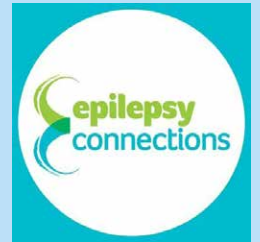


Who are Epilepsy Connections?

Epilepsy Connections exists to serve and benefit people with epilepsy and their families, carers and friends. They have delivered epilepsy information and support services since 2000. In 2005 Epilepsy Connections took over the delivery of community-based, person-centred information and support services for people with epilepsy and their carers across the Forth Valley area. Support groups offer a vital lifeline for isolated people living with epilepsy throughout Forth Valley. The groups provide an opportunity for participants to receive information, learn more about managing their condition and develop vital networks of peer support and friendship.



How was the grant used?

- As Covid-19 restrictions eased, Epilepsy Connections were able to use the grant to source a suitable venue to re-establish the Falkirk support group, while their usual venue remained closed.
- Two support group meetings took place in September 2020, supporting 10 individuals to meet for peer support and information. While the group numbers were lower than usual attendance, the groups ran smoothly and allowed for some vital peer support to take place.
- Further dates for support groups were planned for October & November 2020, however due to rising Covid-19 cases the decision was made to postpone these.
- Further support groups have been planned for 2021 with the hope that these will go ahead.

What had to change due to Covid-19?

- Due to Covid-19 restrictions the group were unable to meet face-to-face and weekly telephone contact with group members was used to keep in touch and provide support. Group members commonly expressed that they missed the face-to-face peer support received in support group meetings.
- Epilepsy Connections have also been running a fortnightly Zoom support group since lockdown restrictions were introduced.



Support group meeting

What difference has the grant made?

- Attending face-to-face meetings has allowed group members to access essential networks of peer support. Clients who live alone have reported finding this particularly beneficial.
- Several group members who attended have re-connected with each other after exchanging contact numbers at the group. They now stay in touch with each other for regular contact and emotional support. These friendships provide extremely isolated people with a much-needed lifeline, especially since further restrictions have been re-introduced.
- Epilepsy connections have also been running a fortnightly Zoom Support Group since lockdown, and while this has been a real success, many regular clients have been unable to access this support, highlighting the value of the face-to-face activities.

A group member mentioned it was:
'the first time they had engaged in
proper conversation with another
human being for several months.'

'The group is the one place
I feel normal. Everyone else
there has the same condition
and I feel far better for having
been there.'

(Service User)

