

Learning and Epilepsy



Most people living with epilepsy do well as learners through primary, secondary, and further education and training. Learning can be challenging for anyone. However, some people living with epilepsy may experience additional challenges in learning, which can be due to their condition and/or treatment. At times, these challenges may affect some of their aspirations and goals in life. Fortunately, there are various services available for people living with epilepsy that can help.

In this section, we look at some of the reasons why epilepsy can have an impact on learning. We also look at a range of support options, which may assist a person with epilepsy on their learning journey.

Most people living with epilepsy will not experience significant learning difficulties. However, some may experience learning difficulties related to the condition and its cause/s, such as underlying neurological disorders, genetic factors, or prior head trauma. Educational challenges may also be due to frequent seizures and/or anti-epileptic drugs. They could also be due to undiagnosed learning disabilities, which may or may not be related to living with epilepsy.

A person living with epilepsy may experience difficulties with:

- Memory (long and/or short term)
- Problem-solving
- Attention/concentration (e.g. due to post-seizure tiredness and/or medication)
- Visual and/or verbal learning
- Speech and language
- Reading, spelling, numeracy
- Motor ability (e.g. poor or slow handwriting)

- Psychosocial issues (self-esteem, motivation problems)
- Maintaining consistency in learning
- Behaviour (e.g. attention-seeking or withdrawal behaviour)
- Mood.