

Spring 2023

Headway News



The magazine of Headway - the brain injury association

*“There is
light at the
end of the
tunnel”*

Exploring
post-traumatic
growth
p10



**Finding your
superpower**

Page 12 - 13



**Don't need it?
Donate it!**

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**Don't get bitten
by the sharks**

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We're expanding our Headway Training Programme for 2023!



An introduction to brain injury

A session exploring the effects of brain injury, designed for family members and professionals new to the world of brain injury.

Understanding acquired brain injury

A session designed for care professionals working with brain injury survivors and looking at the cognitive and behavioural difficulties following brain injury and some strategies that can be used.

Understanding MY brain injury

A 40 minutes session about the hidden effects of brain injury and the rehabilitation journey: created for brain injury survivors and delivered by a brain injury survivor!

Behaviours that challenge

A session looking at the leading models explaining behaviours that challenge and some strategies to implement.

Mindfulness and breathing strategies

A practical session aiming to learn more about mindfulness and breathing exercises for family members, brain injury survivors and carers.

Solicitors training

Our new programme for solicitors covers hidden disability and the ripple effects on brain injury survivors and their family members. We review relevant brain anatomy and the associated cognitive, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

For further information visit: headway.org.uk/training



STANDING UP FOR YOU

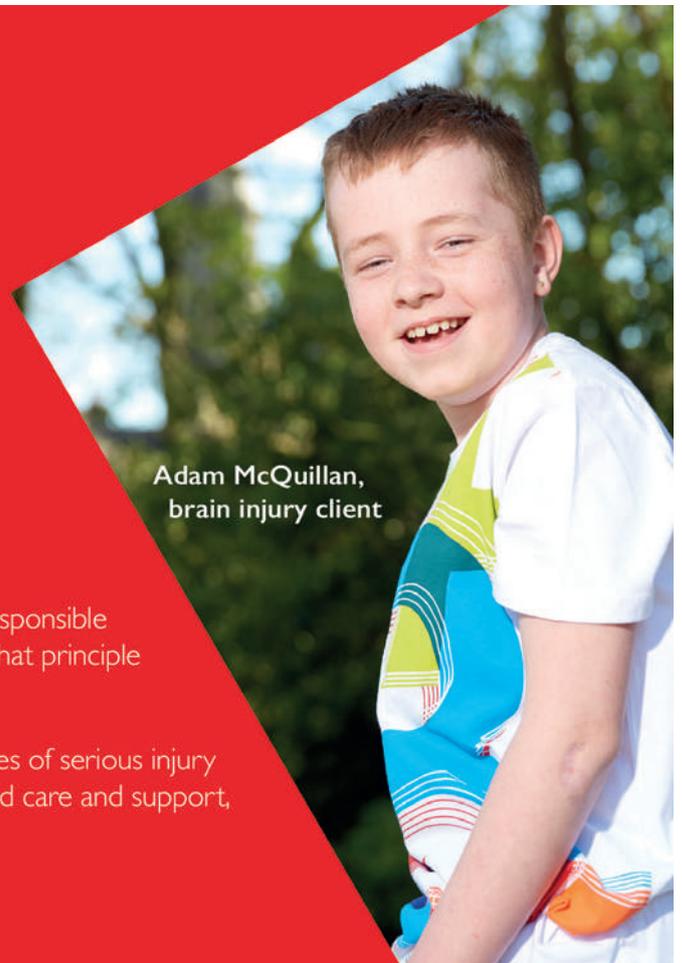


Our legal specialists are uniquely on your side

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.

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Adam McQuillan,
brain injury client

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Welcome

Welcome to the Spring edition of Headway News.



This is our first edition of 2023 and, as such, it got us wondering how many New Year's resolutions are still intact?

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority fall by the wayside by the end of January, but what is it that makes us set these resolutions in the first place? Even if there are slim odds of them being kept?

I guess New Year's offers us a clean slate, and by aspiring to a goal we are attempting to gain a sense of self control and a chance to feel better about ourselves.

Often, sustaining a brain injury can require people to rebuild their lives from scratch, with survivors often referring to life 'before' and 'after'. While it's not easy to gain control and feel positive after a brain injury, on page 10 we meet survivors who have adapted to their new lives and found skills and passions for something surprising and unexpected.

This is an example of post-traumatic growth, which we explore on pages 12 and 13. For it to be most effective, post-traumatic growth requires people to identify things that are most important to them and give meaning to their life.

This is good advice whatever your circumstances, and it is something our new Chief Executive Luke Griggs did around 15 years ago, thus starting his Headway career which you can read about on page 17.

Finally, we have an important appeal for donations to our Headway shops on page 20. We have seen a drop in donations over the last six months which isn't surprising given the cost-of-living crisis. Whilst more people have visited our charity shops, we have seen a drop in donations which impacts the money we raise. Money that pays for essential services such as our nurse led helpline, the Emergency Fund, the Headway Brain Injury Identity Card and so much more. We do need your help, so if you are having a clear out or if you think your place of work could host one of our clothing banks then we would love to hear from you.

I hope you enjoy the magazine.

Colin Morris
Director of Communications



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:
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Essential contacts

Headway office:

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

Telephone:

0115 924 0800
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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:

community@headway.org.uk

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Your views

We asked our 12 finalists to summarise their Headway Awards experience in three words...

1. Fantastic
2. Amazing
3. Facilitator of friendships

Dudley Garner

1. Overwhelming
2. Inspiring
3. Proud

Chris Case

1. Overwhelming(ly)
2. Brilliant (and)
3. Inspirational

Mark Kennedy

1. Totally
2. Emotional
3. Yeah!

Dean Harding

1. Wholesome
2. Potential
3. Realized

Iain Henderson

1. Oh
2. My
3. God

Michelle Kelly

1. Amazing
2. Inspirational
3. Proud

Michael Condon

1. Welcoming
2. Community
3. Inspiring

Mark Ewart

1. Wow
2. For
3. Real?

Peter McDaid

1. Overwhelming
2. Wonderful
3. Happy

Richard Cardy

1. What
2. A
3. Day!

Dee Blackwell

Read all about the glittering Headway Awards on page 26!

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

News of Headway's ongoing work to improve life after brain injury

New webinar series to explore brain injury in depth



A new year means a new line-up of events to fill up your diaries, and at Headway we're delighted to announce the launch of our new series of webinars taking place across 2023!

We will be delivering bitesize, half-hour sessions each month via Zoom on a range of topics featuring expert guest speakers. The series will begin on Thursday 23rd March 2023 with a talk from Dr Alyson Norman, Associate

Professor of Psychology, who will be discussing the crisis of social care and slipping through the gaps.

There will be opportunities to ask questions towards the end of each webinar, and the series will be recorded for people to playback if they are unable to attend.

We will be regularly updating our brand new events website page with further details of upcoming webinars as they are announced, so head over to www.headway.org.uk/training to find out more and book yourself on!

Football lawmakers reject trials of temporary concussion subs

Despite support from The Premier League, the Football Association and the world players union FIFPRO, the International Football Association Board (IFAB) have decided against a trial of temporary concussion substitutes.

Head to page 28 to read more about the issue and our plans to continue campaigning for this important change.

Focus on hidden disability at the Wales Virtual Conference

Our Headway in Wales annual virtual conference took place on 17th November 2022. The focus of the conference was on living with a hidden disability, a topic that resonates strongly with many brain injury survivors, as we found in our 2022 Action for Brain Injury Week campaign *See the hidden me*.

The conference was attended by an incredible 130 people, comprising brain injury survivors, carers, Headway group and branch staff and professionals. It was kept to a short half-day so that

survivors with fatigue, headaches or other effects of brain injury were not spending unnecessarily lengthy periods of time looking at a computer screen.

Delegates heard a powerful testimony from brain injury survivor Lynsey Blane, with input from Principle Clinical Psychologist Dr Christopher Byrne, on understanding the hidden world of brain injury. Headway's Publications and Research Manager Tamsin Keyes discussed findings from the charity's ABI Week *See the hidden me* survey.

From the perspective of a carer, Pat Griffiths, who is also Chair of Headway South Gwynedd, talked about the hidden challenges of being a carer along with Dr Sophie Perry, Principal Clinical

Psychologist. And finally, Ammaarah Siddique, PhD student at the University of Bolton shared what academia has taught her about brain injury.

A recording of the conference is available - contact our Network Support Coordinator Ffion Jones at ffion.jones@headway.org.uk to find out more.

The conference was kindly sponsored by Slater and Gordon Lawyers, who we extend our thanks to.

After a successful conference in 2022, we look forward to keeping you updated on our plans for a Headway in Wales conference 2023!

Scotland conference explores *What Matters To You*

The Scotland conference was held in the Grand Central hotel in Glasgow, under the banner of *What Matters To You*. This theme ensured content revolved around individuals affected by brain injury, and covered a range of topics to improve the wellbeing of brain injury survivors, carers and family members.

Highlights included a session from Age Scotland on the importance of keeping both mind and body active. Their power quiz had the audience moving their body as well as answering multiple-choice questions. Not only was this a very interactive session, it was an inclusive one too, with seated and standing variations of the movements so people of different physical abilities could take part.

Another well received session was a talk by Social Security Scotland. Their National Engagement and Partnership Team shared information on benefits such as the adult disability payment and how they are adopting a person-centred approach. This means they focus on the individual and treat everyone with dignity, fairness and respect.

Other sessions were run by a health and wellbeing practitioner focusing on mental health and mindfulness, and the University of Edinburgh presented on Prescribe Culture which is an initiative that makes use of Scotland's heritage to improve the mental wellbeing of visitors to historic sites.

Conference organiser and Development Officer for Headway East Lothian, Joyce Cattanach, said "There was so much fun and laughter, but we had moving moments too. The facilitated conversations between brain injury survivors and carers talking about their brain injury journeys created great empathy. It was very moving."



Delegates enjoyed a range of engaging talks and fun activities at the Scotland Conference

The Scotland conference was sponsored by Irwin Mitchell Solicitors and Brown Shipley financial services who we thank for their generous support.

Headway Devon's warm space



Towards the end of 2022, Headway Devon launched its own 'warm space' initiative at its centre in Exeter. The initiative sees monthly drop-in sessions on the second Saturday of every month, open to brain injury survivors and other local people. These much-needed sessions allow people to keep warm,

make new friends and have a natter over a drink and a slice of cake.

The idea is an excellent example of how Headway Devon continues to support people in their time of need. To find out more about Headway Devon, visit www.headwaydevon.org.uk.

As many of us continue to feel the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, the team at Headway Devon has stepped in to provide further support to brain injury survivors and the wider community.



Latest news round-up

News of Headway's ongoing work to improve life after brain injury

ABI Games are back!



After a tremendously successful event last year, which was named to mark the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen, we're delighted to announce that the Queen Elizabeth II Games for People with Acquired Brain Injury are back for 2023.

Happiness, friendship and achievements were the undoubted themes of last year's Games, with the brain injury community across the UK (and even a few international participants!) coming together to celebrate their incredible and often unknown skills.

Don't miss out on the chance to take part this year – head to headwayworcestershire.org.uk/abi-games-2023/ or email

abigames@hwtl.org.uk to find out more and register your place.

Chris Bryant MP awarded knighthood

Sir Chris, who has represented the Rhondda constituency in Wales since 2001, has been a tireless champion for people affected by brain injury, working closely with Headway and other brain injury charities to increase awareness in parliament and introduce meaningful change in the way government departments support survivors and carers.

Since 2017, Chris has chaired the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Acquired Brain Injury, leading to numerous debates in parliament and raising the profile of brain injury.

His determination to ensure debate delivers change, led to Sir Chris introducing a Private Members' Bill requiring the government to develop a cross-departmental strategy to address the needs of brain injury survivors and carers.

Despite the rarity of Private Members' Bills becoming Acts of Parliament, Sir Chris's tenacity resulted in the then Prime Minister Boris Johnson agreeing to the development of a strategy without the need for a vote on the Private Members' Bill.

Speaking at the Headway Annual Awards in December where he accepted a Special Award for Improving Life After Brain Injury, Sir Chris said that he hoped the strategy would be published around the middle of this year.

Congratulations, Sir Chris!



Parliamentary reception to raise ABI awareness

Sir Chris Bryant MP, the chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on acquired brain injury, has organised a parliamentary reception for 10th May where Headway UK will have the opportunity to lobby MPs about issues important to brain injury survivors and their families.

It will also be a chance to receive an update regarding the important work being done to create a new government strategy for acquired brain injury, which Headway UK are involved in.

Revised factsheet for Executive Dysfunction

Executive dysfunction is a term that not many people are familiar with, but one that commonly affects brain injury survivors. It can interfere with many aspects of life including activities of daily living, relationships, managing finances and working.

We have revised our *Executive dysfunction after brain injury* factsheet to explain this all-too-common effect of brain injury and to provide guidance on how to cope with it.

The factsheet includes self-coping tips as well as signposting to professional forms of support. It also explains how our Brain Injury Identity Card can help survivors who experience difficulties in social situations due to their executive dysfunction.

With expert input from Professor Jonathan Evans, Professor of Clinical Neuropsychology, we hope that this factsheet helps brain injury survivors with executive dysfunction to cope with this challenging effect of brain injury.

We would also like to offer many thanks to Irwin Mitchell for their kind sponsorship of this factsheet, which helps us to make our information available free-of-charge to those affected by brain injury.

Download the factsheet from [headway.org.uk/information-library](https://www.headway.org.uk/information-library) or scan the QR code.



SCAN ME!

Headway Sale charity shop celebrates 10th anniversary

Many congratulations and thanks to the team at the Headway Sale charity shop, who marked the 10th anniversary of the store's opening on January 18th.

The hardworking team celebrated their big achievement with tea and some delicious cake.

Headway Sale Shop Manager Steven Barton said: "We would like to thank all our customers and donors for their support over the past decade.

"We would also like to thank all our staff and volunteers for their hard work and



dedication; without them, we would not be able to do the work we do raising funds for survivors of brain injury. The



Some of the Headway Sale team celebrating the shop's 10th anniversary

shop continues to go from strength to strength, and we can't wait for the next ten years!"

The Headway Sale charity shop is urgently looking for donations of quality bric-a-brac, books and clothing to help Headway continue its vital work. Please drop donations to the shop at 78a School Road, Sale, M33 7XB.

To speak to someone at the shop about donations, please call **0161 969 7496**.

Post-traumatic growth after brain injury

"Over the last seven years I've been in dark places to get to where I am today, but I've come out a much better person. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and it's getting bigger and bigger."

These inspiring words were shared by our cover star Marco Gambi, a brain injury survivor who was involved in a devastating motorbike crash in 2016. Following the accident, Marco's world was changed in an instant. He sustained multiple injuries, was no longer able to continue working as a chef, and, like so many survivors, found the process of adjusting to life with brain injury incredibly difficult.

Despite the challenges, Marco's optimism shines through his words, making him a prime example of an experience called post-traumatic growth.

In this feature article, we explain what post-traumatic growth is and share more inspiring words from Marco. We then move into discussing some of the skills, strengths and 'super powers' survivors have reported developing after their injury.

What is post-traumatic growth?

We often discuss the challenges and hardships of coping with life after brain injury, and this is sadly an all-too-common experience for many survivors. However, for some, over time there can be a sense of renewed appreciation and gratitude for life, a desire to support others and engage in philanthropic acts, or even an awakened sense of spirituality. This experience of positive change following a traumatic event is known as post-traumatic growth (PTG).

Marco's PTG

Being a professional chef prior to his brain injury, Marco focused on redeveloping his cooking skills during rehabilitation.

"When I was at the rehabilitation unit, one of the tasks I was set was to go to the supermarket and buy £5-worth of produce, then come back and turn it into a meal," said Marco. "I found this

helped me to focus and plan. As well as a cooking challenge, it's something that uses a number of skills that transfer to other aspects of life."

Marco channelled his skills into benefitting others, and he now helps clients in his local Headway group.

"Being able to cook even simple meals can make a big difference to people's lives," said Marco. "I see the changes in people as they go from not being able to cook at all to making simple meals for themselves and family."

"I worked hard to get the good career that I had before my accident, but the last seven years have been by far the hardest in my life! However, my partner Dawn says that I was a good person before my injury, but I'm a better and more rounded person now."

"You cannot put a price on helping people in need. It's the biggest buzz and sense of satisfaction I've ever had."



Marco Gambi

Feeling positive after brain injury

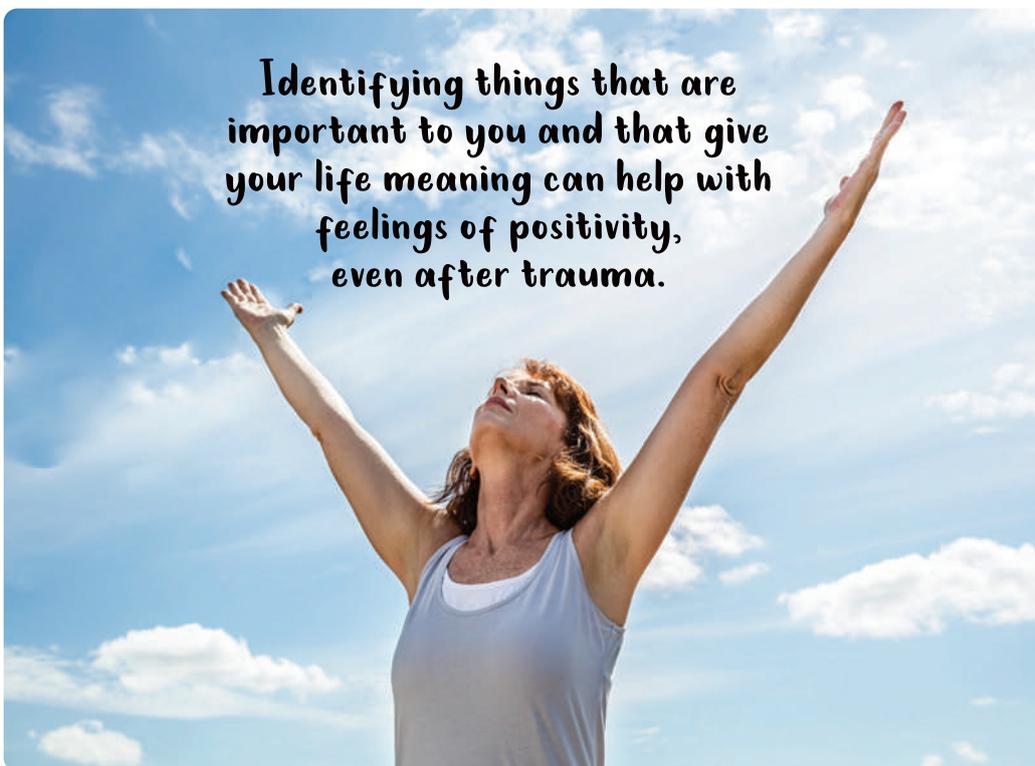
There is no right or wrong way to feel after brain injury, and no survivor should ever be made to feel like they have to be positive. It is perfectly normal to feel grief and a sense of loss.

However, research points towards a few suggestions that can help with developing a positive approach after brain injury...

- Set realistic goals for yourself that are achievable – this may mean breaking larger goals into smaller tasks, asking for help to achieve goals, or trying something new to accommodate for your needs.
- Visit braininjuryandme.org.uk to read personal testimonies from other brain injury survivors on living life after brain injury.
- Explore your options for returning to work or consider volunteering opportunities. Our factsheets on *Returning to work after brain injury* and *Volunteering after brain injury* offer advice on these topics.
- Consider what your values are. Research points towards a concept called values-based living that is associated with PTG. It entails recognising what matters most to you in life – your family, hobbies, skills, and making commitments to focus on these.
- Identify a new hobby or skill. Many people develop new interests after their brain injury and the possibilities are endless! There are plenty of ideas online and in books or magazines of activities you could try, and many activities that have been adapted for people with disabilities.
- Seek support from a professional, such as a clinical neuropsychologist or counsellor specialising in brain injury.

Above all, try not to lose hope – there can be life after brain injury. For many, the first few months and years are the hardest to adjust to, but remember

Identifying things that are important to you and that give your life meaning can help with feelings of positivity, even after trauma.



that support is available and time can be a healer. Identifying things that are important to you and that give your life meaning can help with feelings of positivity, even after trauma.

Finally, please remember that you can contact our nurse-led helpline on **0808 800 2244** or visit

helpline@headway.org.uk for information and support, or contact your local Headway group or branch for local support.

For more information on post-traumatic growth, visit our website at headway.org.uk.



issues, it's made me become more creative and entrepreneurial. It's not always easy but I prefer it to the old rat race."

Other fascinating superpowers that people shared include finding a passion in classical singing, writing poetry and songs, painting, gardening, and wildlife spotting.

Pete Bourne developed a more creative side following his brain injury. He started writing poems and ended up with a song. Others found themselves discovering a new interest in things that they were previously uninterested in, or even feared.



Jed the dog

Lynn Boyle had a fear of animals and flying before her aneurysm. Both fears completely vanished after her surgery, and she now loves to pet dogs and other animals. She wrote: **"I have no explanation as I know it was in my cavernous sinus, but I imagine that, if you have faced emergency brain surgery, nothing else can ever scare you."**

"I've found that I can live life on my terms more now."

(futuretoolbox)

Memory

Memory problems are one of the most common and often debilitating effects of brain injury, but several survivors reported an enhancement to at least some aspects of their memory.

Roy Burton refers to his "very enhanced memory from years before the head-injury", and Anthony Potter agrees:

"I struggle to explain to my wife how I can remember stupid stuff from my childhood, but struggle to remember even important more recent events - including my wedding!"

"I now get so many people asking about local events from years ago; I am at the moment helping someone write a book about some of the things I remember."

Hearing

It surprised us to find that one of the most common 'superpower' examples that came out of this conversation was a change in some people's hearing post-brain injury. Below is part of a conversation thread that gives a great insight into this particular change:

"My husband's hearing has got super acute since his TBI he can hear things that nobody else hears until about 3 or 4 minutes later."

(Julie Vye-Parminter)

"My daughter's hearing is exactly the same!" (Sinead Magee)

"It's like I have superpowers now since my brain aneurysm as my senses are heightened, I hate noise especially motor bikes and drilling now." (Deborah Johnston)

"A miracle in itself"

For one person in our online community, @amba_bollo_boosh, there was a definite superpower that she saw in her husband after his brain injury but he hadn't recognised. She shared: **"My husband says 'no, unfortunately not'. I disagree, he is 14 years a survivor and that was a miracle in itself."**

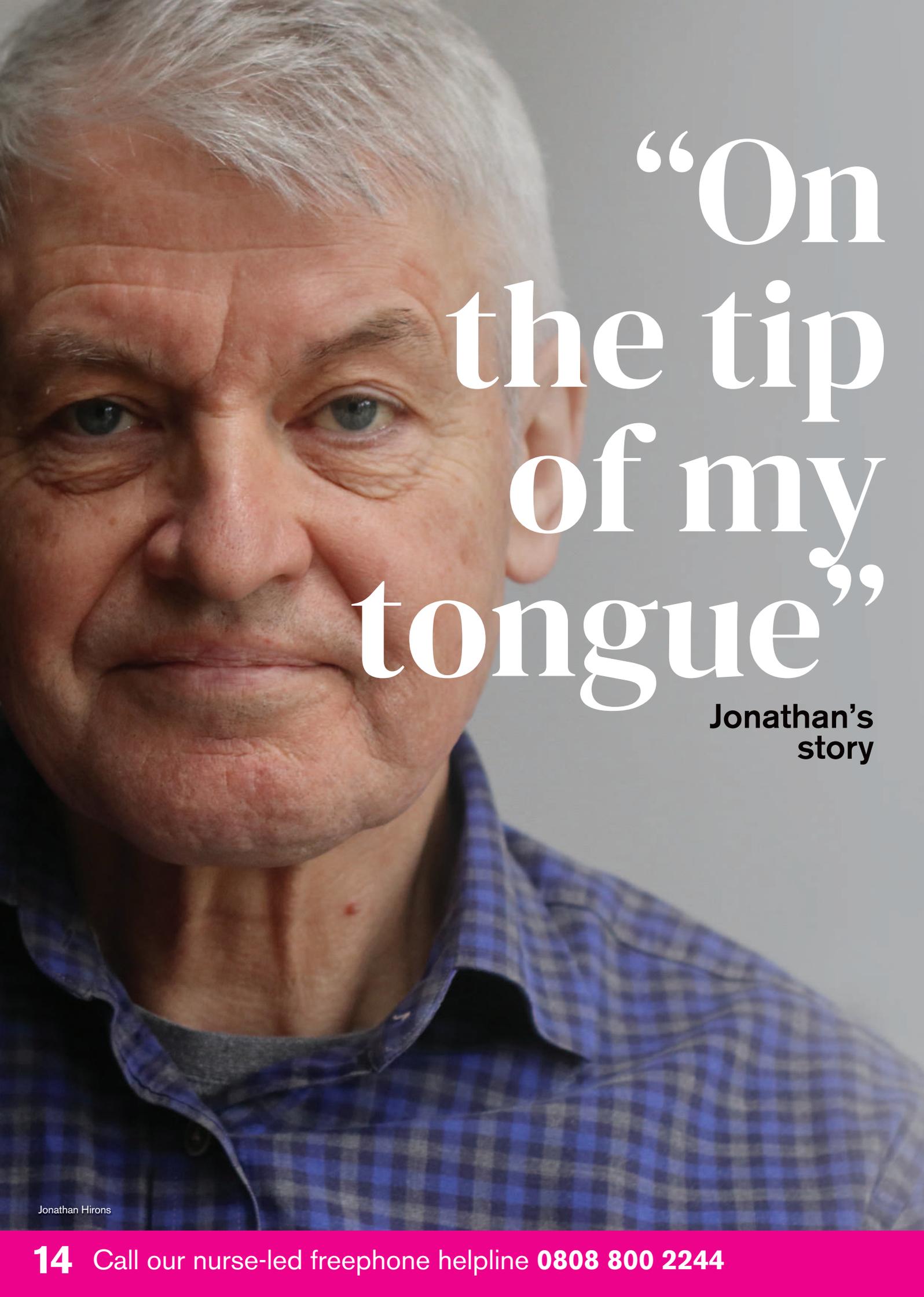
It is fair to say that's an experience shared by many people. Even if it's hard to see everyday life as an achievement let alone a superpower, the small victories and battles faced every day by all brain injury survivors and their loved ones are far more impressive than those of even the most heroic of Marvel heroes!

Thank you to everyone who contributed their experiences to help build this article and do keep sharing on our social media channels.



"My husband's hearing has got super acute since his TBI. He can hear things that nobody else hears until about 3 or 4 minutes later."

(Julie Vye-Parminter)

A close-up portrait of an elderly man with white hair and blue eyes, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. The background is a plain, light grey color.

“On the tip of my tongue”

**Jonathan's
story**

Jonathan Hirons

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In January 2019, while working in London, Jonathan Hiron's life suddenly changed.

He remembers sitting in a business meeting with colleagues discussing a work project when he "began to feel strange".

Jonathan soon found that he couldn't make changes to the document he was working on, and he began to struggle to find the words to speak.

Fortunately, realising something was very wrong, his colleagues acted quickly and called an ambulance.

Jonathan was rushed to University College Hospital, where CT and MRI scans showed he had suffered a stroke caused by a bleed on the brain. He spent five nights in hospital and was diagnosed with aphasia.

Following Jonathan's stroke, many everyday things became a struggle, including work. Jonathan had been employed as a Project Manager for EU Projects in the Creative Industries. "My work stopped on that day," he explained. "Initially, I couldn't speak properly, and I was unable to read or write".

Additionally, Jonathan couldn't remember much of where he lived. He remembered his postcode, but not his address, mobile number and the PIN for his bank account. Jonathan also sometimes had trouble understanding what was being said to him. He could, however, sign his name.

This was a worrying time for Jonathan and his loved ones. He had to stop driving. His wife, Ann, ensured he carried a card with his name and address and contact numbers.

However, recognising the importance of starting the rehabilitation process as soon as possible, Ann also encouraged Jonathan to begin reading out loud.

Every day a small amount of time was set aside to read a few lines of a book. In addition, Ann started using nursery-school flashcards to help Jonathan with word recognition and writing.

When speech therapy started, Jonathan vastly improved and is now at the point where he can read and write more fluently.

"Over time and with much help from my wife and speech therapists, I got my speech, my reading and my writing back on track," said Jonathan. "Even now, I find reading and writing difficult, particularly if I'm tired and I still get words mixed up, but I'm a lot better".

Well versed in technology throughout his career, Jonathan found it a valuable tool in helping him in his recovery, and now, aged 73, he uses voice-to-text to help him with his writing.

Jonathan is now using his experiences and creative skills to help others impacted by aphasia with his film 'On the Tip of my Tongue.'

He explained: "During 2019, I met a number of people with aphasia and people who look after them, and I vowed to do as much as I could to raise awareness of aphasia. So, over the next two years, I developed the idea of making a documentary about aphasia and some people affected by it."

After successful funding campaigns, help from the Tavistock Trust and support with PR, the film was finished in September 2022.

"Currently, I am showing it to people in the health industry as a training resource: it recently has been successfully presented to Carers UK," said Jonathan. He has also produced a film called 'What is aphasia?'

"So here I am four years later, and I'm still wanting to put the word out about aphasia, so if you read this, please pass it on to as many people as you can so that we can keep the interest going," he added.

Jonathan said he wants people to understand that aphasia is a hidden disability and that he feels there is a lack of support once the initial rehabilitation is over.

"The main problem with aphasia is it is very difficult to explain. People say, 'you seem fine,' but they don't know about [difficulties with not] being able to form words quickly or following a conversation in a group. Just because you have lost your words, it does not mean you have lost your intellect."

"Recovery from strokes and head injuries vary considerably. Some people can regain the ability to function independently others need more help. Help and support tends to come from charities and the family."

But despite the immense challenges faced by people living with aphasia, Jonathan's message to others is one of hope. "Persevere. It may seem to be hopeless, but improvements will come. Engage with fellow sufferers and, if possible, join a group".

To learn more about Jonathan's films, visit www.tipofmytonguefilm.com and watch.buffalolounge.co.uk.

Headway's information booklet *Coping with communication problems after brain injury* includes further information on aphasia. You can download it from headway.org.uk/information-library or by scanning the QR code.



SCAN ME!

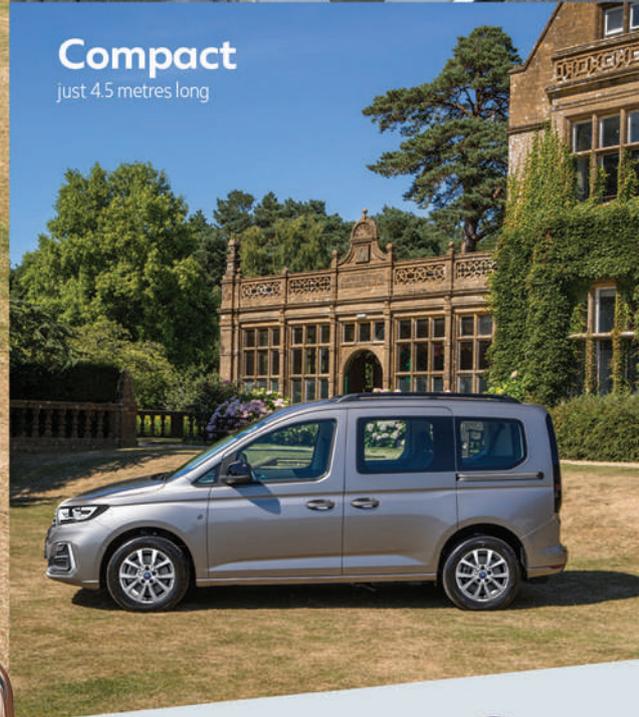
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Meet our new Chief Executive

New CEO Luke Griggs shares his thoughts on what makes Headway a special organisation and how, together, we can make a difference for the brain injury community.



So Luke, you've already held a number of roles within Headway, but what did you do before joining?

I began my career working in PR agencies representing a variety of clients. While that diversity developed my ability to reach different audiences, I found myself wanting a greater sense of purpose and to be immersed in one organisation.

At one stage, I worked for a client that supported Herefordshire Headway. I recall interviewing a volunteer at the local charity and was moved by the work they were doing. Shortly after, I saw an advert for the Communications Manager role at Headway UK and the rest is history.

And is there a single moment in your Headway career that stands out for you? A time that made you think, yes this is the right place for me?

The first time I secured national press coverage for the charity was a moment of great pride. It was a great feeling knowing that I'd helped increase awareness of something that really mattered and it made me feel I'd found a home at Headway.

I also remember being overwhelmed by the first Headway Annual Awards I attended, just three months after joining the charity. Anyone who's ever attended this special event will understand why it helped confirm just what a privilege it is to be part of a charity that supports such inspirational people.

You've been with Headway for a while, what are the things that have kept you at Headway? What do you find most rewarding? What drives you on?

If you are lucky enough to find a job in which you feel supported and empowered while being able to make a difference to people's lives, it's difficult to see why you'd want to move on.

There's also a more personal reason. My grandmother lived most of her adult life with the effects of a traumatic brain injury sustained when she fell off her bike in her mid-20s.

This was in the 1950s at a time when little was known about supporting people with brain injury. She received no information or support about living with brain injury, and neither did my grandfather or their children.

It meant life was a challenge for them as a family, not understanding the changes that had occurred or why my grandmother was a different person

who was unable to complete everyday tasks she once took for granted.

When I joined Headway and learned more about brain injury, the reason for my grandmother's difficulties with word finding, memory, speech and mobility were obvious. Finally, we understood.

Sadly, my grandparents died before I joined Headway and I was therefore unable to explain to my grandmother what had happened to her or provide the support she and her family should have had.

Everyday I'm driven to do all I can to prevent other families from suffering in silence having not had the effects of brain injury explained or being signposted to available support.

You've been with the charity for over 15 years and progressed through a number of roles and now here you are in the position of Chief Executive, so what are the attributes that have

obviously been recognised?

Throughout my time at Headway, I have simply tried to give the best of myself in every role or task I have been given. I feel fortunate that I have been able to play a part in driving the charity forward and humbled that I'm seen as the person to take the charity into a new era.

You are taking over from our long time, Chief Executive, Peter McCabe, what are the lessons that you learned from him?

I think Peter did a remarkable job over the past 20 years. When he first joined, the charity was a fraction of the size it is today. He did an outstanding job in developing Headway.

I recognize that no leader can do an effective job without having a good team around them and without adopting a collaborative approach.

I am fortunate to be part of a team of exceptionally talented and dedicated colleagues at Headway UK and across the entire Headway network.

Equally, I'm sure you will want to put your own stamp on things. Is there anything in particular that you think will change under your direction?

There are two words that I think capture my vision: *visibility and connectivity*.

We do some genuinely life-changing work at Headway, from projects like the Emergency Fund to local Headways helping people to defy all expectations in rebuilding their lives.

I am passionate about ensuring more people know about the work of Headway so that everyone who needs us can access our support when they need it.



Luke Griggs presenting an outstanding service award to Andrew Green MBE at the Headway Annual Awards 2022

The profile of Headway and awareness of our collective work across the UK is now far greater than ever before, but we can always do more!

I also believe that together we are stronger. Whether it is greater collaboration and sharing of ideas among the Headway network, or working more closely with external organisations, I am keen to ensure we connect with others that share our aim of improving life after brain injury.

A brain injury can have such a wide-ranging impact on individuals, it is a huge challenge that we have in supporting brain injury survivors. Do you have any reflections on the challenge that we face in providing that support.

When you consider the complexities of brain injury with its often hidden and fluctuating effects, it is often hard for people to get the help and understanding they need.

That's something we're continually challenging by increasing understanding of the impact of ABI. We have made significant progress, with brain injury far more widely discussed than it ever has been by the press, Parliament or public, but we have to keep fighting to ensure the voices of brain injury survivors, carers and families are heard.

And we know that groups and branches are facing huge challenges at the moment, what is your sense of the landscape?

There's no doubt the funding landscape is incredibly challenging for local Headway charities at present, particularly those that rely on adult social care commissioning.

Similar challenges have faced Headway groups previously, however, the combination of the cost-of-living crisis, high energy costs and chronically



Luke Griggs with auctioneer John Cameron at the Headway Annual Awards 2022

underfunded social care makes for a very concerning situation.

Naturally, we are doing all we can to support the network through this difficult period.

And finally, the ABI strategy is under development, but what hopes and fears do you have for the strategy? For example, could you complete this line: The strategy will be a success if...

...the government fully commits to it by providing the necessary funding to support the initiatives contained within.

It was not so long ago that the National Service Framework (NSF) for long-term neurological conditions was lauded as *the* chance for meaningful change.

However, no funding was provided and it was quietly abandoned by the government of the day.

I remain optimistic that this new ABI Strategy will achieve a great deal more than the NSF. Indeed, there is already far more traction and political attention, largely thanks to the sterling efforts of Sir Chris Bryant and his colleagues on the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Acquired Brain Injury.

Finally, are there any other things you would like to say to readers of Headway News?

Thank you! Thank you to all who support Headway whether as a volunteer, trustee, fundraiser or in any other way. Without you, we simply couldn't operate.

And thank you to every survivor, carer or advocate for championing the needs of those affected by brain injury and continually proving that with the right help, at the right time, there can be life after brain injury.



Johanne Davison, Deputy Manager at Headway's shop in Beeston, Nottingham

Headway's charity shops URGENTLY need your help

Our charity shops have issued an urgent appeal for donations as they are struggling to fill their shelves.

Headway has charity shops across the East Midlands, West Midlands and the North West. Following a sharp drop in donations, all of our shops desperately need quality clothing and bric-a-brac to help us to continue improving life after brain injury.

Jen Murgatroyd, Headway's Director of Fundraising, said: "We have seen a 10 per cent decline in donations across Headway's charity shops in the last six months, which we believe could be as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

"10 per cent is a massive drop in donations, and the impact on our shops is huge. We are also seeing a

six per cent increase in customers coming through our doors, so we urgently need help to keep up with that demand.

"As well as continued support from the general public, we'd like to ask people to think about who they know and could ask to get involved with donations. Is your organisation looking for a new charity of the year partnership? Could you hold one of our clothing banks in your place of work, local community centre, place of worship, or school? We'd love to hear from anyone who could support us with more donations to our Headway charity shops in this urgent time of need."

Headway UK Beeston Shop Manager Jeannette Nadin said: "Every year, around 350,000 people are admitted to hospital with a brain injury. That's one every 90 seconds. The money raised from sales in



Beeston shop Manager Jeannette shows the low stock levels at the back of the store

our charity shops goes a long way towards ensuring vital care remains in place for those affected by brain injury. So please think of Headway if you are having a spring clean; we'd be so grateful for your support."

DON'T NEED IT? DONATE IT...

And help improve life after brain injury!



Find your local shop at
[headway.org.uk/charity-shops](https://www.headway.org.uk/charity-shops)
or scan the QR code.

If you're a business or a local
group who'd like to donate items to
support Headway's charity shops,
please email Jen Murgatroyd on
dof@headway.org.uk.



SCAN ME!

#HeadwayHeroes

MAKE YOUR EFFORT COUNT

Follow our top fundraising tips

While taking on a challenge for charity is a great way to meet your personal goals, our fabulous fundraisers also tell us of the enormous feeling of pride when the donations start flowing in from family and friends. Every penny you raise leaves a lasting legacy that benefits those affected by brain injury across the UK.

1.

Set a goal

Giving yourself a realistic but challenging goal for your fundraising can be a huge motivation. It helps to inspire your supporters, and they might even chip in with a few extra pounds if you're close to the line!

2.

Set up a fundraising page online

Head over to a fundraising platform like JustGiving or GivePenny and start your page, which becomes a hub for the next few weeks as you approach the big day. Don't forget to choose 'Headway – the brain injury association' or your local Headway group or branch as your charity.

3.

Share, share, share!

Your friends and family want to support YOU, so tell them what you're doing, why you're doing it and how their support can help. You could even ask if they'd like to join you.

4.

Make a plan

Taking an hour or so to create an action plan can really help to make your challenge a success. How are you going to reach your target? Do you have any ideas for extra sponsorship? Could you ask for donations instead of birthday presents? Does your employer offer a matched funding scheme?

5.

Share your progress

Your fundraising page is a great place to talk about your progress and your thoughts and feelings about the challenge. They even have tools that help link with fitness trackers and other technology to build up a fascinating log of your efforts. Keep sharing your progress, and you'll be surprised at how much people will get behind you.

6.

Say thank you

Enjoy your well-deserved feeling of pride when you complete the challenge you've worked so hard for. Don't forget to say a big thanks to your family and friends for all the support you've received – they're Headway Heroes too!

PICK A PERFECT CHALLENGE...

Hillsborough Castle & Gardens Running Festival

5K/10k/Half marathon
30th July 2023

Enjoy the beautiful Grounds of Hillsborough Castle.

Great North Run

Newcastle upon Tyne
10th September 2023

Join us for the World's biggest and best half marathon!

Yorkshire Three Peaks

Pen-y-Ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough

15th July 2023

Join us and conquer the highest 3 peaks of the Yorkshire Dales!

Skydives

After exiting the plane at 10,000ft you will freefall for 40-45 seconds travelling at up to 120 mph!



Use the QR code or visit [headway.org.uk/challenge-yourself](https://www.headway.org.uk/challenge-yourself) to browse and book all of our available events.

Please contact events@headway.org.uk for more information.



SCAN ME!

**FINANCIAL
CRISIS!**

INTEREST RATES

**FINANCIAL
PRESSURE**

DEBT

LOAN SHARK

**ATTEMPTED
FRAUD**

DEBT RELIEF

**PERSONAL
FINANCE**



DON'T GET BITTEN BY THE SHARKS!

The ongoing 'cost of living crisis' continues to challenge the finances of many households across the UK.

In the last issue of this magazine we explored a number of helpful services and schemes that go some way to assisting those needing financial help. But alongside these vital services, there are also sadly some who exploit others' hardships and prey upon their vulnerability.

At a time when people are looking for a cash boost to cover their bills, loan sharks may be on the lookout for their next victim.

What is a loan shark?

A loan shark is an illegal money lender. They offer money as a loan in an often enticing and appealing way, but then charge extremely high interest rates and may aggressively collect money or collateral back.

All money lenders need to be authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) – this ensures that loans are offered in accordance with the law. Loan sharks will offer money without being authorised by the FCA, meaning that they act illegally and may use threatening tactics against the borrower.

Anyone can fall victim to loan sharks. Their offers can be tempting, and their approach may initially seem genuine. Brain injury survivors may be particularly vulnerable to such schemes if, for instance, they are impulsive or have cognitive effects of brain injury that interfere with their ability to make decisions.

How can I spot a loan shark?

Anyone lending money must be authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

If you are ever approached by someone offering to lend you money, always check whether they are registered with the FCA before entering into discussions with them. You can check the register here:

www.register.fca.org.uk.

The government-approved service Money Helper (www.moneyhelper.org.uk) has some useful information on how to spot loan sharks. Some of the signs they recommend looking out for include:

- **No paperwork** – having an official paperwork trail makes a business transaction more legitimate, and loan sharks avoid it at all costs.
- **Cash loans or bank transfers** – loan sharks normally prefer to deal in cash. However, more are now using bank transfers as well.
- **Refusing to give you information about the loan** – most loan sharks will avoid giving you clear details about your loan, such as the interest rate, details of previous repayments and the total amount you owe.
- **Taking possessions for security** – some loan sharks will take personal possessions, such as a passport or bank cards, to act as security.
- **Your loan keeps on growing** – loan sharks might increase the debt or add extra charges at any time, even if you're making regular payments. It's important you get help because the debt can spiral out of control very quickly. Find out more at www.stoploansharks.co.uk.
- **Threats of violence** – loan sharks often use intimidation and threats to frighten people into paying back their loan.

What to do if I am approached by a loan shark?

Loan sharks keep chasing people for money, and it is important to act to stop them. You should always report a loan shark. There are different ways to do this depending on where you live in the UK.

Guidance on how to report a loan shark is available at www.gov.uk/report-loan-shark.

When you report the loan shark, the advisers can give you advice about your situation. The information you provide helps them to take action to stop illegal money lending. Anything you tell them will be strictly confidential and you can remain anonymous. The loan shark won't know they're being investigated.

If you have been approached by someone you suspect is a loan shark, and think you are in immediate danger, you should call the police on 999.

If you've already borrowed from a loan shark, you haven't broken the law and you can get help. You shouldn't try to handle the situation on your own. Remember as well that anyone can fall victim to a loan shark, and you shouldn't feel embarrassed to ask for help.

It may help to talk to your situation through with a family member or friend. The Headway helpline can also offer emotional support and a listening ear. They are unable to offer advice on money issues, but they can often point you in the direction of other services that can help.

Headway
Annual
Awards
2022



Dean Harding won the Stephen McAleese Outstanding Contribution to Headway Award, sponsored by No5 Barristers Chambers.

Incredible achievements honoured

at the Headway Annual Awards

It was a pleasure to finally be back with the Headway Annual Awards during 2022's festive season.

Every year we are blown away by the incredible stories of care, dedication and determination shown by brain injury survivors and their loved ones.

Many congratulations to all of our nominees and finalists; we were honoured to celebrate your achievements with a glittering ceremony at London's swanky Landmark Hotel.

We'd also like to extend our gratitude to the award sponsors, the Landmark Hotel and Headway's supporters, including Sam Peters, Sir Chris Bryant, Dave Thomas, James Cameron and James Cracknell.

Nominations for this year's Annual Headway Awards will open later this year.



Michelle Kelly scooped the Carer of the Year Award, sponsored by Barr Ellison LLP.



Mark Kennedy was named the Alex Richardson Achiever of the Year, sponsored by Slater & Gordon.



Michael Condon took home the Volunteer of the Year Award, sponsored by Anthony Gold Solicitors.



Awards host Sam Peters in conversation with Dave Thomas, right, who walked the length of Britain with his daughter Willow, raising thousands for Headway.



TV's John Cameron hosted the exciting Headway auction.



Former Headway CEO Peter McCabe, right, was given a special award for his outstanding service to Headway.



Headway CEO Luke Griggs, with Andrew Green, right, who was awarded an outstanding service award for his work as Chair of the Board of Trustees.



Sir Chris Bryant MP was given an award for improving life after brain injury.

Special thanks go to our award sponsors:



FOOTBALL LAWMAKERS REJECT TRIALS OF TEMPORARY CONCUSSION SUBSTITUTES

Despite support from The Premier League, the Football Association and the world players union FIFPRO, the International Football Association Board (IFAB) decided against a trial of temporary concussion substitutes at their recent Annual Business Meeting at Wembley Stadium.

The request to introduce the trials from the beginning of next season had been made by the World Leagues Forum and FIFPRO on behalf of their members.

Under the current rules, two permanent concussion substitutes are allowed per game. When a potential concussion injury has occurred, medical staff are brought on to the pitch to make their assessment of the player, a process that usually takes a few minutes. The player is then either cleared to carry on or taken off the pitch and replaced by a substitute for the remainder of the game.

Under the new proposals, the player would be removed for 10 to 15 minutes

for the medical assessment to take place in a private environment such as the changing room, with a substitute replacing the player for that assessment period. After the assessment, the player would either be allowed back onto the field, or, if they had displayed symptoms of concussion, the substitution would be made permanent for the remainder of the game.

The request to change to temporary concussion substitutes has come off the back of several high-profile concussion incidents at the men's World Cup. In these incidents, after a pitch-side assessment, the players were cleared to carry on but then substituted several minutes later when it was clear they were not fit to continue.

At Headway, we believe that medical staff will be better able to assess a player in the quiet confines of the changing room instead of under the glare of TV cameras and with thousands of fans looking on.

Luke Griggs, Chief Executive of Headway – the brain injury association, said:

“Medics are being forced to make snap judgements under pressure, which is resulting in players being allowed to stay on the field despite the assumed presence of at least some doubt over potential concussion.”



“IFAB’s refusal to introduce a temporary concussion substitute rule is causing undue risk to players. The rule is supposed to be ‘if in doubt, sit it out’ not ‘play on and see how it goes’.

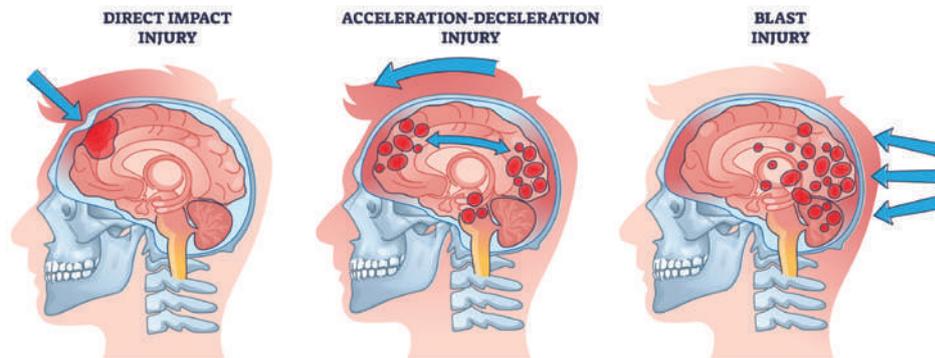
“It is hard to fathom the flawed logic behind this bitterly disappointing decision.”

Of particular concern is the risk of second impact syndrome, caused when a second blow occurs before the symptoms of the first injury have subsided. This can cause rapid swelling of the brain and damage can be exacerbated and even fatal on rare occasions.

What is concussion?

Concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that is usually mild. It is commonly caused by falls, road crashes, assaults

TYPES OF CONCUSSIONS



and sports accidents. These incidents cause the brain to shake back and forth inside the skull, causing damage.

While most of these mild head injuries result in no long-term damage to the brain, it can cause temporary disruption to brain function that can last for at least a number of weeks. Concussion can leave people with a range of symptoms including dizziness, nausea, confusion or an inability to process or retain

information, sensitivity to light, and vision distortion.

In some cases, an individual may lose consciousness as a result of the head injury, but it is important to note that only around 10% of reported concussions involve a loss of consciousness – so it’s important to not solely rely on this as an indicator.



Creative Expression

If ever a picture could paint a thousand words

This painting was produced by Jan Johnston during a recent art therapy session at Headway Sefton. Jan has had two very serious brain injuries. His artwork represents his brain before (right) and after (left) his injury.

"I have a wife and two boys, we live in a house that we built ourselves, and we love to travel. I was Managing Director of two companies. I spoke three foreign languages, worked hard, and played hard - skiing, cycling, rugby etc.

"I would say that life before I sustained my brain injury was a fast life for all the family.

"On 16th August 2012 at around 6pm I sustained my first traumatic brain injury when I fell from my bicycle.

"Cycling in a group of three, at dusk, summer 2012, a pheasant ran straight into my front wheel, catapulting me over the bars at 26 miles per hour, bouncing on my head 3 times as recorded by my Garmin GPS.

"I was unconscious for about 45 mins, and in hospital for 31 days.

"Following the accident, I developed very complicated feelings of not feeling part of the world, which made me feel very anxious, stressed, and depressed. I became suicidal, never feeling I could reach a destination.

"It often feels like there's a ball bearing in my head, like a pin ball machine. I cannot cope with conflict, and I put my head into the sand if I'm overwhelmed.

"Joining my local Headway group allowed me to recognise others in the same boat and that gave me hope and

support. It helped me to take the focus off my own misery.

"In 2019, I fell 15 feet from a tree in my garden. I was airlifted to Aintree with broken; back, neck, every rib, burst aorta, bleed on brain, punctured lungs, and was not expected to live. However, 45 days later, I exited the Walton Centre with state-of-the-art metalwork spine etc.

"I would not be here without my family.

"My advice to any others in the same situation as me would be to get to a Headway group asap for the sake of you and your family.

"The artwork was inspired by a drop-in painting session where we were asked to express ourselves. I wanted to depict the ball-bearing feeling I live with now, with the shadow of my former brain in the background."





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

We could claim to be the UK's leading head injury compensation lawyers. But the only claim that matters... is yours.

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FREETHS

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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