

# what help is available?

epilepsy  
society

factsheet

3

Some of the practical and financial services and support available to people with epilepsy and people who care for them. Whether or not you feel that you have a disability, you may be eligible for support, depending on how your epilepsy affects you.

## financial help

### Free prescriptions

People with epilepsy are entitled to free prescriptions for their anti-epileptic medication, as well as any other prescribed drugs (but not dental treatment or eye tests). This is called 'medical exemption'. To apply for free prescriptions in England, fill in the form FP92A, available at your doctor's surgery. It is important to carry your medical exemption card in case you are asked to show this when you collect your prescription. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all prescriptions are free.

### NHS Low Income Scheme (LIS)

If you are on a low income or benefits you may be able to claim back some of your costs of travelling to some medical appointments, under the 'Healthcare travel costs scheme' (HTCS). The Low Income Scheme may also cover some dental and eye care costs.

 **Call the Low Income Scheme helpline on 0300 330 1343 or visit [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) for more information.**

### VAT exemption

Some equipment designed specifically to help people with disabilities does not include VAT. For example, you may not have to pay VAT on a seizure alarm system.


 **Call HM Revenue and Customs' Helpline on 0300 200 3700 or visit [hmrc.gov.uk](https://www.hmrc.gov.uk) for more information.**

### Discounted public transport

If you have epilepsy and are still having seizures you may be entitled to free or discounted travel. This is usually because you would be refused a driving licence if you applied. You will usually need some proof that you are eligible for the discount, depending on where you live and the rules of the discount scheme.


### Rail travel

You may be eligible for a disabled persons railcard. This gives you, and a companion, a third off most fares.

 **Call 0345 605 0525 or visit [disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](https://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)**

### Bus and tube travel

**England:** if you have had a seizure in the last year you should be eligible for a free national bus pass. Some councils have additional travel discounts.

 **Visit [gov.uk/apply-for-disabled-bus-pass](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-disabled-bus-pass) or contact your local council.**

**London:** you may be eligible for a Freedom Pass which gives free bus, train, tram and tube travel in London.

 **Call 0300 330 1433 or visit [londoncouncils.gov.uk](https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk)**

Some boroughs have a London Taxicard Scheme for reduced cost taxi travel.

 **Call 0207 934 9791 or visit [londoncouncils.gov.uk](https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk)**

**Merseyside:** you may be eligible for a Travel Pass.

 **Call 0151 227 5181 or visit [merseytravel.gov.uk](https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk)**

**Scotland:** the National Entitlement Card gives you free bus travel throughout Scotland.

 **Contact your local authority (or Travel Card Unit for Strathclyde) or call Epilepsy Scotland on 0808 800 2200.**

**Northern Ireland:** if you cannot drive due to epilepsy, you can get a Half Fare SmartPass for bus and rail travel.

 **Visit [nidirect.gov.uk](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk)**

**Wales:** people with disabilities are eligible for free bus travel throughout Wales.

 **Contact your local authority for details.**

### Coach travel

Some coach operators, such as National Express, offer discount fare schemes for people with disabilities.

 **Contact companies directly for details.**

### Access to Work

If you are unable to use public transport because of your epilepsy, you may be able to get financial help towards the cost of your transport to and from work, through the Access to Work scheme.

 **Contact your local Jobcentre Plus office or visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) for more information.**



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## benefits


You may be entitled to benefits, depending on how your epilepsy affects you. These might include Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Universal Credit and Attendance Allowance.

You will need to meet certain requirements to be able to apply for these benefits. We have more information on the criteria and how to apply for certain benefits, as well as sources of support around benefits.

 Visit [epilepsysociety.org.uk/benefits](https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/benefits) or contact our helpline.

The following organisations can also provide information and advice on benefits.

**Dial groups/Disabled People's Organisations:** Local disability support groups, who may offer independent benefits advisors who can help with completing forms.

 Call **0808 800 3333** or visit [scope.org.uk](https://scope.org.uk)

**Turn2us:** Help with accessing benefits, grants and other financial help, including a benefits calculator.

 Call **0808 802 2000** or visit [turn2us.org.uk](https://turn2us.org.uk)

**Citizens Advice Bureau:** Information on benefits.

 Visit [adviceguide.org.uk](https://adviceguide.org.uk) or call **03444 111 444** (England) or **03444 77 2020** (Wales).

**GOV.UK:** Government information website.

 Visit [gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline](https://gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline)

## help from social services

Depending on what your epilepsy is like, you may be entitled to a 'health and social care assessment'.

An assessment is normally carried out by an occupational therapist and takes place in your home and looks at whether you have any physical or health difficulties, social or housing needs, and what support you already receive, for example from family or friends.

If the assessment identifies that you have needs which meet the local authority's criteria, then they have a duty to arrange relevant community care services for you. These services may include meals, home help, adaptations to the home such as installing a shower or personal alarm, and access to leisure activities. You may need to pay some of the costs.

 Contact your local social services department to ask for an assessment or visit [gov.uk](https://gov.uk)

## help for families

We have information about how epilepsy may affect children and their education, information for young people, and books for parents and children. We also offer support through our helpline.

 Visit [epilepsysociety.org.uk/readinglist](https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/readinglist)

The following organisations also offer support.

**Contact a Family** offers support for families with children who have a medical condition or disability.

 Call **0808 808 3555** or visit [cafamily.org.uk](https://cafamily.org.uk)


**Family Fund** offers grants to low income families or carers of a child (17 and under) with a severe disability.

 Call **01904 550 055** or visit [familyfund.org.uk](https://familyfund.org.uk)

## help for students

Students with epilepsy in higher education can apply for a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). A DSA is designed to help cover the cost of any practical support you need as a direct result of your epilepsy. It does not depend on your income or that of your household.

Unlike student loans, DSAs do not have to be repaid.

 Visit [gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas](https://gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas) for more information.

Disability Rights UK runs a Disabled Students Helpline.

 Call **0330 995 0414** (Tuesday and Thursday 11am–1pm) or visit [disabilityrightsuk.org](https://disabilityrightsuk.org)

## help for carers

If you are a carer for someone with a disability, and this is not paid or organised voluntary work, you may be able to receive some help, even if you are not living with the person you are caring for.

You may be entitled to a 'carer's assessment' from your local social services department. This may identify the need for home help, respite care, emotional support or other services. Some carers can claim Carer's Allowance.

 Visit [gov.uk](https://gov.uk) or [adviceguide.org.uk](https://adviceguide.org.uk)

There are organisations that support carers by giving information, providing respite care, and campaigning for carers' rights.

 Visit [epilepsysociety.org.uk/carers](https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/carers) or see our factsheet [carers](#) for more information.

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Registered charity number 206186

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[epilepsysociety.org.uk](https://epilepsysociety.org.uk)



helpline  
01494 601 400

Monday and Tuesday 9am to 4pm  
Wednesday 9am to 7.30pm  
Confidential (national call rate)