

Autumn 2022

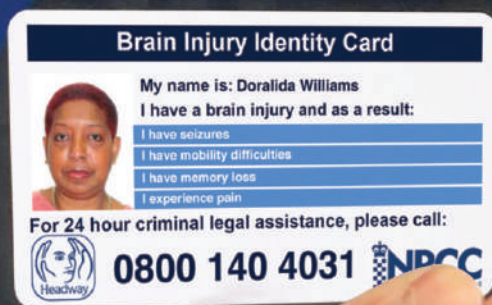
Headway News



The magazine of Headway - the brain injury association

*“It’s very
comforting”*

Celebrating
10,000
Brain Injury
ID Cards



**Rehabilitation
rather than
incarceration**

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problems**

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on sale**

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Are you a Friend of Headway?

Becoming a Friend of Headway member is a great way to support the charity, accessing a range of benefits while helping us to continue improving life after brain injury.

Every member receives a Headway pin badge and wristband, a discount on our award-winning publications, access to a free or discounted will writing service and a copy

of this very magazine delivered four times a year.

There are annual and lifetime options available and a discount for brain injury survivors and their loved ones, and even ways to buy a membership as a gift.

Just complete the simple form at headway.org.uk/friend to become a Friend of Headway today.



STANDING UP FOR YOU

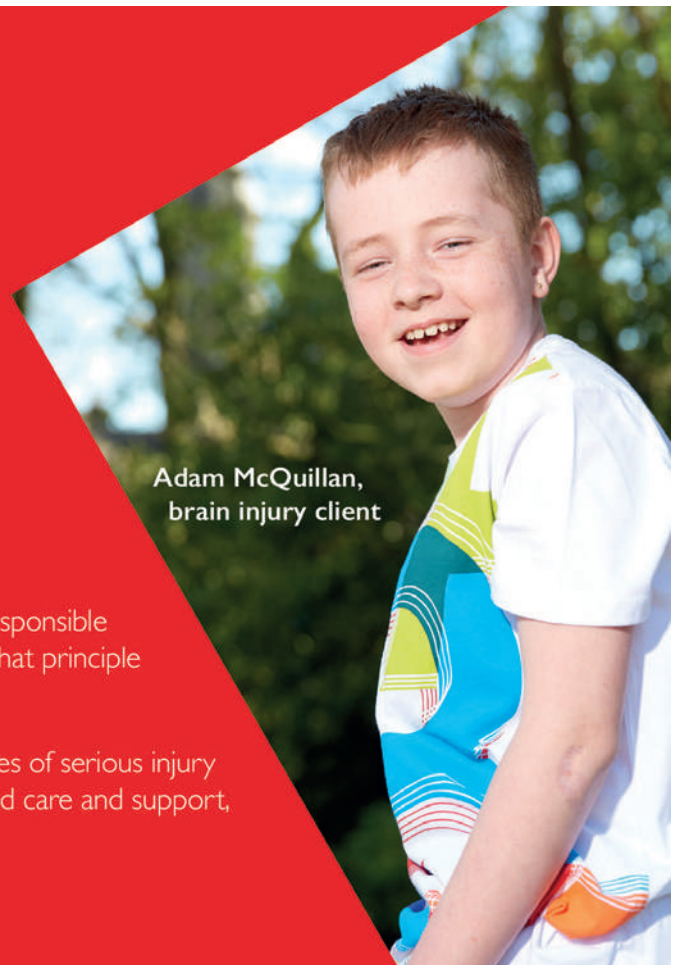


Our legal specialists are uniquely on your side

We only act for those who have suffered injury, not those responsible for causing them, or their insurers, and we have maintained that principle throughout our 100-year history.

Our brain injury specialists combine compassion with decades of serious injury expertise, to ensure you and your family receive co-ordinated care and support, as well as the maximum possible compensation.

0800 0 224 224 www.thompsons.law



Adam McQuillan,
brain injury client

Welcome

Welcome to the autumn edition of Headway News.



A new era for Headway

As a charity, we have faced many challenges over the past few years. But the future is bright as we enter a new era for the charity. As we do so, however, we face one more significant change.

After more than two decades leading Headway – the brain injury association, and 42 years working in the third sector, our Chief Executive Peter McCabe has retired.

Peter joined Headway in 2001 at a difficult time for the charity. Over the course two decades, Peter did a remarkable job in developing Headway into the UK's leading charity supporting brain injury survivors and families.

He has steered the charity through good times and bad, steadily growing its income and importantly its reserves to enable it to withstand the rainiest of days – as so acutely demonstrated over the past two years.

He is personally responsible for conceiving and developing two of the most valuable and important services we provide: the Emergency Fund and the Justice Project.

Indeed, it is fitting that this edition of Headway News celebrates the magnificent milestone of 10,000 Brain Injury Identity Cards being issued to survivors across the UK.

But the Justice Project is far more than the ID cards. Only this week, we heard from a survivor who wrote to us to explain how he had been arrested following a dispute with his neighbour.

He was placed in a cell and kept there for 18 hours while police investigated

the incident. Video evidence would later prove that he was the victim, not aggressor, but he was scared, confused and isolated while in custody.

Thankfully, as a Headway Brain Injury Identity Card holder, he received free criminal legal support that helped ensure all charges were dropped and he was appropriately supported as a vulnerable adult.

The police staff involved with the case now have a much better understanding of brain injury – as do many others working within the criminal justice system thanks to training provided by Headway as part of the Justice Project.

Meanwhile, the Emergency Fund has distributed almost half a million pounds to enable families to be at the bedside of a loved-one in the immediate aftermath of a brain injury.

The cards and letters of thanks we receive from people receiving relatively modest grants show that a little care and support can go an awfully long way towards helping a family in crisis.

Everyone who has received support from Headway over the past two decades owes a debt of gratitude to Peter. His passion for social justice and determination to improve life after brain injury is to be admired.

Directly and indirectly, he has changed so many lives and helped so many people. It's fair to say he deserves a rest and everyone at Headway wishes him a happy retirement – no doubt spent largely with his dogs and grandchildren!

Thanks for everything, Peter!

Luke Griggs
Interim Chief Executive



the brain injury association

Who we are

Headway is the leading UK-wide charity that supports people to rebuild their lives after brain injury through the provision of information and support services across the UK. To find out more, visit www.headway.org.uk or you can call the freephone helpline on 0808 800 2244 if you need support.

Go digital!

Subscribe to our monthly Headway News Bitesize email at:
headway.org.uk/join-our-mailing-list

Essential contacts

Headway office:

Bradbury House, 190 Bagnall Road, Old Basford, Nottingham NG6 8SF

Telephone:

0115 924 0800
enquiries@headway.org.uk

Nurse-led freephone helpline:

0808 800 2244 (9am - 5pm, Mon to Fri),
helpline@headway.org.uk

Website:

www.headway.org.uk

Advertising:

directorofcomms@headway.org.uk

Fundraising:

projects@headway.org.uk

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Your views

It's a big edition of Headway News as we proudly celebrate the 10,000th Brain Injury Identity Card!

Here, we share the views of a few card holders on what they use it for and what it means to them...

"Got mine with me never felt the need to use it yet. But I know I can."

Adrian Walter

"The attitude of transport staff changes. I was wearing mine at Crewe station when my card was seen by staff. Rather than being directed, I was taken to my train and watched while I safely boarded it."

David Eve

"I carry it in my purse everywhere just in case of a problem. People can see I have had previous brain problems and don't just write me off as drunk etc because you can't see my scars and I look OK to most people."

SJ Wallis

"It's helped with assistance in busy city centres and also on metro and buses. The public are more understanding when I require a little longer to get served."

Samantha Sweeney
Ashcroft

"I wear mine attached to a sunflower lanyard on a daily basis both in and out of work, and when travelling on my own."

Judith Betts

"The card has been very useful to me. it worked well as a great form of ID after I had a seizure, and the police officers who were assisting me could know who I am until I fully recovered."

Steve Williams

"I used mine at the airport as I get anxious in crowds and noise."

Jayne Harris

Visit our website at headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury for information on the effects of brain injury and practical guides to help you cope. You can also get in touch with our helpline to talk through your concerns and get information that is tailored to your circumstances. Contact the team on **0808 800 2244** or helpline@headway.org.uk

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Go green!

Did you know that the plastic wrap used for Headway News is recyclable? It's made from polythene film and starts to break down after just three months. It can be recycled alongside carrier bags at larger supermarket stores, not at the kerbside. Do your bit to help save the environment and recycle today.



Latest news round-up

With news of your charity's ongoing work to improve life after brain injury



Acquired Brain Injury Strategy – what next?

The Government is putting together a cross-departmental strategy which we hope will improve the lives of brain injury survivors and their families and carers.

Importantly, the voices of those directly affected by brain injury are being heard as the strategy develops.

In March 2022 the Government launched a 12-week call for evidence asking for ideas to develop a cross-departmental ABI Strategy. Headway submitted a detailed response, using the rich insight and data that we have developed through our relationships with brain injury survivors.

Our response called for action in areas where you have told us it is most needed. These included improved access to specialist neurological rehabilitation and support services, more support for families of brain injury survivors, disability benefits reform, greater awareness and understanding of brain injury in the criminal justice

system and better awareness and prevention of concussion in sport.

We encouraged everyone affected by brain injury to get involved. We published guidance on how to respond to the call for evidence and the issues that could be considered when responding. We strongly felt that everyone affected by brain injury should have the opportunity to share their own unique views.

We also highlighted our calls for action across our social media channels, provoking online debate amongst our followers, which we shared with the Government.

What happens now?

Now the call for evidence has closed, Headway is supporting the Government through our membership of the strategy's Patient and Public Voice Reference Group. The group includes brain injury survivors, carers, and representatives of charities that work to help people with brain injuries. The group makes sure that the voices of brain injury survivors and their carers are heard throughout the strategy's development.

Revised factsheet for a stress-free holiday

Our recently revised *Holidays and travel after brain injury* factsheet offers useful guidance for travelling with a brain injury.

Whether you're planning a staycation or looking to travel abroad, going on holiday always takes careful preparation and there are many different things to consider such as your destination, how to get there and what to pack.

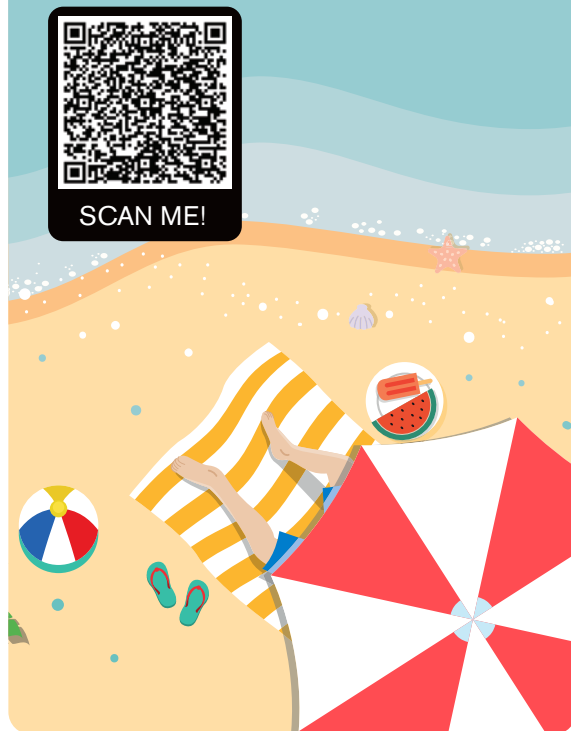
The updated factsheet provides tips to help you travel with a brain injury, including information on where to get financial help and considerations for travel insurance.

Our thanks go to Irwin Mitchell for their kind sponsorship of this factsheet, which helps us to continue producing free-to-access publications to support life after brain injury.

You can scan the QR code or visit **headway.org.uk/information-library** to download the factsheet.



SCAN ME!



Conquer your “bucket list trip” for Headway

Headway Heroes Laraine and Philip Martin found Headway after Philip sustained a brain injury in 2013 following a fall from a horse.

After Philip was in a coma for four weeks and following a long rehabilitation process, the determined pair still live every day with the lasting effects of the injury.

“We decided during lockdown we needed a plan to motivate us,” said Laraine.

“We agreed on the bucket list trip of hiking Machu Picchu and then thought what better way to mark this momentous trip than to raise funds for the charity that has been there for us.

“Sadly in June 2020 our very dear friend, also Philip’s age, fell downstairs at home and suffered a massive brain injury. Two years on he continues to be in residential rehabilitation. We speak to his wife every week. She knows Headway are there, waiting for when she needs them.

“We definitely need to keep raising funds for this charity!”

Inspired by Laraine and Philip’s adventure? Whether you want to climb Kilimanjaro or hike through the Peak District, you can find your perfect challenge at headway.org.uk/treks.



Philip and Laraine took on the long hike to Machu Picchu...



...and were certainly rewarded for the effort with this stunning view!



Latest news round-up

With news of your charity's ongoing work to improve life after brain injury

Wardrobe overflowing? Cupboards bursting with bits and bobs?

Thanks to a boom in business, our charity shops are in desperate need of your support to continue raising vital funds (while maintaining their reputation as a treasure trove on the high street!).

Clothes that've gone unworn for months crammed into drawers,

shelves full of books that may never be read again, cupboards stuffed full of once-favourite ornaments that no longer have a place on the windowsill... sound familiar?

If you have any clothes, bric-a-brac or small electrical items that need a new home, please consider donating them to Headway and help us to improve life after brain injury.



How to donate

- Pop your items down to your local Headway shop in the North West, Midlands and South East of England, as well as Jersey. Search for your nearest at [headway.org.uk/charity-shops](https://www.headway.org.uk/charity-shops).
- Call us on **0115 924 0800** if you live in the vicinity of our shops and want to arrange a collection for larger amounts.
- Why not rally your colleagues around the cause and arrange a big office collection? Call us on **0115 924 0800** to talk it through!

All I want for Christmas is (a Headway card from) you!

Yes, we know it's still technically summer, but word is that Santa is hard at work finalising all the festive plans – a clear sign that it's time to stock up on your Headway Christmas cards.

We have eight designs on offer from the traditional 'Bright Silent Night' to the classic 'Robin on a Holly Branch'. The big man himself even makes an appearance on 'Santa and Snowman Friend' to get us all in the festive spirit.

Each pack of 10 cards costs just £3.50, and thanks to our generous

sponsor Bolt Burdon Kemp, every penny will go directly to supporting brain injury survivors, their families and carers.

Our Christmas cards always sell out fast, so don't delay - head to page 24 to see the full range and find out how to get your hands on them, or visit shop.headway.org.uk to dive straight in and buy your cards now.



SCAN ME!



Headway left 'frustrated' by IFAB's decision to ignore expert groundswell

On Monday 13th June 2022, more than a hundred leading voices in brain health and concussion, including Headway, signed an open letter to the International Football Association Board (IFAB) urging it to introduce temporary concussion substitutes.

IFAB was to hold its AGM later that day, and published a news release afterwards which effectively stated that it would not be listening to the communal plea for temporary concussion substitutes but instead would be continuing with the permanent concussion substitutes trial until 2023.

"IFAB's continued reluctance to ignore the groundswell of expert opinion on temporary concussion substitutes is as frustrating as it is confusing," said Luke Griggs, Deputy Chief Executive of Headway.

"As well as refusing to implement temporary concussion substitutions, IFAB has announced the trial of additional permanent concussion substitutes is to be extended to 2023. This is surely delaying the inevitable and missing opportunities to improve safety protocols for yet another year, leaving players in major tournaments including this winter's World Cup, and yet another domestic and European season, at unnecessary risk.

"We urgently need IFAB to clarify its statement that it has 'to gather sufficient data to form a scientifically valid decision' on concussion

substitutes. Here we have a letter signed by some of the world's leading names in concussion – and they're ignoring it.

"Following on from this meeting, we have more concerns than ever that concussion, and player health, is not being taken seriously by football's rule makers."



Brain Injury Identity Card



My name is: Jonathan Smith

I have a brain injury and as a result:

I have difficulty processing information

I have attention and concentration difficulties

I experience fatigue

I may have anxiety

For 24 hour criminal legal assistance, please call:



0800 140 4031



10,000 AND COUNTING

Since its launch by Prince Harry in 2017, Headway's Brain Injury Identity Card and the Justice Project that it supports have gone from strength to strength.

The need for the card has never been greater. In a recent survey for our *See the Hidden Me* campaign, more than three quarters of brain injury survivors experienced problems on a daily basis as a result of their brain injury being hidden.

Even those who experience visible effects of their injury such as balance

problems encounter barriers to engaging with society, with many people reporting that they have been mistakenly treated as being drunk.

The overwhelming feedback is that when people find themselves in these difficult and distressing situations, presenting the ID Card quickly diffuses the situation and ensures people get the right support at the right time. It's a simple solution to a tricky conversation.

In this special feature, we celebrate this important milestone by exploring what the card means to people. We also explore another vital side of our work – the ID Card's role in the Headway

Justice Project and the ways in which brain injury survivors have gained access to specialist support which ensures fair treatment when they came into contact with the criminal justice system.

Prince Harry officially launched the ID Card in 2017.



Introducing card holder #10,000

We're delighted to celebrate the 10,000th Brain Injury Identity Card, which was issued on 1st July 2022 to Headway Worcestershire member Doralida Williams, who is already feeling a boost in confidence when out and about.

We spoke to her about life with a brain injury and the difference the card has made...

"In November 2015 I had just finished working at a 10-pin bowling facility in Worcester, where I'd been for 10 years as a bar person and cook.

"My new job awaited me, but on that Sunday I experienced a stroke which led to me being in hospital for 15 weeks, mostly spent in a coma."

Doralida received incredible help from her partner who she describes as a 'guardian angel', but he then experienced a heart attack in 2017. It was at this point that she saw an advert for her local Headway group.

She explained: "I visited to see what it would involve, and really liked the place and the people. I now attend on one full day a week.

"The stroke affected the left-hand side of my body, my sight and my memory. I found my speech had become a little fast and mumbled."

In the years that followed the stroke, Doralida encountered a range of difficulties and misunderstandings while out and about, hitting her confidence and making it more difficult to engage with society.

When she found out about the Brain Injury Identity Card, Doralida made an application with support from the team at Headway Worcestershire.

"I always carry my card with me now whenever I visit the shops or go to the theatre at weekends," said Doralida.

"It is very comforting to know that I have it with me should I need to explain to anyone why I might be a bit slow or forgetful."

"To anyone who might be struggling with the effects of their brain injury I'd say without a doubt, apply for the Brain Injury Identity Card."



A support worker's perspective

Samantha Ashcroft started attending Headway Blackpool in 2000 when she began caring for her best friend, who sustained a severe brain injury following a road traffic accident. Her friend sadly passed away, but Samantha continued to volunteer until a permanent job became available developing the service.

A highly respected and integral member of the team, Samantha now also works as Network Coordinator at Headway Salford.

Since its inception, Samantha has supported countless people to apply for a Brain Injury Identity Card. Here, she speaks to us about the need for the card and the positive changes she sees in people who have it...

"Most of my group don't socialise outside of Headway," said Samantha. "They say that people just don't understand how difficult it is to live with a hidden disability.

"Many of them battle with fatigue, and when they have multiple tasks to do it can have a knock-on effect for days afterwards, causing some of them to become emotionally distressed and anxious.



"One lady uses a walker when she's tired, but chooses not to when she goes out with her 25-year-old friends and is often refused entry when she is mistaken for being drunk. Having the ID Card helps to explain about her brain injury and makes a huge difference.

"We also supported a man who split from his long-term partner and was arrested when he continued to send her cards and flowers. He used his card in the custody suite, and was assigned an appropriate adult who supported him all the way through the process.

"When the police called to talk about the card, they requested posters and information to help officers who are not aware of it, and this is now being incorporated into their training in the North West.

"I'd encourage anyone who needs it to apply for the card straight away. My members say that it gives them the confidence to know that if they show their card, they won't get questioned about their brain injury."

‘Rehabilitation rather than incarceration’

The Brain Injury Identity Card is part of our Justice Project, a project aiming to tackle the shocking over-representation of brain injury within the criminal justice system by providing training to a wide range of professionals including prison and probation staff and police services.

In addition, the project provides vital support to vulnerable brain injury survivors caught up in the criminal justice system. By calling the freephone criminal legal assistance number on the front of the cards, survivors gain access to specialist criminal legal support from our partners, Thompsons Solicitors.

We asked Paul Shevlin from the social justice law firm to explain how the service works and to highlight some of the interventions made on behalf of vulnerable adults.

“At Thompsons Solicitors, we have been partners in the Justice Project since its inception, providing brain injury survivors with access to specialist legal advice and representation,” said Paul.

“We manage the 24/7 legal helpline, which gives the cardholder access to legal advice and representation 365 days a year if they find themselves in contact with the criminal justice system.

“The helpline has seen a steady increase in calls year-on-year since it began, topping nearly 850 calls in the past two years alone.

“A report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, published in April 2020 led to an inquiry into the treatment of disabled defendants – including those with neurodiverse needs – by the criminal justice system.

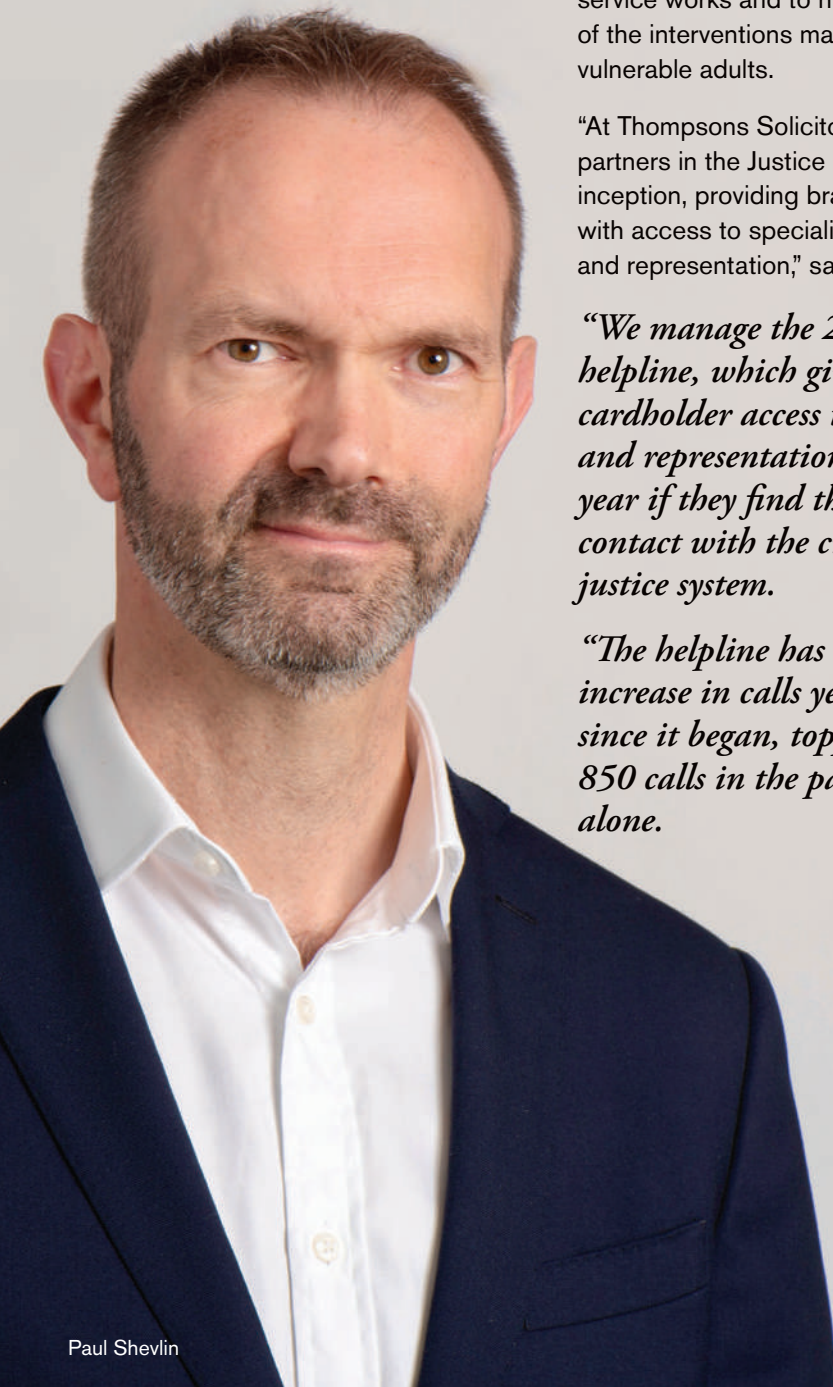
Daniel’s story

Daniel sustained a traumatic brain injury following a motorcycle accident and as a result has memory loss, speech difficulties and disinhibited behaviour. He was charged with sexual assault but had no memory of the offence.

Each time he attended court, Daniel could not remember the reason he was there. He received support from Thompsons Solicitors, Headway’s partners on the Justice Project.

A neuropsychological report was sought highlighting the impact of Daniel’s brain injury and the court found he was unfit to plead. Evidence, however, showed that Daniel had committed the act.

Thompsons liaised with probation and social services to devise a supervision plan requiring Daniel to attend his local Headway group to continue to receive support with his challenging and inappropriate behaviour.



Paul Shevlin

"It flagged that legal professionals often rely on defendants disclosing information about their injuries as part of the legal process which, in reality, is something many brain injury survivors are not comfortable or capable of doing.

"Having a Brain Injury Identity Card helps mitigate some of these concerns, but identification at the first point of contact with the criminal justice system is only the first challenge.

"In October 2020, the Sentencing Council published guidance for magistrates and judges on sentencing offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders and neurologic impairments.

"Headway took part in the consultation, highlighting the importance of including acquired brain injury into the process. That intervention proved effective with the new guidance stipulating that such impairments and disorders must be considered by the court, even though they may not necessarily impact on sentencing.

"However, Headway's work didn't stop there and its training of probation staff with responsibility for drafting pre-sentence reports is already proving effective and will no doubt ensure the outcome for many vulnerable survivors will be rehabilitation rather than incarceration.

"Indeed, this is already happening. A recent case in which we supported a brain injury survivor led to the court granting a supervision order, with the survivor attending a Headway group as an alternative to a custodial sentence.

"It is progress when the criminal justice system acknowledges the benefits of a more holistic approach to the rehabilitation of those with brain injury who have found themselves in difficulty with the law.

"While our job is, where possible and appropriate, to divert people away from criminal justice system we of course



Christopher's story

Christopher sustained a traumatic brain injury following a violent assault resulting in executive functioning deficits, memory problems and communication difficulties. Christopher faced serious charges of possession and intent to supply class A drugs, and was represented by Thompsons Solicitors.

It emerged that Christopher had been subject to exploitation and drug dealers had been using his home as a drug distribution point, an offence described as 'cuckooing'. It became apparent that he was not fit to plead or participate in providing evidence in relation to his exploitation as a result

of the cognitive impact of his brain injury.

Thompsons obtained a report from a neuropsychologist as well as ongoing support through the survivor's local Headway group, and were successful in persuading the Crown Prosecution Service not to proceed with the prosecution.

It was agreed that prosecution of this very vulnerable adult would not be in the public interest, and would be prejudicial and unfair given his inability to participate fully at trial due to the cognitive impact of his brain injury.

understand that a person who commits a crime will face consequences.

"Prison however is very often not the answer, and it can be a particularly dangerous place for those with brain injuries, so novel approaches are needed.

"Of course, avoiding a case reaching the courts in the first place is the best outcome for our clients. Currently, we are supporting a client who was arrested by the police on suspicion of drug dealing.

"Thanks to our intervention and due to his brain injury card, the police are

now treating him as a vulnerable adult manipulated by others and they are looking for those who took advantage of our client's vulnerability.

"Without his brain injury card, the call would not have been made to Thompsons Solicitors, and the end result might have been very different.

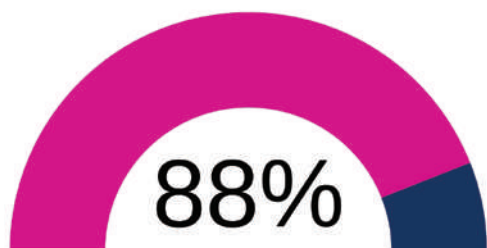
"Thanks to The Justice Project, these instances are becoming more commonplace and resulting in more just and better thought through outcomes for all."

BRAIN INJURY IDENTITY CARD:

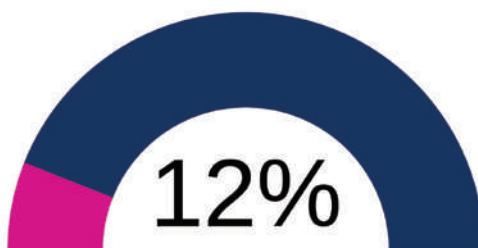
Your questions answered!



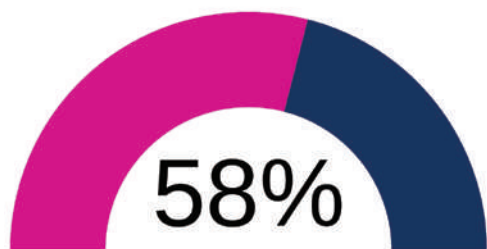
The first ID Card was issued in April 2016 during a pilot of the scheme



88%
of people have used
their Brain Injury
Identity Card



12%
have used their card
when in contact with
the police



58%
have used their card
in everyday
social scenarios



85%
said when they used
their card it has
been helpful



The 10,000th card was issued to Doralida Williams on 1st July 2022

The complexities of brain injury can make it difficult for people to ask for support.

Carrying an official Headway Brain Injury Identity Card can provide you with the confidence to know that if you need help, your needs can be easily identified, whether in social situations or if you come into contact with police officers or other emergency services.

The card is free-of-charge and available to anyone aged 18+ who is living with the effects of a brain injury.

What information do I need to apply?

The application form asks a series of questions about the person with a brain injury including contact details, the cause of brain injury and the long-term effects that are experienced.

You can save your progress if you don't have everything to hand or need time to think, but you might want to prepare:

- Contact details of the card holder (and the person applying on their behalf if applicable)
- A digital photograph
- Evidence of the brain injury – this could be a scan/photo of a letter from a clinical professional or Headway group or branch that confirms the diagnosis
- If no evidence is available, we'll need contact details of your GP
- Details of the cause and ongoing effects of your brain injury

It might also be helpful to think about the four effects of your brain injury that cause most difficulty while out and about, as you will be asked to choose which appear on the front of your card.

What happens after I apply?

As soon as you submit your application form it's over to us to start processing your application. We'll look at all the information you have sent us and if you qualify, print and post your card.

Because of the number of applications we receive it can take a few weeks to get your card sent out. If we need to check things with your GP it can take significantly longer, so it's always best to send your evidence to us if possible.

If we have any further questions we'll contact you, but you can always get in touch on justiceproject@headway.org.uk if you have any queries or would like to submit any new information.

Why does Headway ask for evidence of my brain injury and why do you need a photo of me?

We work hard to ensure that the Brain Injury Identity Card is recognised as widely as possible, including by the police and JobCentre Plus staff.

In order to do this, it's important that each card is personalised and issued to people with a verified brain injury. Seeking evidence of the brain injury ensures it's as helpful and respected as possible, meaning that card holders can receive better support.

I've lost my card... What do I do?

No problem! We can send you a new one free-of-charge.

Please email us on justiceproject@headway.org.uk or call us on **0115 924 0800** to arrange this.

How do I apply for a Brain Injury ID Card?

Simply visit headway.org.uk/idcard to find out more and start your application. You can use our online application form or download a printable version from this page.

If you need any extra support to apply, please get in touch with your local Headway or contact us on justiceproject@headway.org.uk or **0115 924 0800**.



Brain Injury Identity Card

 **My name is: Ben Parsons**

I have a brain injury and as a result:

- I have communication difficulties
- I find it difficult making decisions
- I have balance difficulties
- I can get confused

For 24 hour criminal legal assistance, please call:

 **0800 140 4031** 



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Visual problems: A closer look

The eyes are known as our windows to the world, but we need more than just our eyes to make sense of the colours, shapes and movement taking place all around us every day. Our brains are a vital part of this skill, processing the complex signals received from the eyes and interpreting them so that we can 'see'.

When the brain is injured, a number of visual problems can occur. This does not simply mean someone 'cannot see' after their injury. In fact, complete blindness after brain injury is quite rare. Rather, there are a number of different types of visual problems affecting the quantity and interpretation of our perceived world.

Here, we take a look at some of the different types of visual problems that can occur after brain injury.

Types of visual problems

VISUAL ACUITY LOSS

Visual acuity refers to how clear the visual information is. When visual acuity is affected, it can result in blurred vision. Some people also report having blurred vision when they feel fatigued.

VISUAL FIELD LOSS

The visual field is the full area that can be seen by the eyes when they are held still. After a brain injury, visual field loss can cause fuzzy or black patches of space in the visual field. Vision may be affected around the edges, towards the centre, or on entire halves or quarters of the visual fields.

DOUBLE VISION

Also known as diplopia, double vision causes two images of a single object to be seen at the same time.

NYSTAGMUS

This is a condition in which the eyes rhythmically shake, which can subsequently affect the quality of information received by the brain and cause issues such as vertigo or nausea.

VISUAL AGNOSIA

Damage to parts of the brain responsible for recognising objects can cause visual agnosia – apperceptive agnosia causes problems with processing basic perceptual aspects of an object such as colour and shape. Associative agnosia causes problems with giving meaning to this information to recognise an object.

VISUAL NEGLECT

Sometimes referred to as 'hemineglect' or simply 'neglect', this causes a person to have difficulties with attending to visual information on one of their sides, although if they are reminded to turn to look at that side, they can actually see it. While visual neglect is, strictly speaking, more of a problem with attention than vision, it can be misinterpreted as a visual problem unless careful observation or testing is done.

PHOTOPHOBIA

An increased sensitivity to light, to the point where it causes discomfort or pain, is known as photophobia. In some cases this sensitivity might be to a particular type of light.

COLOUR VISION CHANGES

After a brain injury, some people may perceive colours differently – colours may appear to be washed out or different shades from those seen prior to the injury.

STEREOPSIS

Depth perception, known as stereopsis, can be affected after a brain injury, causing difficulties with judging the distance between objects or assessing how far away something is.

AKINETOPSIA

The ability to process the movement of objects can be affected by brain injury, causing things that are moving smoothly to appear as static moving images instead.



Top tips for coping with visual problems

The following tips are only general coping tips and do not replace clinical guidance. You should always follow any advice given by your neurologist or other medical professional.

CONSIDER HOW AN OPTICIAN CAN HELP

Less complex visual problems such as double vision can sometimes be corrected with the use of adjusted glasses or contact lenses, so an optician may be able to help with these.

EXPLORE ADAPTED TECHNOLOGY

Adapted technology or accessible settings can make it more comfortable for you to use devices such as mobile phones and computers. For instance, many devices come with settings that can make the screen brighter, change to larger text or make colours more contrasted. You could use software such as a screen reader that reads text out loud.

LARGER FEATURES

Use items with bigger features, such as clocks with large numbers or books and screens with large text. Some items such as telephones and remote controls are also available with larger buttons.

KEEP AREAS CLUTTER-FREE

Keep walkways around the house or elsewhere clutter-free where possible to minimise the risk of tripping.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Take things at a slower pace where you can, especially if you have issues such as dizziness in addition to visual problems. This can include walking, reading or moving more slowly, or taking more time to think about things before doing them.

USE VISUAL PROMPTS

Visual prompts can help with some types of visual problems. For example, reminding people with visual neglect to turn their attention towards the neglected side of space can sometimes help. You could also explore using colourful ribbons, highlighters or stickers as visual prompts.

CONSIDER REGISTERING AS VISUALLY IMPAIRED

If your vision is affected to the point where you are struggling to cope on a day-to-day basis, consider whether it would be helpful to register as visually impaired. An ophthalmologist can assess whether you would be eligible to register as either Sight Impaired or Severely Sight Impaired, depending on the severity of your visual issues. Registering as visually impaired makes your GP and local social services team aware of your visual problems, which can help with accessing appropriate support.

It is important to seek professional support for the effects of brain injury. For information on professionals that can help with visual problems after brain injury and further helpful tips, see Headway's factsheet *Visual problems after brain injury*. You can scan the QR code or visit **headway.org.uk/information-library** to download it now.

Contact our helpline on **0808 800 2244** or **helpline@headway.org.uk**

to talk through your concerns about visual effects and get further information and support.



SCAN ME!

Where there's a WILL...

We all know about the importance of making a Will to ensure our wishes are known after death, but it's so often a job that people keep putting off 'until tomorrow'.

Added to that, there is generally very little awareness of Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) and their importance in making critical decisions when life-changing events such as a brain injury occur.

Assumptions are often made by brain injury survivors and their families around what can and cannot be done from a legal point of view.

Here, Christine Thornley, a Partner on the Tax, Trusts and Estates Team at Irwin Mitchell LLP, answers some frequently asked questions about Wills and LPAs after brain injury.





What legal documents are important?

Everybody, whether they have a brain injury or not, should think about making a Will and Lasting Powers of Attorney.

A Will deals with the distribution of assets on death and Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) ensure that there is someone you trust to make decision about your finances and health if you can't make those decisions yourself.

These documents could prove critical for someone with a brain injury.



Do I need to tell my solicitor about my brain injury?

Yes. If you let your solicitor know about your brain injury they will be able to put all the possible protection mechanisms in place. This will ensure, as much as possible, that your documents won't be challenged and, if they are, there is evidence generated at the relevant time to prevent your documents being declared invalid.



Is it possible to make a Will and Lasting Power of Attorney when you have a brain injury?

It very much depends on the injury and the impact that it has had.

The tests for capacity are slightly different for a Will and LPA but having a brain injury does not automatically mean that a person lacks capacity. Capacity is decided on a case-by-case basis, based on the decision being made at that specific time.

When someone has a brain injury capacity is not always easy to determine. If this is the case a medical practitioner needs to be asked for their professional view. If you are making an LPA the document involves a capacity assessment in any event.



How important is a medical opinion?

A Will and/or LPA can be challenged if the person who made it did not have the necessary capacity at the time and this could lead to a Will or LPA being declared invalid.

If an LPA is declared invalid, it could mean the person would be left with no one appointed to make decisions for them while an application to the Court of Protection is being made. This could be very stressful for all involved, not to mention incredibly costly if it were contested.

A claim that a Will was invalid for lack of capacity would only be made once the person had died. If this happened, historic medical records would have to be used to determine capacity and it is much more difficult dealing with this than when the Will is being made. Any challenge against a Will can also be incredibly expensive.

Taking the next steps...

Why not start today! If you'd like to start the process of writing your Will, Headway can help. Visit headway.org.uk/leave-a-legacy to find out about our easy, low-cost Will-writing service.

Many firms on the Headway Solicitors List can help with Wills and LPAs, so simply visit headway.org.uk/legal-advice to find a firm near you.

You might find Headway's information on supporting people to make decisions after brain injury helpful. To find out more, visit headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury/individuals/caring/supporting-people-to-make-decisions, or alternatively contact our helpline on **0808 800 2244** or helpline@headway.org.uk.

HEADWAY CHRISTMAS CARDS 2022

Support Headway this
Christmas and improve life
after brain injury



the brain injury association

CHRISTMAS CARDS

All cards sold in packs of 10.

£3.50
per pack!

**Bolt
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Kemp**

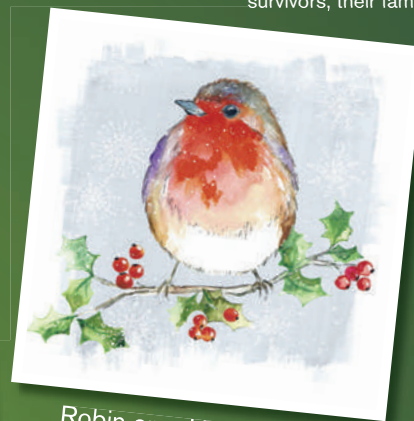
These cards are kindly sponsored by specialist brain injury solicitors Bolt Burdon Kemp, so all proceeds will go directly to supporting brain injury survivors, their families and carers.



Bright Snowman



Bright Silent Night



Robin on a Holly Branch



Ribboned Tree



Peace Dove



Floral Bauble



Colourful Text



Santa and Snowman Friend

HOW TO ORDER

- Visit shop.headway.org.uk or scan the QR code to order online
- Call **0115 924 0800** to make an order over the phone

You can also contact the team on fundraising.admin@headway.org.uk if you have any questions or would like us to send you a printed order form.



SCAN ME!

TOGETHER, WE GO FURTHER

Traumatic brain injuries have life changing implications for you and your family. Quality care, treatment and rehabilitation are essential to ensure that you make the best possible recovery and you and your family feel supported.

If your injury or that of a family member was caused by an incident which wasn't your fault, or was only partially your fault, or due to an assault, you are entitled to make a claim for compensation.

To find out if you have a claim, it is important to speak with a friendly law firm that can provide you with expertise and experience in this complex and specialist area. Our experienced solicitors can arrange the best possible care and treatment to help you regain your independence.

We can advise you on the following:

- the Hugh James Emergency Fund and how it can assist you and your family
- obtaining private rehabilitation
- interim payments
- welfare benefits and emergency funding
- employment concerns
- charities that can assist you
- Wills, Trusts and Power of Attorney and Court of Protection matters
- dealing with your mortgage, credit card and loan providers following a brain injury
- investigating any potential insurance cover that may benefit you
- social services and local authority funding for care and equipment

We have supported Headway for over 30 years with members of the firm being trustees of both Headway UK and local groups.

Contact us today

neuro@hughjames.com

0808 501 7069

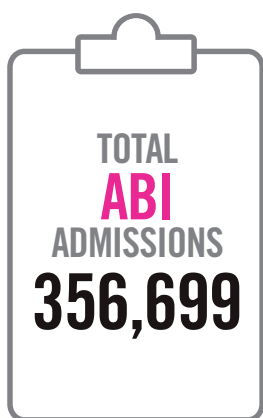


Headway updates ABI hospital admission statistics

Updated hospital admission statistics from 2019-20 highlight that there is still one admission to hospital for brain injury every 90 seconds, one head injury every three minutes and one stroke every four minutes in the UK.

Alarming, head injuries among females have continued to rise, with an increase of 28% in hospital admissions among females since 2005-06. Strokes in males have increased by 24%, while total strokes have increased by 14% since 2005-06. All ABIs have increased by 12% since 2005-06, with there being 356,699 admissions to hospital in 2019-20.

The increase in hospital admissions for brain injuries provides an up-to-date picture of the scale of the problem and further reinforces a continuing need for appropriate support services. Many of those admitted to hospital with a brain injury related primary diagnosis will experience long-term difficulties and require some form of rehabilitation and support.



EVERY 90 SECONDS
someone in the UK is admitted
to hospital with an **ABI**



EVERY 3 MINUTES
someone in the UK is admitted
to hospital with a **HEAD INJURY**



EVERY 4 MINUTES
someone in the UK is admitted
to hospital with a **STROKE**



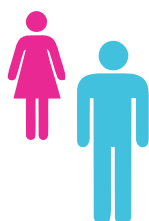
**HEAD INJURIES
UP 3%**

**STROKES
UP 14%**

**ALL ABIs
UP 12%**



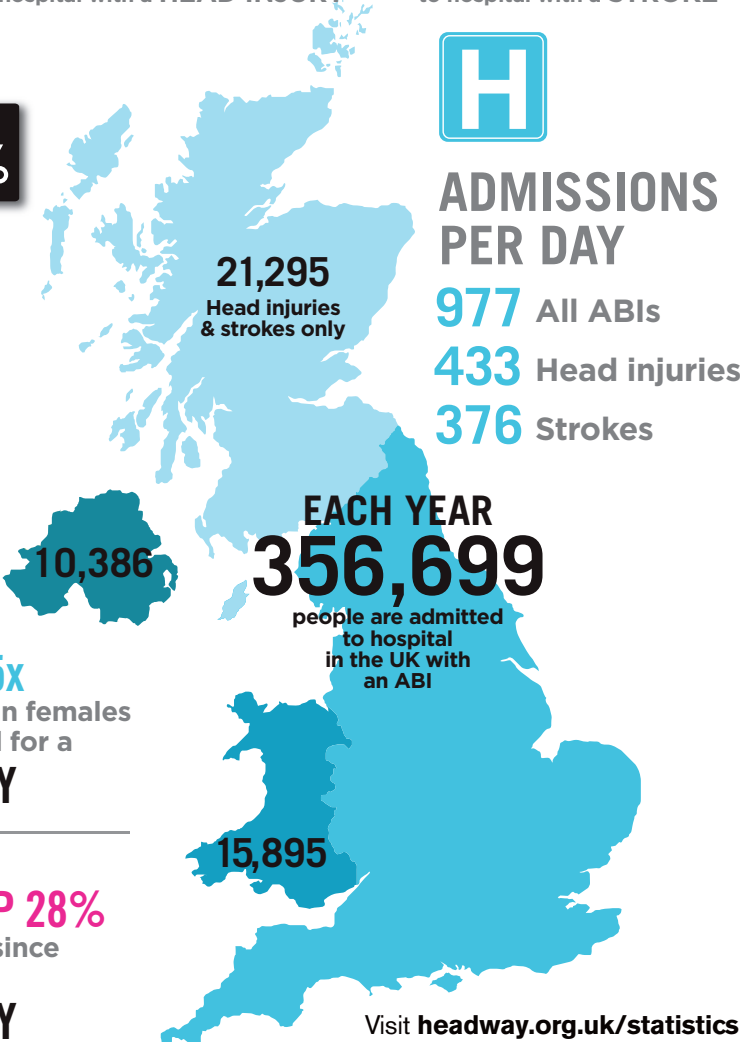
SINCE 2005-6



MALES = 1.5x
more likely than females
to be admitted for a
HEAD INJURY



FEMALES UP 28%
in admissions since
2005-6 for a
HEAD INJURY



Visit [headway.org.uk/statistics](https://www.headway.org.uk/statistics)
to explore the stats.

“YOU CAN’T TURN BACK TIME”



Proud Raj graduated with a Criminology degree

Raj Gataora was 21 years old and working in a pub to make money to help fund himself through university.

One night, at around 11.30pm, Raj’s life changed completely. He was driving home from a shift through terrible weather conditions when a deer ran in front of his car, causing him to swerve and crash.

After the crash, Raj’s parents were told that he had sustained a brain injury.

“Life has been very challenging to be honest with you. Doctors told my parents that I wouldn’t eat, I wouldn’t drink, I wouldn’t breathe by myself. But look at me now – I’m doing all those things.”

However, Raj was angry and initially found it extremely difficult to come to terms with the huge changes he now faced.

“Firstly, I was angry with any old Dick or Harry. And I overcame it by just ignoring the situation and just getting on with it. That is all you can do.

“I said to myself, uh-uh. I’m not going to do this for the rest of my life, waking up doing nothing with my life. So I decided to go back to education and prove everyone wrong.

“I knew it would be a lot of work and it was a lot of work. But I got through it and eventually I got into Nottingham Trent University to do Criminology.

“Graduation was epic! When I went up to collect my degree my name was called out... My support worker helped me, and I walked over and received my degree.

“The whole audience in the concert hall were clapping until I sat down. It was such a fantastic feeling – really amazing for me.”



Raj knows how lucky he was to be to be supported and spurred on in all his efforts by his family.

“Luckily for me I have an extremely strong family which I so appreciated – and I love them with all my heart. All of us just got on with life – that is all you can do.”

In the years immediately after his brain injury, Raj found it difficult to meet friends and enjoy activities in the way that he used to. However, he started going along to Headway Nottingham, where he gained the confidence to meet new people and talk with others who had also sustained life-changing brain injuries.

Through Headway, he met people on the same wavelength who he describes as like a family to him. Raj now leads a full life, and enjoys rock climbing, going to the gym and socialising with friends over a coffee.

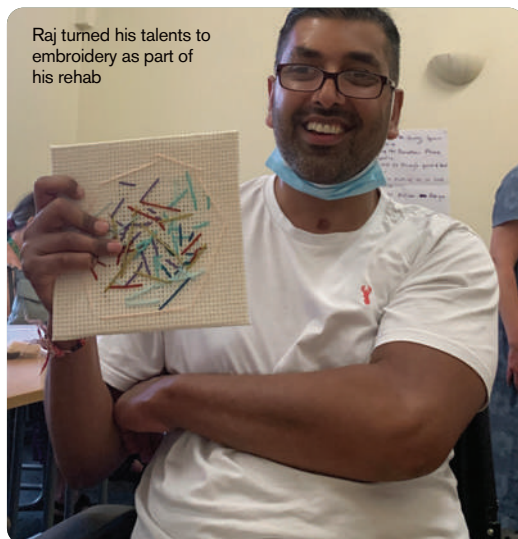
“I’ve been coming to Headway for about two to three years, I believe. We’re like a family and in that family we’re all like-minded people.

“I just feel comfortable when I’m here, and if you’re scared or petrified of going and meeting new people – trust me, I was. But now, fear, pah. No fear at all and it was all worth it.”

Raj’s attitude has helped him to make amazing progress and find enjoyment and fulfilment in new activities and new friends.

“Don’t sulk about it, just get on with it. What’s happened has happened – you can’t turn back time. That is my motto.

“Then you can say to the people who doubted you – ‘I told you so!’”



Inside your incredible brain

In this edition, we will look at the brain's 'window to the world', the **occipital lobes**...

Basic facts

The occipital lobes are located right at the back of the brain (known as the 'posterior' of the brain), behind the temporal and parietal lobes. As with all lobes, there are two occipital lobes, one on either side of the brain. The occipital lobes are the smallest of the four lobes of the brain.

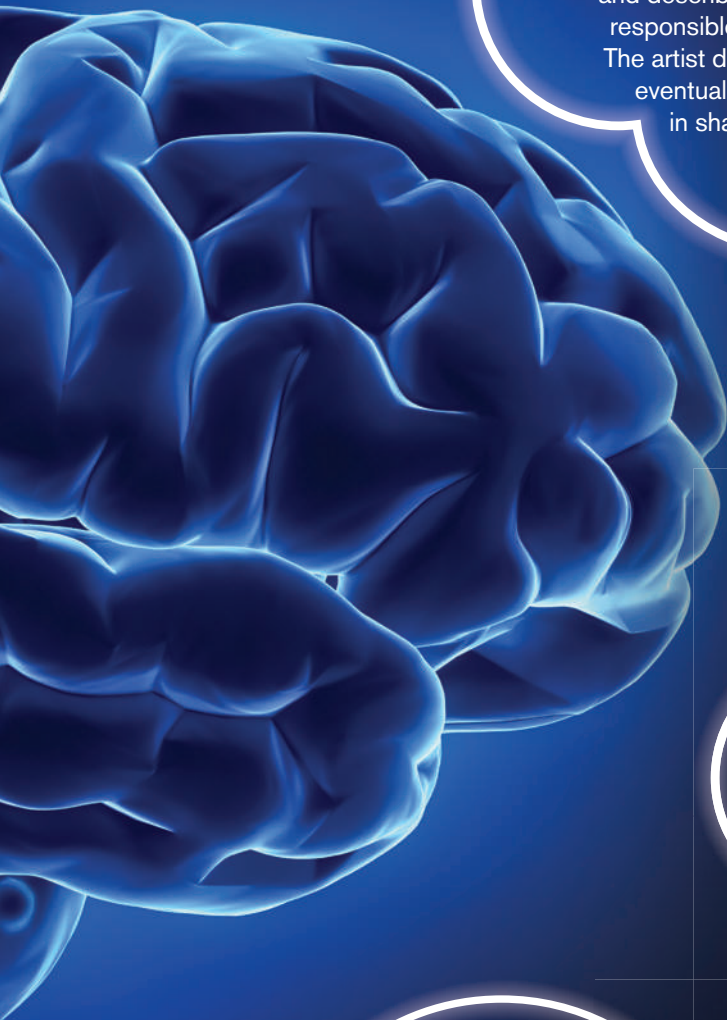
Visual cortex

The primary visual cortex is a part of the occipital lobe that receives information from the retina. It is also known as Brodmann Area 17, based on a common mapping system used for the brain. The secondary visual cortex receives signals from the primary visual cortex and is known as Brodmann Areas 18 and 19.

The visual pathway

The term 'visual pathway' refers to the full set of structures and processes that take place to carry information received from the eye to the brain. The visual pathway starts with light entering the eye, where a part of the eye called the retinas convert light into electrical impulses. These travel along the optic nerve, cross a point called the optic chiasm and travel through the thalamus, eventually reaching the occipital lobe at the back.





The case of the colourblind painter

The famous late neurologist Dr Oliver Sacks wrote about the rare case of an artist who became completely colourblind following a brain injury, being able to subsequently only see varying shades of grey and describing everything as “leaden”. The parts of the occipital lobe responsible for processing colour is in the secondary visual cortex. The artist described was devastated by his loss of colour vision and eventually went on to creating displays and exhibitions entirely in shades of grey to allow people to understand how he viewed the world.

History

The suggestion that there is a distinct part of the brain responsible for processing vision was first made as far back as 1884. The area now known as the occipital lobe was first linked to visual processing in 1855, following the observation of stroke survivors and soldiers with bullet wounds to this area who became blind. Experimental work involving shining bars of lights into cats’ and monkeys’ eyes in the 1950s further advanced our understanding of this region of the brain.

Interconnected

The occipital lobe is well connected with other parts of the brain. Information relating to object recognition (such as recognising faces, objects) is first processed in the occipital lobe and then transmitted to the temporal lobe through a pathway called the ventral stream, where meaning is given to the information processed by the occipital lobe, such as colour, form etc. Information relating to object orientation, shape or movement is first processed in the occipital lobe and then transmitted to the parietal lobe through the dorsal stream.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Theresa Malcom shares her brain injury story and some of the inspiring artwork she created in the Submit to Love Studio at Headway East London.

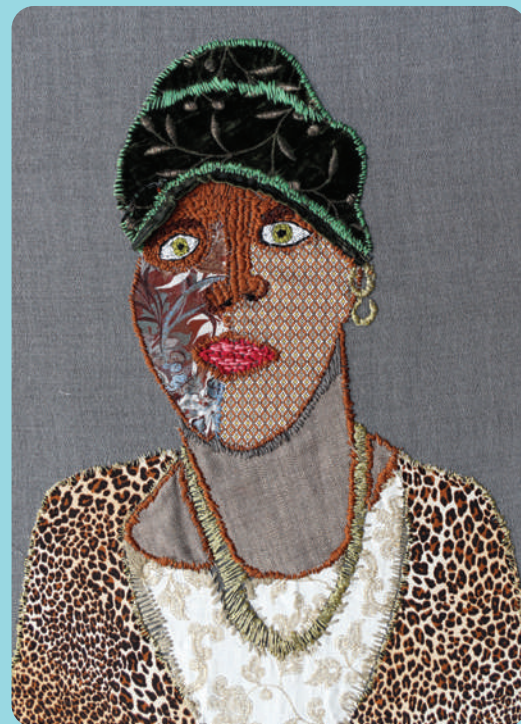
"Before my accident I was just about to start a job as a healthcare assistant at a children's hospital. Before that I was mother to my two children. One of them had cerebral palsy. We were broke but living a good life.

"My injury started in 2004. I went to the Citizens Advice Bureau because my oldest son wanted to move out. I was talking to the woman who told me I wouldn't be able to get any help with this and when I went to leave, I collapsed.

"Later I woke in the hospital, and found I'd had a head operation. I can't remember anything during my time at hospital. I think I had a stroke but there were other things wrong with me.

"I draw pictures and paint. I started on paper and card but have now moved onto canvas. I have done needlework and pottery. We can just do everything in the studio. I just finished a painted portrait of my son and his new wife as a wedding present.

"A lot of the time I forget what I have made but when I see it again, I remember. I am glad that it helps me, I enjoy it. It makes me feel like I am doing something.



"I never did art before my brain injury. The closest I got to a hobby was knitting jumpers for my kids. Ask me how to knit now and I couldn't tell you!"



Find out more about the Submit to Love studios and browse some of the amazing members' artwork at submittolovestudios.org



Leading Personal Injury and Medical Negligence Lawyers



Boyes Turner is proud to be an active supporter of Headway. Kim Milan, head of our Personal Injury team, is a Trustee of Headway Thames Valley.

Our specialist lawyers and brain injury support team have the knowledge, experience and commitment to ensure that you and your loved ones get the result you deserve and the support you need. We are more than happy to visit you in hospital or at home at times that suit you. We provide national coverage.

A special thank you to my lawyer Kim. Her input has changed everything for me. She has given my life a level of security and stability that I never thought I was capable of achieving post-accident.

Jessica Stevens

Contact Kim Milan on
0118 952 7137 or
claimsadvice@boyesturner.com
boyesturnerclaims.com

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Putting your life back on track

It's what we do



Prince Evans LLP is a specialist brain injury practice that focuses upon representing the interests of our clients and their families to the full.

We are understanding and knowledgeable of the multiple complexities that are experienced by all when a loved one is affected by brain injury.

We provide a free nationwide no obligation consultation to discuss respective claims and where our expertise can assist; including with potential interim payments, rehabilitation and case management and support. We offer no win, no fee funding.



For more information on how we can help, contact
Gary Smith, Head of Personal Injuries

Call free on 0800 019 0991

Email: gary.smith@prince-evans.co.uk

Gary Smith is a member of Headway – the brain injury association's Personal Injury Solicitors list



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