, materials and spatial layout, colour can support navigation, wellbeing and sensory comfort across the built environment. The following principles provide a foundation for creating colour schemes that respond to the needs of both the space and the people who use it.



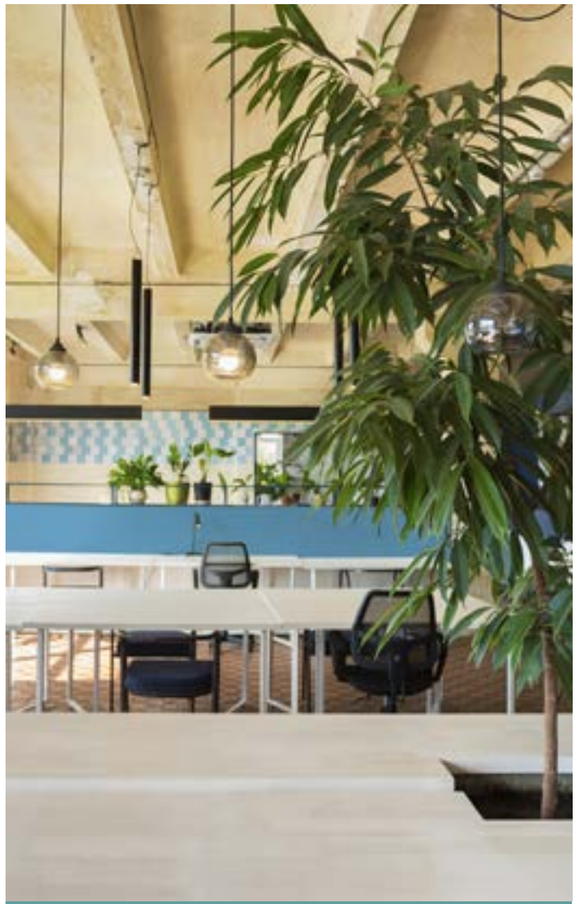
## 1. Colour & Contrast

Use contrast between critical surfaces such as walls, floors and doors to support navigation, orientation and spatial understanding.



## 2. Light & Reflectance

Consider Light Reflectance Values (LRVs) alongside natural and artificial lighting to ensure colours remain legible and visually comfortable.



## 3. Biophilic Design

Nature-inspired colours, materials and patterns can help create environments that feel calming, restorative and connected to the natural world.



## 4. Choice & Flexibility

Provide a choice of sensory experiences where possible, allowing people to engage with spaces in ways that best support their individual needs and preferences.

# CURATED COLOUR PALETTE

This curated palette has been developed to support a broad range of sensory preferences and cognitive needs across different sectors and environments.

Recognising that people experience colour and space in different ways, the palette balances comfort, clarity and visual interest to support more inclusive design outcomes.

Three themes have been created from this palette, each offering a different balance of colour, contrast and comfort. These can be used as complete schemes or adapted to suit specific spaces and user needs.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10RR 75/039 | 80YR 83/035 | 65YY 84/081 | 90YY 67/117 | 10BG 72/057 | 29BB 75/065 | 15YY 69/080 | 00NN 72/000 |
| 10RR 53/087 | 10YR 41/223 | 46YY 61/201 | 30GY 61/245 | 10BG 46/112 | 30BB 63/124 | 97YR 39/118 | 10YY 46/041 |
| 90BB 32/126 | 70RR 19/190 | 21YY 45/405 | 30GY 41/173 | 90GG 30/195 | 30BB 33/163 | 00YY 26/220 | 28GG 22/002 |
| 09RB 12/102 | 72RR 07/173 | 54YR 22/344 | 10GY 14/135 | 30BG 10/111 | 52BB 08/128 | 94YR 17/076 | 00NN 13/000 |

# HOW TO USE THE PALETTE

The palette has been arranged to support colour selection and scheme creation. Colours can be used individually or combined to create balanced schemes that respond to the needs of a particular space, project or user group.

To simplify colour selection, the palette has been organised both vertically and horizontally. This allows designers to create tonal schemes using colours from the same column, or harmonious multi-colour schemes using colours from the same row.

## PALE TONES

These lighter shades help create a sense of openness and visual calm. They work particularly well on ceilings, main wall areas and other larger surfaces, providing a versatile backdrop for mid and deeper tones.

## MID TONES

These colours offer a balanced level of colour strength, making them suitable for walls, feature areas, doors and joinery. They help define spaces while maintaining a comfortable and harmonious environment.

## DEEP TONES

These stronger shades introduce contrast, emphasis and visual definition. They are particularly effective on doors, joinery and focal points, helping to support navigation while adding depth and character to a scheme.

**HARMONIOUS SCHEMES**

Colours shown horizontally form harmonious multi-colour schemes

**TONAL SCHEMES -** Colours shown vertically form tonal schemes

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10RR 75/039 | 80YR 83/035 | 65YY 84/081 | 90YY 67/117 | 10BG 72/057 | 29BB 75/065 | 15YY 69/080 | 00NN 72/000 |
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**Note:** The themes shown in this guide represent just a selection of possible colour combinations. Colours may also be combined across themes to suit specific project requirements and user needs.

# NURTURING NATURE

Creating Calm, Restorative & Nature-Inspired Spaces













# NURTURING NATURE

A nature-inspired palette designed to support calm, regulation and gentle sensory engagement. Soft greens, muted blue-greens and natural neutrals are lifted by sun-warmed yellows and earthy ochres, creating a grounded environment that feels stable, restorative and visually balanced.

Together, these colours help create spaces that feel calm, reassuring and connected to nature, making them well suited to environments where reducing sensory load and fostering a sense of ease is important.

65YY 84/081

90YY 67/117

10BG 72/057

15YY 69/080

46YY 61/201

30GY 41/173

10BG 46/112

00YY 26/220

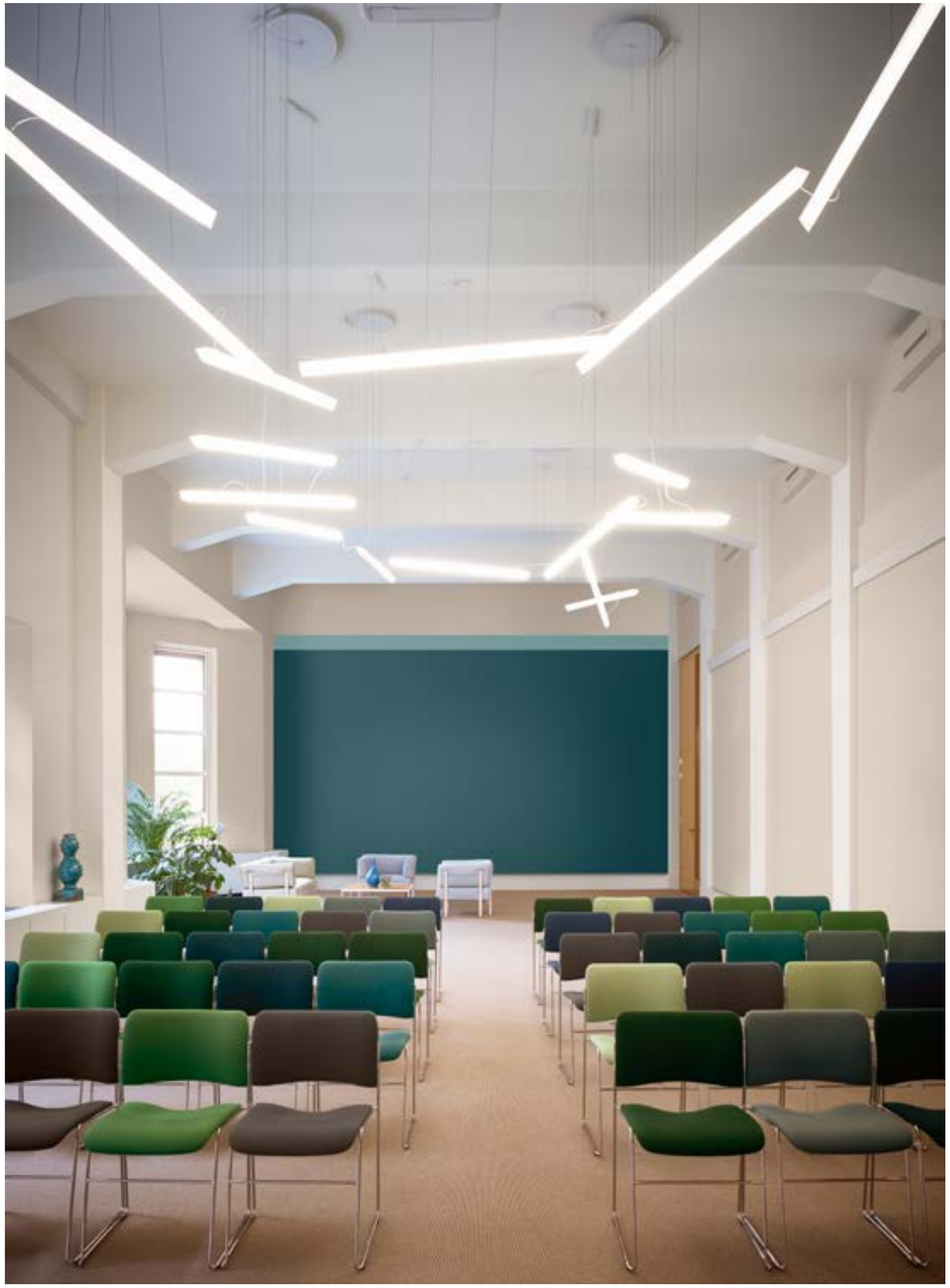
21YY 45/405

10GY 14/135

30BG 10/111

94YR 17/076

Note: A high LRV white (such as Pure Brilliant White, LRV 93) can be introduced for ceilings and/or trim to strengthen contrast and enhance visual clarity, helping to define surfaces and support spatial understanding.



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# NURTURING NATURE









# WELCOME
# COMFORT

Creating Familiar, Reassuring
& Comfortable Environments














# WELCOME COMFORT

A soft, warm palette that creates a sense of familiarity, ease and emotional comfort. Warm neutrals, grounding terracottas, muted pinks and lilacs are balanced with gentle blues to soften the overall feel and create a harmonious, reassuring environment.

Together, these colours help spaces feel welcoming without being overstimulating, creating environments where people can settle, relax and feel comfortable over time.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15YY 69/080 | 80YR 83/035 | 10RR 75/039 | 29BB 75/065 |
| 97YR 39/118 | 10YR 41/223 | 10RR 53/087 | 30BB 33/163 |
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# WELCOME COMFORT









# GENTLE ENGAGEMENT

Encouraging Positive Interaction
& Sociable Spaces













# GENTLE ENGAGEMENT

A balanced palette that introduces gentle colour energy to support engagement without overwhelming the senses. Warm pinks, sunlit yellows and fresh greens bring a sense of positivity, while uplifting blues add clarity and visual interest.

Together, these colours help create spaces that feel engaging, inviting and easy to navigate, making them well suited to environments where connection, participation and interaction are important.

80YR 83/035

65YY 84/081

10BG 72/057

30BB 63/124

10RR 53/087

10YR 41/223

30GY 61/245

10BG 46/112

21YY 45/405

54YR 22/344

90GG 30/195

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# GENTLE ENGAGEMENT









# Continue Your Learning

**Build on the principles introduced in this guide with our complementary resources. Deepen your understanding through our Designing for Neurodiversity CPD, or explore our Inclusive Design guide for broader guidance.**

## DESIGNING FOR NEURODIVERSITY CPD




Deepen your understanding of neuroinclusive design with our in-depth CPD, exploring neurodiversity, sensory processing, colour psychology and practical design strategies for creating more inclusive environments.

**BOOK A CPD**

To arrange a Designing for Neurodiversity CPD for your practice or team, contact your local Dulux Trade Specification team.

## INCLUSIVE DESIGN FOR COMMERCIAL SPACES




Explore the wider principles of inclusive design with our comprehensive guide, featuring practical design guidance and ready-to-use colour palettes for offices, education, healthcare, hospitality and residential environments.

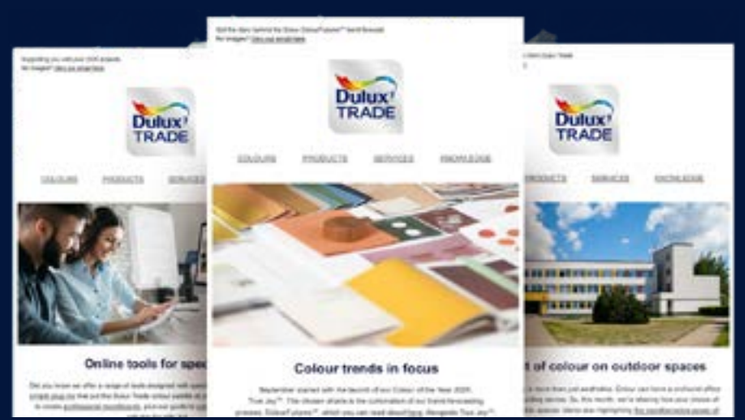
**CLICK TO DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE**




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The Specification Services hub lays out all the Dulux Trade services available to support your specification - from colour scheming and product selection to value engineering. It's an easily accessible library of sector-specific guidance, digital tools and video resources to help you with your next project

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# CONTACT THE TEAM

**COLOUR**
**For any colour related queries, Contact the colour services team on duluxtrade.advice@akzonobel.com**

**TECHNICAL**
**If your query is technical please contact the technical advice centre on duluxtrade.advice@akzonobel.com**

**CALL US**
**Call the team on 0333 222 70 70**

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