



**F**OR the half-a-million people in the UK living with epilepsy, being able to quickly access expert help and support can dramatically improve their quality of life.

The condition, which causes debilitating seizures, forces those affected to come to terms with everything from managing personal safety to considering the potential impact on everyday activities such as work and driving.

Thankfully for patients, adapting to the ailment is made much easier by Epilepsy Society. The national charity, which has headquarters in Buckinghamshire, is involved in everything from day care to medical research to help make living with epilepsy much more manageable.

But none of the charity's valuable work would be possible if the Occupational Health (OH) needs of its 280 permanent staff were not being taken care of.

That fact is not lost on Epilepsy Society, which has teamed up with one of the nation's leading OH providers to boost its provision.

The link, with Slough-based Corporate Health, sees Epilepsy Society receiving a bespoke package of business-focused services that ensure its staff are able to be as effective as possible.

Tricia Buckle, the organisation's Head of HR, explained that Epilepsy Society's staff help the charity strive towards its mission of improving the lives of people affected by epilepsy as well as their families and carers.

"We promote public awareness, provide information and training, conduct research and provide day care, respite care and specialist medical care," she added. "Epilepsy Society also provides residential and nursing care for people with severe epilepsy and complex needs as well as supported living for people in their own home.

"To provide all these services we rely on a national network of volunteers in addition to our 280 permanent staff."

#### IMPORTANT ASSET

With absence from the workplace through illness or injury a major drain on the resources and productivity of companies up and down the country, Epilepsy Society is among a growing number making use of Corporate Health's expertise. >>

# SPARKING A CHANGE

STEVE TYLER TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ROLE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS  
CORPORATE HEALTH PLAYS IN HELPING NATIONAL CHARITY EPILEPSY SOCIETY  
CARRY OUT ITS LIFE-CHANGING WORK...

Key to the charity's endeavours to keep its employees fit and ready for work is its use of the OH provider's management referral service.

When a member of staff is away from the workplace for a health-related reason, Epilepsy

Society enlists Corporate Health to carry out an assessment of their condition.

The results of this process allow the charity to better judge the impact of the illness on the employee's ability to carry out their role, making everyone involved aware of a possible return-to-work date.

The in-depth consultation also involves Corporate Health providing educated suggestions as to reasonable adjustments to an employee's working conditions – such as shorter hours or a change in duties – to better ensure their future wellbeing.

In addition to referrals for absent workers, Corporate Health makes sure Epilepsy Society's new members of staff are fit for their roles by carrying out pre-placement questionnaires.

The questionnaires, which are given to new healthcare workers, provide the charity peace of mind over important aspects such as an employee's vaccination history.

Corporate Health is also able to provide advice to clients like Epilepsy Society about employees who are likely to need adjustments to their duties because of a disability.

This important service ensures employers meet their legal duty of care under the 2010 Equality Act.

Despite the breadth of Epilepsy Society's work and the scope of the services delivered to it by Corporate Health, Tricia said she was particularly pleased with the provider's simple approach to OH.

**“CORPORATE HEALTH HAVE A CLEAR STRUCTURE AND A TURNAROUND TIME THAT THEY STICK TO”**

Tricia Buckle, Epilepsy Society

“I have used other providers in the past, but with Corporate Health

I like the fact that they have a really clear structure and a turnaround time that they stick to,” she explained.

“They always meet

turnaround times and are also approachable by email so we can do a lot of things online. That means we always get a quick response when we need it.

“I have found them to be professional and their independence is also important. They have been very good for us and I have had no reason to change the arrangement.”

#### PROACTIVE PARTNERSHIP

Given the nature of the charity's ground-breaking research and vital day-to-day care, knowing that its staff are equally well catered for is of utmost importance.

As well as being pleased with the services Corporate Health already delivers, Tricia said that the organisation's proactivity in suggesting new ways to boost Epilepsy Society's provision is important.

The HR professional singled out the provider's regular email newsletters and invites to training and information events at its Slough

headquarters as examples of its willingness to provide a complete OH service.

Tricia said:

“We already

find Corporate Health's reports and referrals to be very clear and they are very receptive to my comments.

“They are very pragmatic and work-related.

“In addition, I expect them to look at our needs and come up with services with better cost models and that is what we get from them.” ■

**epilepsy society**

## EPILEPSY: FAST FACTS

**Around 1 person in every 100 in the UK has epilepsy.**

**1 in 20 will have a single epileptic seizure. 1 person in 50 will go on to develop epilepsy at some time in their life.**

**Epilepsy is more than 3 times as common as multiple sclerosis (85,000), Parkinson's disease (120,000) and cerebral palsy.**

**87 new cases are diagnosed each day of the year.**

**Epilepsy can develop at any age. However, it is diagnosed most often before the age of 20 and after the age of 60.**

**There are more than 40 different seizure types.**

**There are 3 epilepsy-related deaths each day. Epilepsy claims more lives in England and Wales each year than AIDS and cot death combined.**

Source: [www.epilepsysociety.org.uk](http://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk)

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