

# Neurological Conditions in the Community: Information for professionals

## What do you need to know?

Neurological conditions can impact any part of the nervous system; central - brain and spine, and peripheral. There are many different neurological conditions, some of which are very rare and others which are very common and you will be familiar with.

Some conditions impact people from birth, others can develop following a brain or spinal cord injury and some conditions occur following a viral infection. Some conditions are hereditary, and some are completely random and can start at any age. There can be a high correlation with mental health problems and learning disabilities as well as other comorbidities. Find out more about neurological conditions through [NHS Inform](#) and the [Neurological Alliance of Scotland](#).

Whilst there is a wide range of over 600 neurological conditions, and not all symptoms are relevant for all conditions, there are common elements that connect all neurological conditions together and this is what we want to look at in this fact sheet.

Listed below are some of the ways that people can be impacted by their neurological condition.

### **Mental health, cognition and memory**

People with certain neurological conditions can develop mental health, cognitive and memory difficulties, which can get progressively worse over time. Typically these difficulties can manifest themselves through impulsivity, anger, irrationality, compulsive behaviour, forgetfulness, lack of awareness of self and others. As a result, the person may require higher levels of support.

### **Medication**

Many people with neurological conditions are likely to be taking prescribed medication. They may need assistance to manage this.

### **Pain and fatigue**

Many neurological conditions cause pain and fatigue which can impact across all areas of life.

### **Emotional and social impact**

The emotional and social impact of having a neurological condition cannot be underestimated. Fear, anxiety, loneliness, isolation, relationships with family and friends and access to the labour market are all impacted. Anyone with a neurological condition may need support through social prescribing and being connected to a community link worker.

### **Visual and hearing difficulties**

These can occur when there is any damage to the nerves connected to the eyes and ears, or with processing difficulties due to neurological damage. Other sensory difficulties may also occur.

### **Speech, language and swallow**

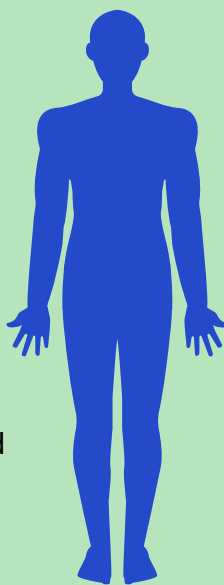
Conditions which impact the muscles used to control speech, language, swallow and interpretation of other people's speech may have a big impact on a person's ability to communicate with you. It is important not to confuse communication with cognitive difficulties.

### **Bladder and bowel**

Several common conditions impact the functionality of the bowel and bladder leading to incontinence.

### **Balance and co-ordination**

Living with any neurological condition can cause practical difficulties when moving about. Conditions that impact the nerve signals to muscles, may lead to weakness, seizures, tremor or muscle wasting. This will have an impact on a person's ability to live independently.



# Top tips for supporting someone with a neurological condition

Some neurological conditions including dementia, cause a loss of executive function. People may lose the ability to manage activities of daily living and the world around them can become challenging. For anyone with any neurological condition, it is important to acknowledge that they are living with a condition that can be hard to manage, and talk about it if the person wishes.

Ask the person what help do they want?

Avoid finishing other people's sentences

Avoid making assumptions or judgements

Answer every question like its the first time that it has been asked

Learn a bit about the person's condition - no two people with the same condition have the same experience

Encourage the other person to talk about their condition and how it impacts them

Keep calm and avoid causing distress

Be sure you understand what the other person is communicating - if you are not sure, check with them

Be more aware of non-verbal communication

Ask who supports them at home - they will require help too

Be patient at all times

Don't patronise people

Leave the person time to process and respond

Be prepared to repeat yourself

Don't overload people with information

It can often be the case that carers and / or family members require support as well

**Above all else, be understanding and compassionate**

## For more information

The Neurological Alliance of Scotland is an umbrella body of over 50 organisations that represent people with a neurological condition and those who support them. We work to improve the care and support that people receive.

To find out more about a particular neurological condition, check out our [members page](https://www.scottishneurological.org.uk/members/):  
<https://www.scottishneurological.org.uk/members/>

Have you found this factsheet useful? [Tell us your views here](#)

For more information about the Neurological Alliance and the work that we do, visit our [website](http://www.scottishneurological.org.uk):  
[www.scottishneurological.org.uk](http://www.scottishneurological.org.uk)