

**Professor Ian Bone, Epilepsy Scotland Board member
Speaking at the Epilepsy and Occupational Health Guide Reception, Scottish
Parliament (2011)**

Hello everyone, my name is Professor Bone and I was a neurologist in Glasgow. My interest in epilepsy and epilepsy in the workplace is both personal and professional as I have a son, now in his mid 30's, who has experienced many of the problems that hopefully documents like this will help to resolve.

I think the Minister's last comment that epilepsy is no reason why someone should not be in the workplace is an excellent point to start from. The document is unique, I believe it is unique to the United Kingdom. I am sure it something that will be used by people in occupational health, by employers and will be looked at by people with epilepsy throughout the country and will be very valuable indeed.

I would like to start off by thanking Alasdair Allan very much for chairing this evening as our host. He is the joint convenor with Mary Mulligan of the Cross-Party Group on Epilepsy. I looked it up and found that there are thirty two MSPs on the Group. I think it is the biggest Cross Party Group. I looked up the National Assembly of Wales and found they have four members on their committee. So I think the score Scotland 32 – Wales 4 is something I would like to see repeated in the sporting arena.

Just to go through all the various speakers. Firstly, I thank Lesslie Young, (Epilepsy Scotland) for giving us the background of how and why the document started off.

I thank Freddie (Westbrook) for giving his account of where he sees the document in terms of how it will help employers in coming to terms with people working in the workplace and how they are helped in the workplace. I think one important comment that he made was that not all people in work have access to occupational health. There are many small companies and firms that do not have access but hopefully this document is something that will percolate through to employers so that they acknowledge and realise that people with epilepsy are just as valuable in the workplace as anybody else.

I'd like to thank Ross (Bennet) for his talk. I think the thing that rings in my ears about his personal account of living with epilepsy, working with epilepsy and succeeding with epilepsy is the statement that he made that loyalty breeds loyalty. I'm sure people with epilepsy who are looked after in the workplace, who are appreciated for what they are as people ,will be people who will be very good at being employees.

Next to mention Hilary Todd, and thank her from the UK and from Occupational Health therapy perspective. Representing as she does the Society of Occupational Therapists and hearing how she sees this document fitting into the work of her society and the members of her society.

Then to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, again to thank her very much for all her staunch support of Epilepsy Scotland, but as much as that for all her informed comments that she makes in support of us. I hope we all get the feeling here she is not just of supporting us but has an understanding of the problems that people with epilepsy suffer from.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you as guests for coming to the Scottish Parliament and for making it such an enjoyable and successful evening. I'm sure on a timeline this document is the beginning of something rather than the end.

I was mentioning to Freddie there is research evidence from looking at employees' perceptions of people in the workplace with epilepsy. There are rather alarming perceptions from employees in terms of whether they would wish to work alongside somebody with epilepsy. However, that is perhaps another chapter for another story for another day.

Thank you all very much.