Appendix D: Differential diagnosis of epilepsy in children, young people and adults

*Differential diagnosis of epilepsy in adults*
Abnormal movements predominate

- Generalised convulsive movements
- Drop attacks
- Transient focal motor attacks
- Facial muscle and eye movements
- Episodic phenomena in sleep

Disturbed awareness, thoughts, and sensations predominate

- Loss of awareness
- Transient focal sensory attacks
- Psychic experiences
- Aggressive or vocal outbursts
- Prolonged confusional or fugue states

Abnormal movements predominate

- Epilepsy
- Syncope with secondary jerking movements
- Primary cardiac or respiratory abnormalities, presenting with secondary anoxic seizures
- Insolventary movement disorders and other neurological conditions
- Hyperekplexia
- Non-epileptic attack disorder (NEAD)

Disturbed awareness, thoughts, and sensations predominate

- Epilepsy
- Syncope
- Cardiac disorders
- Microsleeps
- Panic attacks
- Hypoglycaemia
- Other neurological disorders
- Non-epileptic attack disorder (NEAD)

- Somnolence attacks: epileptic seizure, transient ischaemic attack, hyperventilation
- Transient vestibular symptoms: peripheral vestibular disease, epispy
- Visual symptoms: migraine, transient ischaemic attack, epispy

- Epilepsy
- Migraine
- Panic disorders
- Drug induced flashbacks
- Hallucinations or illusions caused by loss of a primary sense
- Psychotic hallucinations and delusions
- Non-epileptic attack disorder (NEAD)

- Related to learning disability
- Epilepsy
- Visits
Differential diagnosis of epilepsy in children and young people
History of Event / Attack
- Frequency
- Timing
- Triggers
- Warning beforehand
- Colour change
- Alteration in conscious level
- Motor phenomena
- Duration of attack
- Symptoms following attack

What is the trigger for the attack?
- Only during sleep?
- Related to feeding?
- With a fever?
- On initiation of movement?
- With excitement/emotion?
- Following unpleasant/painful stimuli?
- Boredom/concentration

What is the predominant motor phenomenon?
- Repetitive stereotyped spasm?
- Hypertonia?
- Hypotonia (include FALLS)?
- Dystonia?
- Unsteadiness?

What is the colour change?
- Pallor
- Cyanosis
- Flushing

What is the predominant motor phenomenon?