

information for assessors

epilepsy
society

benefits guide

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Many people with epilepsy are entitled to certain benefits as the condition impacts severely on their everyday life. Having a long-term disabling condition can make it difficult for some people to describe the impact on their life to assessors, especially as epilepsy is such a misunderstood condition.

- Epilepsy is a condition that poses unique challenges to those living with it and these should be considered when assessing eligibility for benefits.
- Epilepsy is a group of conditions that sit on a spectrum in terms of cause, symptoms and impact. 'Having epilepsy' does not tell you about the individual's epilepsy, or how it affects their everyday living.
- Epilepsy is an individual condition and people's experiences of it are different. Epilepsy type and seizures vary in different people and can also change over time in an individual. There are over 40 different types of seizure and even people with the same seizure type have very different experiences. It is not possible to generalise about the impact of epilepsy.
- Some people know their seizure triggers, making them easier to avoid. Some get a warning a few seconds or minutes beforehand, allowing them to get safe before it develops. For most, seizures are unpredictable, a constant fear of what might happen and when.
- People with uncontrolled epilepsy constantly risk accident and injury. Help from family, friends or carers is vital and often needed at short notice, during and after seizures. Epilepsy can also be fatal, so care is urgent and critical.
- Seizures can be debilitating for the duration and for some time afterwards. Not knowing when a seizure will happen is disabling and can lead to fear, anxiety and isolation.
- People with epilepsy can experience profound emotional and psychological effects on health. Memory loss, concentration problems, increased risk of depression and anxiety all impact on seizure control, creating a vicious cycle.
- Treatment to stop seizures is achieved in about 50% of people, but persistent side effects of medication can include headaches, slurred speech, confusion and slowed mental speed.

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Epilepsy Society, Chesham Lane
Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 0RJ

Registered charity number 206186

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01494 601 400

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