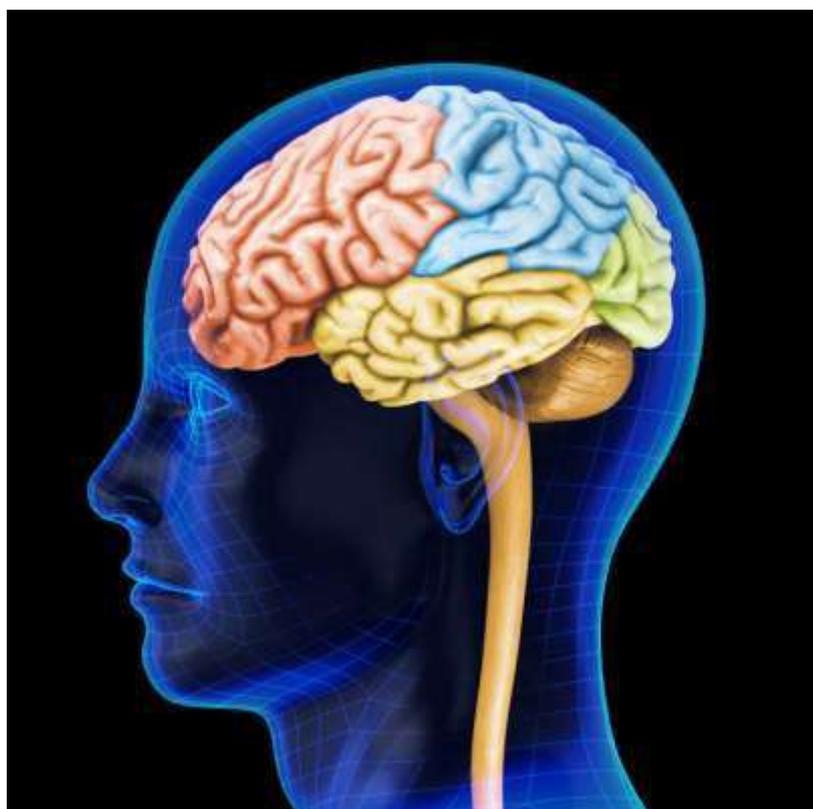


West Dunbartonshire Community Health and Care Partnership

Acquired Brain Injury Service

UNDERSTANDING BRAIN INJURY GUIDE





What is Acquired Brain Injury?

- A condition which is acquired after birth (from 5 years old) and can apply to any age
- It is non- progressive (does not get any worse) and can be caused by various traumas to the brain

Acquired brain injuries can be caused by a number of different events including:

- Traumatic brain injuries caused by an impact to the head and brain (e.g. road traffic accidents, falls, industrial or sporting accidents)
- Poisoning
- Viral infections to the brain (e.g. encephalitis or meningitis)
- Neurosurgery
- Damage to blood vessels in the brain (e.g. through a haemorrhage(bleeding in the brain) or hypoxia (a lack of oxygen to the brain))

Who's Likely to be affected?

The most likely group to be affected by acquired brain injury are found in particular, to be young men aged between 18-25 years old. By far the most predominant cause of injury is traumatic head injuries from

- Road traffic accidents (RTA's) and
- Falls and assaults

It is therefore common for injury to arise from bleeding (haemorrhages) or contusions (bruising) where the brain has moved against the skull during impact. These may not necessarily cause lasting damage; however there are scans called CT scans that can help identify this.

What effects do having an acquired brain injury have on an individual?

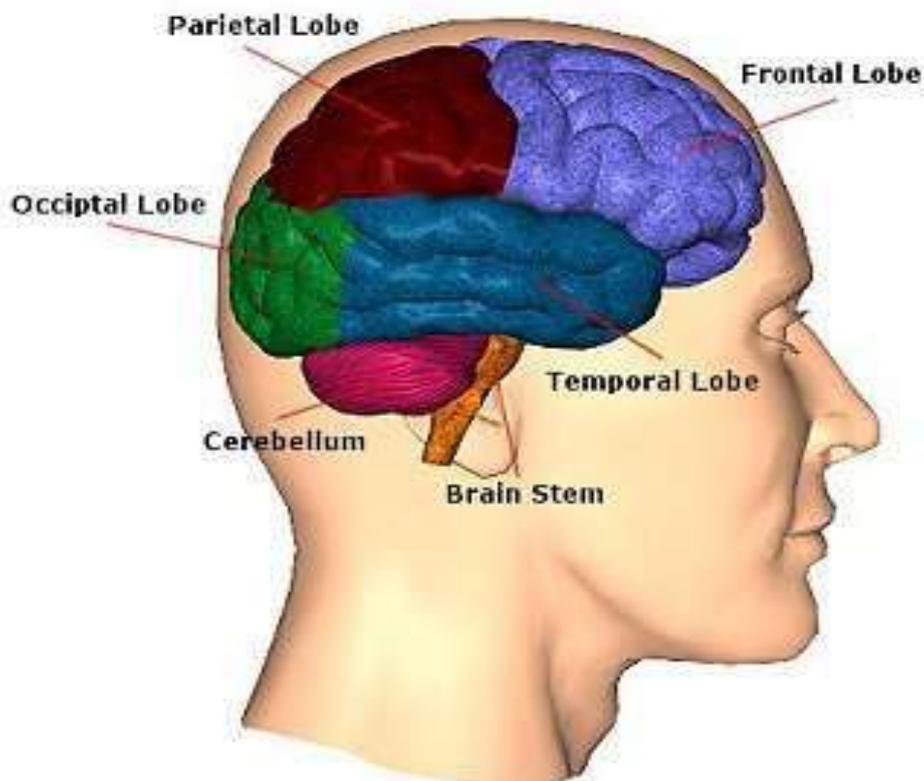


- **Initial effects**- a change in the level of consciousness after injury. At this point, it is difficult to estimate what effects the injury has had on the person.
- **After person emerges from period of unconsciousness**, longer- term effects start to become clear. This is of course, dependant on what part of the brain has been injured.
- **Lasting effects** of a brain injury are wide and varied and no individual case is the same. Some individuals may need very little help/ support whereby others may require long periods of hospital care and rehabilitation.
- **If the injury is deemed to be moderate or severe**, longer- term effects that are common after brain injury may include the following:
 - **Physical effects** (problems with movement and sensations)
 - **Cognitive problems** (thinking processes such as attention, memory and concentration may be affected to varying degrees)
 - **Behavioural difficulties** (personality may change, causing the person to lack self-control and/ or motivation)
 - **Emotional** (psychological problems e.g. anxiety or depression)
 - **Social difficulties**

The effect of damage to particular brain areas

The effects of the injury are largely related to the severity of the injury and the particular area(s) of the brain that have been injured.

Below is a useful guide, showing you the different parts of the brain and the effects of injury in that location.

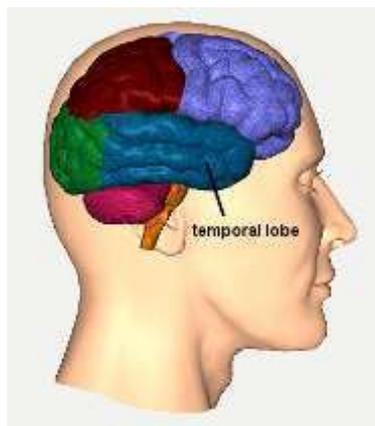
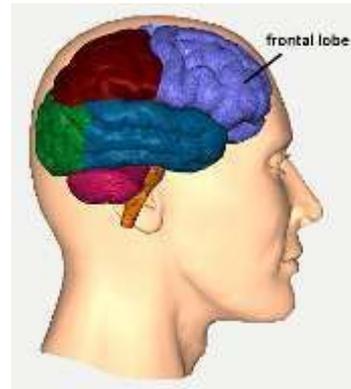


Although we have organised this information in sections, relating to the part of the brain that is damaged- THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT EVERY CONSEQUENCE WILL OCCUR IN EVERY INDIVIDUAL. THERE MAY ONLY BE A FEW THAT APPLY.

Possible effects of brain injury:

Frontal lobe injury can result in:

- Mood changes
- Changes in social behaviour
- Changes in personality
- Poor concentration/ attention
- Difficulties with planning, organising and problem solving
- Perseveration- uncontrollably repeating a thought or behaviour
- Lack of insight (unaware of problems)
- Difficulties with expressing language (Broca's aphasia)

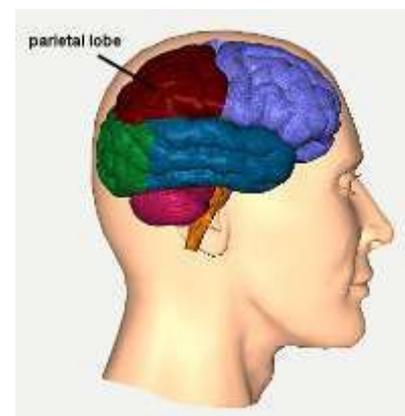


Temporal lobe injury can result in:

- Memory loss
- Difficulty recognising faces
- Difficulty identifying and verbalising about objects
- Disturbance in selective attention

Parietal lobe injury can result in:

- Difficulty naming objects
- Problems with reading
- Difficulty drawing objects
- Difficulty doing maths
- Inability to focus visual attention
- Difficulty with hand and eye co-ordination
- Lack of awareness of certain body parts and surrounding space



Occipital lobe injury can result in:



- Defects in vision
- Difficulty locating objects/movements in surroundings
- Hallucinations
- Difficulty identifying colours
- Difficulty recognising drawn objects
- Word blindness – inability to recognise words

The Rehabilitation process

When an individual receives a brain injury, there are many different pathways that they may take in the process of rehabilitation. In some cases, people are hospitalised and then transferred to a suitable rehabilitation unit where there are trained staff to assist them to recover as many of their abilities as possible.

What happens after rehabilitation?

Following brain injury, we understand that there is a period of time where there are many difficulties in comprehending what happens after brain injury; and subsequently many questions may be left unanswered. The information contained in this pack is not designed to answer all of these questions; however it will allow you to have an initial understanding of the causes and consequences of acquired brain injury.