

Spinal Cord Injuries

A guide to compensation

Expert advice

When someone suffers a spinal cord injury, the impact is dramatic, immediately changing their life and affecting their family and loved ones. Slater and Gordon understand how life changing a spinal cord injury can be and will make the claims process as easy as possible for everyone concerned. We'll ensure the best possible outcome is achieved.

Rehabilitation is key in spinal cord injury cases. Where the facts of the case allows, we'll assist with rehabilitation, provide practical advice, support with benefits and assist with protecting financial awards of compensation. We'll reduce the burden of dealing with any of the additional worries faced at such a difficult time.

What is a spinal cord injury?

A spinal cord injury (SCI) occurs as a result of damage to the spinal cord which can occur as a result of trauma or illness.

In the UK, there are approximately 1,000 new cases of spinal cord injury every year and there are an estimated 40,000 people who are living with spinal cord injury.

Unfortunately, there's currently no cure for spinal cord injury and so the paralysis that results from a spinal cord injury is often permanent.

Are all spinal cord injuries the same?

A spinal cord injury to the neck will result in a tetraplegic injury, meaning that paralysis will affect all four limbs. A spinal cord injury to the back will result in a paraplegic injury, meaning that paralysis will affect the lower limbs only.

A spinal cord injury might also be described as being complete or incomplete.

Complete injury – This means that there has been total severance of the spinal cord at the level of injury resulting in full loss of sensation and movement. In cases of a complete injury, any further recovery is unlikely.

Incomplete injury – This means that there has been a partial severance of the spinal cord at the level of injury. Depending on the individual, they may be left with some movement or sensation which may or may not be functional. An incomplete injury may lead to recovery of some function in the future.

In all cases of spinal cord injury, individuals will be left with paralysis which will affect their bladder and bowel control and their sexual function.



Where are spinal cord injuries treated?

In the UK there are 11 spinal cord injury centres (SCIC's). These are located regionally around the country and are specialist centres providing care and support for those with a spinal cord injury and members of their family.

Does the level of injury indicate which areas of the body will be affected?

The spinal vertebra is split into four sections and there are several levels to each section. It's important to determine which level of vertebra has been damaged as this indicates which parts of the body may be affected by paralysis.

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I found them trustworthy and understanding of our situation. I also found the staff members to be friendly and caring.

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Advice on making a claim for compensation

For those who don't have experience of the legal process, contacting a lawyer and making a claim for compensation can be a daunting prospect. However, we're with our clients every step of the way, ensuring they understand the claims process, and relieving the burden of having to deal with a variety of practical issues, at what can be a difficult time.



What should you do if you think you have a claim?

Contact us. Our team of specialists have a vast amount of experience in dealing with spinal cord injury cases.

Once we've taken details, we'll confirm whether or not you have a claim. If you're entitled to compensation, we can start work on your case straightaway and begin gathering evidence.

Time limits apply when making a claim for compensation, so don't delay in contacting us.

What is the cost of making a claim?

We understand that the cost of legal advice can be a worry, but there are options available to fund injury claims.

You may have legal expenses insurance under an existing insurance policy which entitles you to free representation. If legal expenses insurance is not in place, we may be able to conduct your case under a Conditional Fee Agreement, also known as a 'No Win, No Fee' Agreement. This means if the case fails, no payment is due.

Once we know the circumstances of your case, we'll be able to discuss your funding options in more detail.

What is the amount of compensation likely to be?

Compensation will be based on the severity of the injury, and also on the personal circumstances of the injured person. For example, if they've been unable to work as a result of their injury, loss of earnings may be accounted for.

If the injured person requires rehabilitation, treatment, aids, equipment or adaptations, we will also seek to recover these costs.

How long is the case likely to take?

Every case is different so it's difficult to estimate how long a case is likely to take without first reviewing the circumstances.

However, the case will be dealt with by an expert in spinal cord injuries who will deal with the case as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Frequently asked questions

Will I have to go to court?

A large majority of cases settle before a trial takes place. However, if the case doesn't settle before trial, attendance at court may be necessary.

What if the injury requires rehabilitation or treatment?

As we have many years' experience working on behalf of people who have suffered serious injuries, we see it as an important part of our role to make sure our clients get the best quality support to maximise their chances of recovery and future independence.

We work closely with case managers, medical experts and approved rehabilitation providers to ensure that a tailored programme is put in place as soon as possible so rehabilitation can begin without delay.

Where we've proved that the other side was fully or partly to blame, we can obtain interim payments to pay for treatment and other costs before the case reaches settlement.

What if I need assistance in other areas?

We have expert lawyers in many areas of law such as family, employment, welfare benefits, trusts, Court of Protection and disability rights and work closely with those departments to ensure that you get the best possible outcome.