

Epilepsy Friendly Overview

As you are well aware, years spent in higher education can be incredibly stressful. Late nights and studying for impending exams can have a negative impact on young people and their state of mind. Unfortunately for those affected by epilepsy this is generally the case and is often made worse by issues with concentration, memory retention and seizures induced by the stresses higher education can bring.

Over a period of two years the Epilepsy Friendly scheme gathered information from both students with epilepsy and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the UK to find out what support was available and whether students felt that it had been beneficial to their education.

The information revealed that while there was support available for other long term conditions, in higher education a lack of understanding about epilepsy and subsequent issues with communication can lead to confusion surrounding support provisions.

The intentions of the Epilepsy Friendly scheme are as follows:

- To re-assure students with epilepsy that they will be going to a university or college that is really working to understand their condition. Helping them to achieve and reach their full potential.
- To improve epilepsy awareness and understanding in a larger number of HEIs by offering an incentive for them to do so (listed below).
- To recognise and celebrate the work done by higher education institutions who do their utmost to enhance and improve their services.
- To maintain our relationship with institutions and remain a constant resource for them.

The aim is to have simple criteria to meet which is easily within the grasp of a busy HEI. However these criteria must still impact on the way epilepsy support provisions are approached. Accreditation will require:

- A named lead contact in a HEIs support department to have undertaken and passed our free Epilepsy and Higher Education online training course - epilepsytraining.youngepilepsy.org.uk.
- This person(s) to act as a point of contact for staff and students within a HEI who either have epilepsy or have questions about it.
- This person(s) to act as a point of contact for prospective students with epilepsy.

These criteria will be reviewed each year.

It is a very simple model to fulfil and one that we hope HEIs will be interested in adopting as it grants the following benefits:

- Recognition of their endeavours to make their institution as Epilepsy Friendly as possible.
- Promotion of their services on the Young Epilepsy website.
- Adoption of our Epilepsy Friendly logo that can be displayed on your website and in email signatures.

By making some small provisions HEIs have the opportunity to make a big difference, providing an environment that will promote a positive educational experience and allow students with epilepsy to reach their full potential.