

epilepsy

a quick guide for care professionals

epilepsy: the issues

Epilepsy is a common long-term neurological condition.

People with epilepsy have the **tendency to have recurrent seizures**. During a seizure, there is a sudden burst of electrical activity in the brain. This is often referred to as epileptic activity.

As a result of this activity, the brain's messages are temporarily disrupted. This results in different signs and symptoms, depending on the area of the brain affected, and how widely the epileptic activity spreads.

For this reason, there are many different types of seizure, and each person will experience epilepsy in a way that is unique to them. For example, not everyone falls down and loses consciousness.

There are many causes of epilepsy – and in around 60% of cases the cause is unknown. However, epilepsy may be linked to a brain injury, dementia or stroke.

Anyone can be diagnosed with epilepsy at any age. However, it is more common in people with a learning disability or autism. It is also more common in older people.

Some people with epilepsy find that their seizures are controlled by treatments such as medication or surgery. Others find that their epilepsy gets better over time.

However, around half of people with epilepsy in the UK do not have seizure control – and for 3 in 10, medication will not stop their seizures.

For some people, epilepsy can have a serious impact on daily life and wellbeing. In some epilepsy syndromes, the person may be severely disabled and require lifelong care and support.

People with epilepsy are also more likely to have a mental health condition such as depression or anxiety.

quick facts

Epilepsy is a common neurological condition, that affects **1 in every 103 people** in the UK

There are **many different types of seizure**, with different symptoms

Epilepsy **can be diagnosed at any age**, but you are more likely to be diagnosed when you are very young or in later life

87 new cases of epilepsy are diagnosed in the UK **every day**

Currently only **52%** of people with epilepsy in the UK are **seizure free**

More than **1 in 5 people** with epilepsy have a **learning disability**

People with epilepsy are more **at risk of mental health problems** such as anxiety and depression

People with epilepsy can experience **stigma and discrimination**

impact on daily life

Epilepsy is **not just about seizures.**

There are many ways in which epilepsy can have an impact on daily life and wellbeing.

For example, many people with epilepsy experience memory problems, mental health issues, or low self-esteem.

Epilepsy can also be a barrier to independence, relationships, and social opportunities.

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EFFECTS OF SEIZURES SOCIAL ISOLATION SL
MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS FEAR OF SEIZU
ION DRIVING SIDE-EFFECTS OF MEDICATION
SS OF INDEPENDENCE LOW SELF-ESTEEM LO
STIGMA BARRIERS TO WORK AND EDUCATION
SLEEP PROBLEMS ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

staying safe

People with epilepsy are around **11 times more likely to die early.**

Causes of death include SUDEP (sudden unexpected death in epilepsy), accidents and injuries, suicide, and status epilepticus.

Around 42% of epilepsy-related deaths could be avoided with the right measures. It is essential that people with epilepsy receive the right care and support to reduce this risk.

In care settings, it is vital that the correct safety measures are put into place. These include risk assessments, environmental changes, and support for service user wellbeing.

42%

of epilepsy-related
deaths could be
avoided with the
right measures

fundamental standards

The CQC fundamental standards state that every service user must receive safe, person-centred care.

For people with epilepsy, this means that staff must have knowledge of:

- ✓ The effect of epilepsy on **care needs and preferences**
- ✓ **Care planning** for people with epilepsy
- ✓ **Personal safety** for people who have seizures
- ✓ Safe management of epilepsy **medication**

person-centred care | dignity and respect | safety

are you epilepsy aware?

Do you:

- Know what happens during different types of epileptic seizure?
- Know what to do if someone has a seizure?
- Know when a seizure becomes a medical emergency?
- Understand how epilepsy can have an impact on daily life and wellbeing?

Can you:

- Record seizure incidents?
- Use an epilepsy care plan?
- Put measures into place to keep people with epilepsy safe?
- Make sure that any medications are taken correctly?

Supporting and caring for people with epilepsy is an online course for care and support workers.

The course covers:

- How to manage seizures
- How to keep service users safe
- The key issues affecting people with epilepsy

Written by the UK's leading epilepsy organisation, it is the only online course that ensures your staff know how to support people with epilepsy.

The course is evidence-based and peer reviewed. It is promoted by the CQC fundamental standards and is informed by NICE guidance.

The course costs just **£30 inc.VAT per person**

[epilepsy.org.uk/care](https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/care)

Contact us for bulk discounts or to discuss your organisation's needs learning@epilepsy.org.uk

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