

Autumn 2023

Headway News



The magazine of Headway - the brain injury association

Rowing the extra mile

Read about Giles'
journey of determination
across the Atlantic on
page 24



**Meet the
Volunteers!**

Page 12



**The Emotional
Impact of
Concussion**

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**Summer of
Fundraising**

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HEADWAY WEBINARS

A brand new series of webinars, designed to educate and inform on various topics relating to brain injury, including...

- Moving towards digital care
- Understanding and responding to behaviours that challenge following ABI
- De-mystifying mental capacity
- Memory loss - impact and rehabilitation
- Third wave therapy
- Public affairs round-up

Our webinars are free to attend and run from 12-12.45pm. For more information and to book your place, visit www.headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury/professionals/headway-webinars or use the QR code!



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Adam McQuillan,
brain injury client



Welcome

Welcome to the autumn edition of Headway News magazine!



As the leaves begin to paint the world with hues of amber and gold, we are delighted to bring you an issue filled with inspiring stories and invaluable insights.

In this edition, we shine a spotlight on the power of volunteering and its profound impact on both individuals and communities. On page 12, we proudly present a feature on just two of our wonderful volunteers and their inspiring journeys with Headway.

Art lovers will find page 15 particularly captivating as we report on the extraordinary Barbican art exhibition organized by Headway East London. On display is a profound expression of creativity as a tool for healing.

On page 16 we explore the challenges of returning to work after brain injury with some tips on how best to approach this step. We also meet a brain injury survivor, Iain, who shares his story.

The heartwarming spirit of competition takes centre stage on page 9, as we report on the Queen Elizabeth II ABI Games, organised by Headway Worcestershire. People with acquired brain injury from all corners of the UK came together for this incredible event, showcasing the boundless determination and camaraderie within our community.

We also address the emotional impact of concussion, shedding light on how it can trigger feelings of anxiety and depression. Understanding the effects of such injuries on mental health is crucial, and we are committed to providing the information and support needed to aid recovery.

Finally, prepare to be inspired by the incredible journey of Giles, an intrepid fundraiser who embarked on an epic row across the Atlantic to raise vital funds to support brain injury survivors. Read all about his remarkable adventure and the indomitable spirit that drives our supporters to make a lasting difference.

We hope that this edition of Headway News serves as a source of inspiration, knowledge, and connection.

Wishing you a warm and colourful autumn season ahead!

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:
headway.org.uk/join-our-mailing-list

Essential contacts

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Your views

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Following Volunteers Week in June 2023, we asked some of our lovely volunteers the question: *why do you like volunteering for Headway?*

We had some great responses and you can read a few of them below.

"I had been thinking about doing some volunteering for a while. I happened to start talking to Sue, the Manager, at a social event and told her I was thinking about volunteering somewhere... the rest is history! I enjoy meeting and being with customers. It is a nice working atmosphere here in the shop and I enjoy working as part of the team. It keeps me out of mischief, I really enjoy it! Headway is a worthwhile cause and I feel like I am doing my bit!"

Tracey Taylor,
Whitchurch volunteer

"I like to be busy and do something that I believe to be useful in society."

Helen
from Hinckley

"I enjoy being a volunteer because I'm helping a good charity. Shop management and staff are superb to work with. The customers who come to the shop are more like friends as they are in regularly. I enjoy working with people, as I've worked in shops most of my 86 years. I'm retiring at 90!"

Glenice

"I was a teacher and took semi-retirement. I wanted to do some volunteering to get me out and to meet people. I like books and I like helping the public. I look for books customers ask for and save books for them. I enjoy checking for the price of rarer books on the internet so that we can make as much money as possible from all the books that are donated. Dealers often come into the shop to check out our books and I price them to make sure dealers are tempted to buy them!"

David Clarke,
Whitchurch 'Book'
volunteer

"I like the company!
It keeps me busy and
keeps the old brain cells
working!"

Russell

Have you been inspired by the words of some of our volunteers? Find out how you can be a volunteer on our website: headway.org.uk/donate/volunteer

You can join in the conversation across our social media channels. Find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

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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

HATS OFF TO TARA!

We caught up with this year's Hats for Headway Best Photograph winner, Tara McIntyre.

Tara said: "I was excited to enter this competition as I really enjoyed creating a hat and bringing the summer and good vibes to Essex. My sister-in-law helped me make it. She is a teacher and full of ideas, like me. We had fun making it together."

A regular at Headway Essex, Tara attends every Thursday without fail and the group has a very special place in her heart.

Tara won a luxury Fortnum & Mason hamper which she enjoyed sharing with her family. When asked what her favourite item was, Tara said: "It was lovely to receive such a beautiful gift. I was surprised by how nice it was. I really enjoyed the fruit tea, the chocolates, and the biscuits. It's hard to say what my favourite thing was, to be honest!"



**WINNER:
Hats for
Headway
2023!**



**WINNER:
Hats for
Headway
2023
Best Group
Photo!**



Fosters Solicitors

"We are so pleased that so many of our colleagues got involved in Hats for Headway again this year and that we were awarded Best Group Photo! It's always great fun and in support of such a great cause!"
(Steve Green, Partner at Fosters Solicitors)

Hats for Headway marked the end of Action for Brain Injury (ABI) Week 2023, where we come together to show support to those living with disabilities after brain injury, by wearing wacky hats.

Every hat equals more funding towards our vital support for those affected by brain injury and we would like to thank everybody who took part this year.

You can delve into the submissions for this year's #HatsForHeadway by searching the hashtag on social media.

A message from event sponsor Anthony Gold Solicitors:

"Huge congratulations to Tara McIntyre on winning the Hats for Headway contest with such a beautifully designed hat. The competition raises much needed funds for a very worthy cause, and here at Anthony Gold Solicitors we're honoured to be able to support Headway in its efforts to raise awareness of the impact of brain injury."

Headway launches brand-new Innovation Award!

Headway – the brain injury association is thrilled to announce the brand-new Innovation Award sponsored by Irwin Mitchell LLP.

The Innovation Award recognises innovative projects and work in the Headway network of groups and branches across the UK that has positively impacted the lives of brain injury survivors.

Once a year, Headway's members, friends, and supporters come together to pay tribute to some very special people: brain injury survivors, carers, volunteers and campaigners whose personal achievements have earned the admiration of everyone around them.

This year's categories include:

- **The Alex Richardson Achiever of the Year Award, sponsored by Slater and Gordon**
- **The Carer of the Year Award**
- **The Volunteer of the Year Award, sponsored by Anthony Gold Solicitors**
- **The Stephen McAleese Outstanding Contribution to Headway Award, sponsored by No5 Barristers Chambers**
- **The Innovation Award (NEW), sponsored by Irwin Mitchell LLP**

All nominated projects will be showcased at the Headway Annual Awards ceremony in London in December 2023, with one group or branch invited to accept the inaugural Innovation Award.

Thank you to everyone who has nominated someone wonderful. Look out for news of the shortlist this autumn on our website and social media.



Concussion In Sport Group statement

The sixth international conference on concussion in sport has published its consensus statement.

The group of research scientists that make up the Concussion In Sport Group (CISG) have reviewed published research on concussion and brain health leading to their collective statement. The statement is important as it plays a key part in shaping how sport's governing bodies approach concussion policies and protocols.

This sixth statement included important elements such as the relationship between head impacts and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), as well as pitch side head injury assessments in sport. You can read more detail on our response to the statement in the news section of our website.

The full consensus statement is published by the British Journal of Sports Medicine.

Concern over plans to close train ticket offices across England

Headway – the brain injury association has raised concerns about a proposal to close train station ticket offices across England.

Sarah Russell, Senior Policy and Public Affairs Manager at Headway, explained the charity's fears that mass ticket office closures would have a disproportionately negative impact on disabled people, including brain injury survivors.

She said: "It is vital that the Rail Delivery Group listens carefully to

the concerns of Headway and other disability charities before rushing in with cost-saving measures that could have a detrimental impact on vulnerable passengers."

At the time of printing, this proposal was under public consultation. Headway will continue to provide updates on this topic through the news section of our website.

Read Headway's full response from our consultation on ticket office closures on page 10.

Latest news round-up

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

The NHS long-term workforce plan - what does it mean for brain injury survivors?

Headway welcomes the first comprehensive long-term strategy for the NHS workforce. However, it is light on detail meaning the benefits to brain injury survivors are unclear.

The newly unveiled NHS long-term workforce plan has launched with much political fanfare. The headline figures of an additional £2.4 billion in funding and the doubling of training places for doctors - and almost the same for nurses - certainly grab attention, but what does it mean for brain injury survivors?

For some time, Headway has been calling for an increase in the number of neurorehabilitation professionals, in particular neuropsychologists. Although

the plan details a welcome commitment to boost staff numbers, it does not contain detail on specialist workforce planning. This means that the benefits for the brain injury community remain unclear at this stage.

Luke Griggs, Chief Executive of Headway – the brain injury association, said: “It is crucial that the NHS recognises the essential role of neurorehabilitation professionals within the broader healthcare workforce.”



Hard Hat Awareness Week

Can the construction industry learn lessons from contact sports like rugby and football, to protect workers from head injuries?

Each year in June, Hard Hat Awareness Week drives awareness of brain injury through activities designed to encourage best practice around safety equipment.

Construction sites without the correct protection can potentially be very dangerous places, especially when it comes to head injuries.

Colin Morris, Director of Communications at Headway – the brain injury association, said:

“There is growing evidence of the short and long-term damage that can be caused by even a single knock to the head, so we were delighted to support Hard Hat Awareness Week by reminding people of the importance of wearing hard hats and taking any impact to the head seriously.

“It is important that construction workers recognise the signs of concussion, stop to report the incident and recover fully before returning to work.”



Publication of new optimal care pathway for TBI

Headway has welcomed the publication of a document detailing an optimal care pathway for adults affected by traumatic brain injury (TBI).

This optimal clinical pathway sets out the services, experiences and outcomes associated with good treatment, care and support.

“These common sense proposals are a helpful and timely intervention, and we are grateful to the National Neurosciences Advisory Group for its work,” said Luke Griggs, Chief Executive of Headway – the brain injury association.

“Everyone impacted by brain injury, whether through trauma or indeed any form of ABI, deserves to have their rehabilitation needs clearly established and supported.

“This document complements the submissions of Headway and many others to the ABI Strategy, and we urge the government to implement the proposals put forward.”

Find the publication and more information at www.nnag.org.uk

Spirit and Connection at ABI Games 2023

Headway Worcestershire held its Queen Elizabeth II ABI Games this summer at the University of Worcester Sports Arena. The event, attended by dozens of brain injury survivors and groups from all over the UK, was once again a great success filled with good spirit and connection.

Categories included sports such as indoor bowls, walking tennis and walking football; games like Uno, Memory Game and Chess; and life skills, such as growing sunflowers, baking bread and making preserves.

All participants received a medal, certificate, and a baseball cap for taking part.

"Getting here was a big deal, but I love the organised chaos of it all. I am competitive and I'm looking forward to the cricket!"

(Lester, HW Worcestershire)

"This has been my dream for the last seven years. To use sport to help the community, it has such a positive impact on the lives of people living with brain injury."

(Andy, Headway Sefton)

"Headway Worcestershire has been a lifeline for us following my husband's brain injury. Headway has given support to me when I've needed it, and support and friendship to Gareth. This is such a fabulous event, it's about trying new things, giving an achievement to someone in something that they otherwise wouldn't feel they could do."

(Katy and Gareth)

"These games are about breaking down boundaries – and seeing so many groups here from all over and seeing them all work together is amazing. And when you see the smiles... it's not about the negative here, it's all about the positive."

(Ben Cooper from BBC's Bargain Hunt)

Well done to the Headway Worcestershire team for putting on such a great event.





Headway responds to ticket office closures with consultation

Headway – the brain injury association has raised concerns about a proposal to close train station ticket offices across England in a written response to Transport Focus & London Travelwatch.

The response highlights the fact that around 350,000 people are admitted to hospital annually with an ABI-related diagnosis as a result of trauma, stroke, tumour, infection or illness – and that the majority will require some form of support or rehabilitation. The concern is that many of these individuals, who already find using public transport difficult, will be at a huge disadvantage without the attention and support of ticket staff at train stations.

The Headway response highlights:

*That the effects of ABI can last a lifetime, are immensely varied and are not always visible.

*That buying train tickets online or through a ticket machine may seem like a simple process – however, following a brain injury, this can be extremely daunting and for some people, impossible.

*Issues relating to executive dysfunction, mobility, visual impairment, and anxiety all contribute to difficulties when using ticket machines on platforms or booking online, or explaining why they don't have a

ticket when boarding a train (if unable to purchase before).

*Talking to a member of staff in a ticket office is essential for many brain injury survivors to explain the journey they want to make and to receive support to understand the best way to go about it. It is not possible to get this support from a ticket machine.

*Many brain injury survivors cannot drive and rely on train transport to be able to get around – for both essential and social journeys. The complex and inter-related needs of brain injury described above mean that access to a staffed, permanent ticket office is a necessity for many survivors to be able to travel by train.

Headway ran a survey asking brain injury survivors and their families and carers how the planned closure of ticket offices would affect them.

Over 75% of respondents told us that they either could not or would not be sure how to purchase a ticket for travel if ticket offices were to close.

The presence of staff at our rail stations is vital to ensure that they are accessible to all. Many brain injury survivors would find train travel very difficult or impossible if ticket offices close.

Headway strongly suggests that the rail companies reconsider their proposals to close ticket offices.

Your Comments

"I would be unable to travel if these ticket offices closed!"

"I get confused and my injury makes it difficult for me to follow instructions."

"It will isolate me, reduce opportunities for me, and limit my quality of life, plus make transport generally more expensive. It would have a negative impact on the quality of life for me and many others."

"I would suffer from intense anxiety about buying the right ticket and working the ticket machine."

"I know many others who need the support of the ticket office workers, if nothing else but to help with reservations, actual purchases, explaining the many restrictions on each ticket, and arranging assistance too."

"It will make stations less safe for vulnerable people."

"Ticket office staff helped enormously getting the right ticket, finding out train timetables, what platform to go to, and return times."

"The lady behind the screen took her time to help me, despite the queue forming behind me she didn't rush me."

"Please don't do it! Life is hard enough without this on top of everything else."

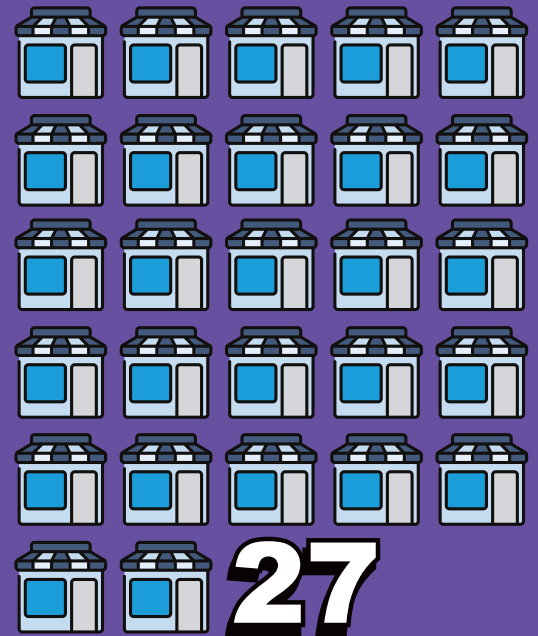
Headway Retail: Did you know?

The Headway retail network plays an essential part in generating income to provide vital services across the UK for brain injury survivors.

Through the generous donations of thousands of people every year, our shops can continue to fund things like the Helpline and the Emergency Fund.

Here are just a few things about our fantastic shops that you may not know:

Number of Headway shops



The very first
Headway shop opened on
**Friday 16th July
2004**
(in Heanor)



**LARGEST
HEADWAY
SHOP:**
Beeston



Volunteers across
the retail network:



174,421 bags donated across all
Headway shops to date

£2,859,175

was raised for Headway – the
brain injury association through
sales from donations in 2022.



A donation to the Alcester
shop turned out to be unmarked
Indian gold jewellery which
was sold for

£10000!

Have you been inspired to volunteer?

Head to our website or contact your local
Headway shop, group or branch! You could
even pop into your local shop
and speak to the team
to find out more.





Meet the volunteers!

For this issue of Headway News we are celebrating some of the volunteers who generously give their time to help support people affected by brain injury.

Whether it's through volunteering with one of the 120 Headway groups and branches across the UK or in one of our 27 Headway Charity Shops, each one of our volunteers deserve a shout-out. We'd like to introduce you to just two of them. Meet Dawn and Pat.



Dawn from Headway Tamworth and Lichfield

Dawn is secretary of the Headway Tamworth and Lichfield branch and has been leading the group for over 16 years. Dawn worked as a Neurological Occupational Therapist and in 2007, after researching with her colleagues and finding that there was no support available for survivors of brain injury in South Staffordshire, she set up the Headway branch.

Dawn helps to run monthly group meetings in Tamworth, with workshops on brain injury topics, guest speakers, art classes and socialising with tea, cake, laughter, and sharing experiences. She also hosts a monthly members breakfast for anyone who would like to socialise.

"At each meeting there is a core of around 15 members, but this can go

up to about 30," Dawn explains. "Not everyone comes every time, but they are always welcomed. I meet with new survivors of brain injury who are not sure what happens next. I help them and their families to navigate services, fill in forms and explain, where possible, the effects of brain injury, such as fatigue, memory problems and executive dysfunction.

"Some people never come to the group but instead keep in touch with me when they need to. Sometimes they just need to know there is someone there", she added.

Dawn runs the Headway Tamworth and Lichfield branch alongside other volunteers – a chairperson, a treasurer and carer support volunteers who can offer support to the carers who attend the meetings, as they have experience of caring for family members with a brain injury.

"The group is amazing. I always say they are the experts; I have not had a brain injury but can help with explaining why they feel like they do, or how to continue their recovery. The group is a support group; they share their experiences, how they coped, what they did. They help each other."

"Brain injury was my special interest, and now my passion. I don't see what I do as volunteering, it is just part of me."



Pat from Headway Meirionnydd

Pat is the Chair of Headway Meirionnydd in Wales. She first heard about Headway's support after her husband's stroke in 2009. After giving up work to become her husband's full-time carer, she began volunteering with Headway to give her some time away from her own caring duties.



"I come from a family of volunteers so started at an early age."

Pat explains: "Both my Nan and Auntie were in the WRVS and received BEM and MBE for their long service. I used to help during school holidays in the running of WRVS canteen in Walton Hospital.

"Strangely enough, my Nan was one of the people who was also on the Fazakerley Hospital League of Friends and helped raise money for the Neurological Centre there. Who would have known all those years later that I would help, along with an amazing team of volunteers, to run the Headway branch here in Llwyngrwl.

"I had not heard of Headway until my husband's stroke back in 2009 and we were referred to The Brain Injury Service in Colwyn Bay. It was here where it all began. Due to giving up work to become my husband's full-time carer, I needed something away from my own caring duties.

"So, I have been the chair of Headway since 2015 and we were known as Headway South Gwynedd, a subunit of Headway Gwynedd and Mon. We have now bitten the bullet in 2023 and have decided to become a separate

new Headway branch – Headway Meirionnydd. This has become possible due to the fact I have so many wonderful people to help me in the running of Headway Meirionnydd.

"We have lots of different themes to our meetings some of which we open to the public, such as presentations, quiz nights and other fundraising sessions.

"We also love our trips out in the summer and our Christmas lunch, which is always a very jolly occasion, with a young gentleman who is a relative of one of our members always bringing a tear to our eyes with his amazing voice over the past eight years.

"I was also very humbled to give a 'carer's view' of dealing with a brain injury survivor presentation at last year's Headway Cymru virtual conference. I am now also a member of the conference planning team for Headway Cymru's annual conference.

"We have started planning for this year's conference, so watch this space!"



Volunteering connects people in all sorts of ways. Volunteers at Headway Lancaster and Morecambe Bay have created an allotment together!

"As a student, volunteering has given me confidence to work with a varied amount of people. It has helped me develop my own allotment skills. Interacting and assisting others is so rewarding and this improves my health, being outside and in the fresh air." (Headway Volunteer)

Thank you
to Dawn, Pat and all the
amazing Headway volunteers
across the United Kingdom.



HEADWAY CHRISTMAS CARDS 2023



Support Headway this Christmas and improve life after brain injury

Available to buy from the 1st September 2023



Colourful Partridge



Colourful Snowman



Painted Tree

**Bolt
Burdon
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.



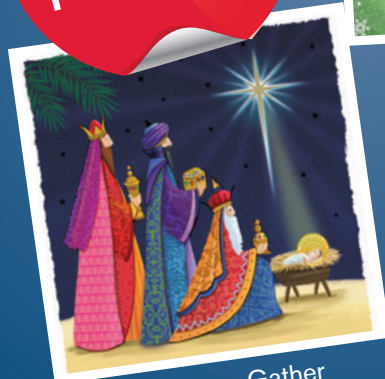
Fluffy Robin Junior



Santa's Red Robin



Winter Friends Scene



The Kings Gather



My Cup of Tea

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@headway.org.uk if you have any questions or would like us to send you a printed order form.



SCAN ME!

differently various: celebrating community and creativity



An incredible exhibition featuring brain injury survivors' powerful artwork has taken place at the Barbican Curve Gallery in London, receiving rave reviews.

Curated by members from Headway East London, *differently various* was the culmination of a collaboration between Headway East London and the Barbican which began in 2019 and was made possible with support from the Heritage Fund.

The event posed the vital question of 'Who gets to be an artist?' and coincided with Headway East London's 25th anniversary changing the lives of people living with brain injury.

- Over 5,000 people attended
- 20 individual events were held
- Over 100 members led talks, tours, and workshops

Alongside the unique artworks, the nine-day takeover saw visitors engage in a public arts programme, including open conversations around brain injury, poetry and workshops from Headway East London's members.

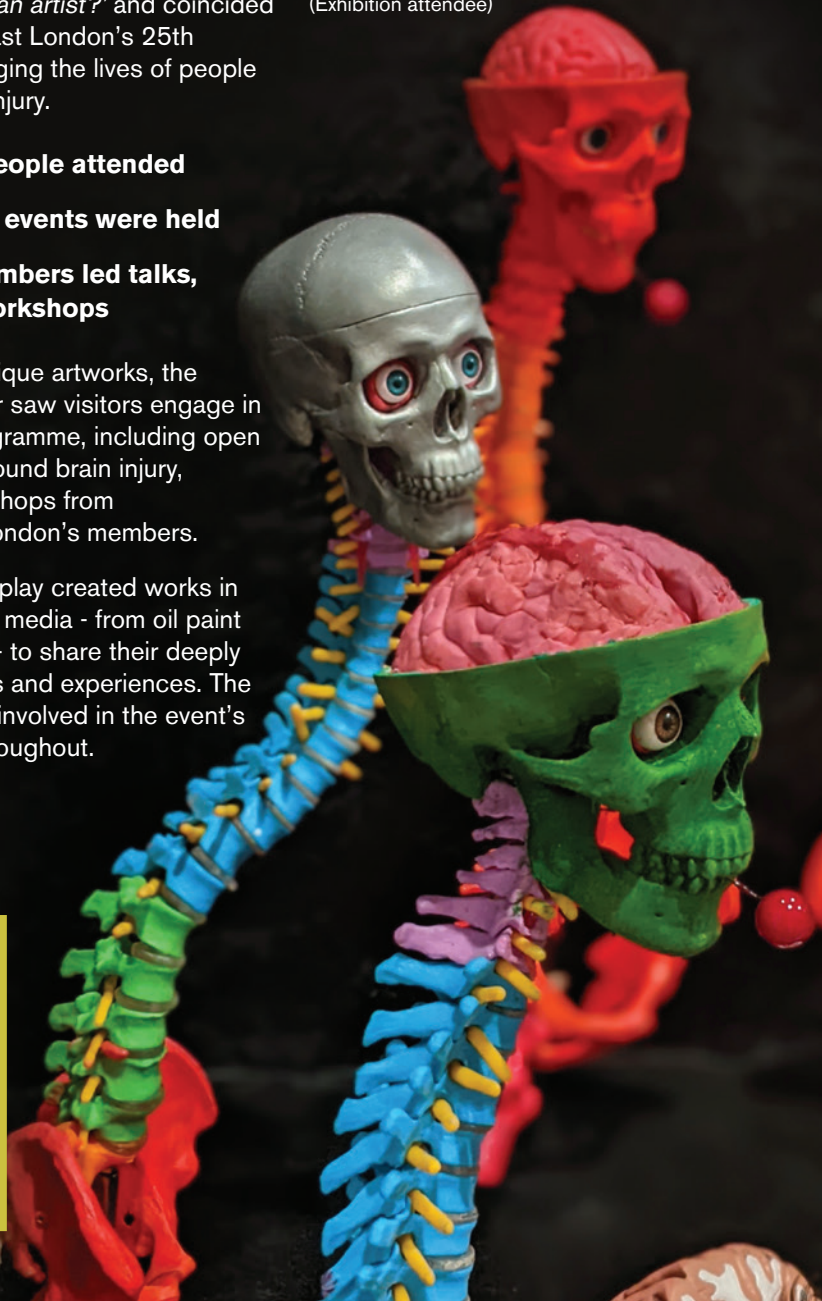
The artists on display created works in different forms of media - from oil paint to papier mâché - to share their deeply personal journeys and experiences. The artists were also involved in the event's key decisions throughout.



Differently various was a huge success, gaining extensive positive press coverage, including a five-star review in The Guardian, which described the event as "a rollercoaster of thought and emotion" and noted that "Through *differently various*, a collective has found a space to express themselves and push boundaries."

"I am totally moved by this incredible art exhibition. Such talent and creativity. Such bravery of all these wonderful people."

(Exhibition attendee)



Making returning to work, work for you

Did you know that September 19th marks the beginning of *International Week of Happiness at Work*?

Unfortunately, for many brain injury survivors, 'happiness' is not the first word that comes to mind when faced with the idea of returning to work after brain injury. Feelings of anxiety, frustration, stress, confusion and being overwhelmed are far more common due to the difficulties of adjusting to life after brain injury.

However, there are ways to make a return to work a much smoother process – and hopefully encourage some feelings of happiness! Here we share some of our top tips.

Consider a phased return - many people find it easier to return to work over a period of time, starting with a few hours and gradually building up to return to their normal working schedule.

Discuss different roles or responsibilities - talk to your employer about the possibility of taking on different responsibilities or roles that are more suitable for you. Reducing some of your workload will help you gradually build this back up when you are ready.

Use helpful tools, adaptive equipment, and strategies - calendars, wall charts, notes, dictaphones, alarms and diaries can help, although in some cases more specialist equipment may be required.

Take regular breaks - talk to your employer about this so that they are aware of your needs and can make suitable arrangements, such as locating quiet rooms or areas that you can rest in when you need to.

Get support from family and friends - this could be through practical support, such as offering lifts to and from work, cooking meals, helping with

childcare or just having somebody to talk to when you need it. Remember that accepting help from others is a sign of strength, not weakness, and the right support can make a successful return to work easier.

Be honest about how you are feeling - be honest with your employer and your colleagues about any difficulties you are having. Above all, be honest with yourself!

Try not to ignore and push through difficulties you may be having. Instead, talk to your employer or GP about any support you may need, and remember that our helpline is also available to support and advise.

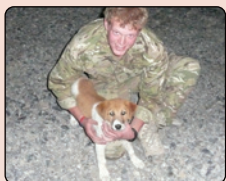
For further information and tips, see our factsheet *Returning to work after brain injury*, which you can download from our website or by scanning the QR code.



Iain's return

When Gloucestershire man Iain Moore was seriously hurt in a head-on collision in 2013, his life changed forever.

Having served ten years in the British Army, Iain found himself medically discharged, living with a traumatic brain injury and all the challenges it brings.



But Iain's desire to speed up his recovery fuelled his aspiration to learn more about improving his overall health. Delving into research through audiobooks and podcasts, he discovered the world of barefoot shoes, which would help change the course of his life once again.

Iain began wearing barefoot shoes which have thin flexible soles and a foot-shaped toe-box compared to conventional shoes. Finding them of benefit to his body, he decided to look for similar shoes for his young son.

However, those he found were incredibly expensive. Disappointed, Iain decided to solve the problem himself. And so his business BGreater was born.

Iain contracted the support of industry-leading children's shoe designers to produce a range of affordable barefoot school shoes and trainers, discovering a new passion along the way.

"After being medically discharged from the Army, I really struggled with a lack of purpose," said Iain. "Having kids helped give me some purpose, but it wasn't until I started BGreater that I really felt that same purpose again.

"I tried for the first eight years post-TBI to find a job, and it didn't work many times. The important thing was not to see it as a failure. When something didn't work, I would ask myself why it didn't work and learn from it. I didn't have the self-awareness to start with, so I asked those around me. Never fail; always learn!

"One of the things I learnt, as I have good and bad days and I still forget things and get muddled when tired, is that I needed to work for myself. I tried a few different ideas before I started

BGreater. I realised that I needed to find work which would fit me and not fit myself into a job."

As well as providing him with a renewed sense of purpose, Iain also uses BGreater to help others.

"Children often outgrow shoes before they outwear them, so BGreater runs an initiative where we take our preloved pairs of shoes and recondition them to donate to children's charity Sal's Shoes," he said.

This year, BGreater has launched its 'first-step' barefoot shoe named for Neil Alden Armstrong who took the 'first steps' on the moon. Iain's shoes have also topped the 2023 list of best running shoes for children in Runner's World.

"If you asked me ten years ago when I was still serving in the Army, what would I be doing now, I'd never have said this," he said.

"But from my military background, having integrity and striving to do better are values that are important to me still.

"I still feel the impact of my collision every day. Years ago, I gave up trying to be 'Iain' again; I'm just 'Iain Mk2' now. I'm similar but different."



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INTERVIEW: A Q&A with Cognitant

As we continue moving into the age of digital technology, healthcare companies are finding new and innovative ways to deliver key services to patients, often by offering easy to access support and information at the touch of a button. Long-term conditions such as brain injury can harness the benefits of these new innovations. We spoke to one company who are working doing just that; using technology in positive ways to support those who need it most.



Cognitant – an award-winning digital health company who's mission is 'to empower people with clear, reliable health information' - have been developing a new app for stroke survivors called My Stroke Companion.

Here, Cognitant Senior Researcher Louis explains more about how these advances in technology can improve the lives of stroke survivors.

What is My Stroke Companion?

It's an online platform designed to provide personalised, reliable, and local information to stroke survivors and their families.

What can it offer survivors of stroke?

The app includes information about the type of stroke, medications, rehabilitation and how to navigate life after stroke. We hope that it empowers patients and their families to understand their stroke and planned care pathway after leaving hospital. It's important that we only provide information relevant to the individual, selected by relevant healthcare professionals.

How did the idea for My Stroke Companion come about?

Well, currently most patients have access to general information about strokes that is not specific or tailored to their stroke, or their specific care plan, or their locality. There is such a range of varied and often contradicting

information available about stroke, and it can sometimes be difficult to identify what is true and what is not.

What are the next steps for My Stroke Companion?

We are currently expanding the platform to add additional topics. People will also be able to access research opportunities and track their health information, including blood pressure and exercise levels. We are also working to ensure that information can be updated even when a person leaves the hospital, and are implementing features such as medication reminders, push notifications and the ability to set personal goals.

How can people find out more?

Currently, My Stroke Companion is only available to stroke survivors and caregivers at certain NHS hospitals – and eligible people will receive further information from their care team. However, if you'd like to find out more about our work, visit www.cognitant.com or get in touch with us.

SHINING A LIGHT

on a dark side of brain injury

The emotional impact of concussion

Concussion, otherwise known as mild traumatic brain injury, is a widely discussed topic these days.

Recent guidelines such as the DCMS' Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport and the International Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport have helped to shine a spotlight on concussion diagnosis and management. But what remains less talked about, despite being debilitating

(and, tragically, sometimes fatal) is the emotional impact of concussion and subsequent post-concussion syndrome.

Please note that this article contains themes that may distress some readers. Contact our Helpline for emotional support and advice on 0808 800 244 (Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm) or helpline@headway.org.uk.

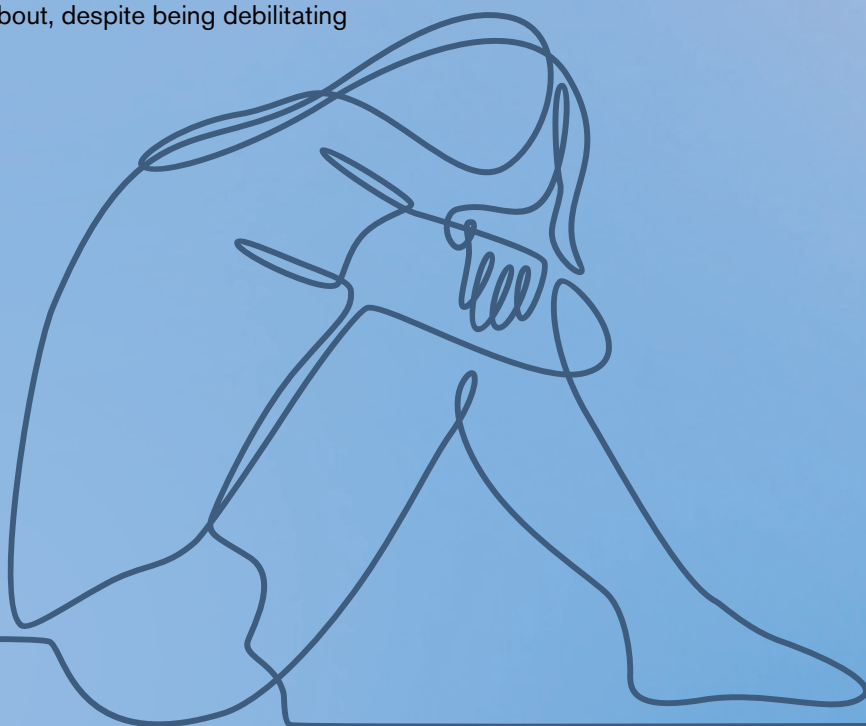
Mild by name but not by nature

Despite being classified as 'mild', the impact of concussion can be anything but, with many people reporting emotional difficulties such as depression and anxiety after concussion. Tragically, in some cases, these emotional effects can be so intense as to cause thoughts or acts of self-harm or suicide.

Research suggests that:

- Around a third of people develop depression after concussion
- Depression can continue for many years after the initial concussion
- A history of depression is a strong predictor of anxiety and depression after concussion
- Depression after traumatic brain injury is distinct from other types of depression
- Experiencing concussion and/or mild traumatic brain injury is associated with an increased risk of suicide

Depression after concussion may be the result of damage being sustained to parts of the brain responsible for mood and emotional regulation, or disruption of hormonal systems. Or there may be fears and concerns about living with the ongoing impact of the concussion.



One factor that can lead to depression is a lack of information, which makes some people think they are 'going mad'.



Coping with concussion

Whatever the underlying cause, **help is available**, and you should not feel alone. Below we offer some guidance on how you can help yourself and get professional support.

Read about concussion - one factor that can lead to depression is a lack of information, which makes some people think they are 'going mad'. Visit our website to find plenty of resources on concussion. Be assured that your

symptoms, while difficult to cope with, are 'normal' and help is available.

Maintain healthy habits - try to have a good sleep routine, as depression and anxiety lead to interrupted sleep and the resulting tiredness can make the problems worse. Have a healthy diet, drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol.

Slow down - mindfulness, yoga, meditation, or other relaxation methods may help. Although there is limited research to prove their effectiveness, brain injury survivors often report benefitting from them.

Journal your feelings - write down your worries and work through them one at a time.

Mindset is key - try to think positively and don't dwell too much on negative things. Maintaining a positive outlook can significantly improve your rate of recovery.

Talk, talk, talk - talk through your worries with family, friends, a support group, or your GP. Visit Headway's online communities such as **healthunlocked.com/headway** to connect with others or contact your nearest Headway group or branch.

If you have suicidal thoughts do seek help immediately. Your GP can help or, if thoughts are particularly strong, attend A&E. It's not uncommon that people can feel despair after a significant life event such as a head injury. Seeking help and talking about it can be lifesaving.

If your problems persist and you are worried about your state of mind, see your GP. Make sure the GP understands that your depression stems from your injury and its effects, and ask about referral to a neuropsychologist, neuropsychiatrist or a counsellor who specialises in depression after head injury.

It is particularly important to seek professional advice if you have a history of depression from before the injury, as this may make it more likely

that you will experience depression now.

Headway's publications *Depression after brain injury* and *Anxiety after brain injury* offer detailed information about these conditions, as well as directing readers to relevant support organisations and useful apps.

Visit our Information Library on the Headway website to access these resources.



In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the environmental and social impact of our consumption patterns. Second Hand September, a global campaign initiated by charitable organisations, has gained significant momentum as a way to promote sustainability, support the economy, and benefit the charity sector.



Summer of fundraising

Another way that people around the UK volunteer their time for Headway – the brain injury association is through fundraising.

Whether it's making, walking, running, competing or, if you're Giles (read more about his efforts on page 24), rowing 1700 miles across the Atlantic,

individual fundraising plays a huge part in ensuring the continuation of services for brain injury survivors across the UK.

This has been a busy summer of inspirational fundraising and every single person who supports Headway

is a hero. In the coming pages we share just a few of the stories of the people doing great things to support brain injury survivors.



Get involved!

Would you like the opportunity to support brain injury survivors while taking on a personal challenge? Read about Headway's upcoming events:

Great North Run

10th September

The event is closed for signups but if you have a place already then you can join the Facebook group! Search Team Headway - AJ Bell Great North Run 2023 on Facebook.

Escape the Wild

21st September

Take the opportunity to enjoy the last few days of summer in the outdoors at Escape the Wild!

Great South Run

15th October

This 10-mile run is one of the last running events of the season! Don't miss it.

Royal Parks Half Marathon

8th October

Deadline to sign up is 1st September but keep an eye on the Headway social media channels for all the action.

Sound great? Head to our website www.headway.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise. Or use the QR code.



Giles' adventure across the Atlantic

This summer, Giles Johnson set off on a journey of a lifetime which he called 'an awfully big row.' He's being super modest, of course, because what he achieved was a 1700-mile journey across the Atlantic Ocean.

GILES
RAISED OVER
£5,500!



Giles and his friend Matthew raised thousands of pounds for several charities – including Headway – and potentially broke a world record!

They set off in their boat, Hurricane, from Canada, on June 22, 2023. From there, the duo rowed to Dingle, Co Kerry, on the west coast of Ireland, battling stormy seas and spotting giant icebergs, awe-inspiring sunsets, and sea life aplenty.

The pair finished the epic journey in 36 days, 11 hours and 30 minutes. They are now eagerly awaiting confirmation of whether their time has beaten the world record for rowing West to East – and whether at a combined age of 117 years, they are the oldest two-man crew to do so!

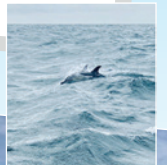
Jen Murgatroyd, Director of Fundraising at Headway – the brain injury association, said: "Our congratulations and heartfelt thanks go to Giles for his phenomenal effort. It will significantly impact people affected by brain injury throughout the UK, and for that, we're incredibly grateful."

"It has been such an adventure following this story and we're certain the efforts of Giles and Matthew will inspire fundraisers for years to come."

Giles' journey:

- Was for a friend, William, who sustained a life-changing brain injury
- Took place with another friend, Matthew Ponsonby, in a 'wonderful' boat called Hurricane, which is an R25 ocean-going rowing boat
- Took him from Newfoundland, Canada, to the west coast of Ireland in 36 days, 11 hours and 30 minutes
- Saw him travel more than 1700 nautical miles on a self-funded adventure
- Involved land support – such as weather watching and technical help – from a world record holder called Charlie Pitcher
- Felt like a 'detox' for Giles, with a huge focus simply on the task at hand
- Saw them stationary for FOUR DAYS due to a stiff wind in the wrong direction
- Involved dozens of BabyBel and Ginger Nut sandwiches
- And a message of encouragement from double-Olympic gold medallist rower and Headway Vice President, James Cracknell OBE
- Ended on Friday 28th July 2023
- And may have broken the world record for speed of crossing!

Did you know? In the time it's taken Giles to row across the Atlantic, around 35,000 people have been admitted to hospital with an acquired brain injury



Ben's tribute to his grandad



Ben Fowler from Hartley Wintney in Hampshire has been fundraising as a tribute to his beloved grandad, by challenging himself to run 75km every month for three months straight.

The challenge forms part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award but is also in memory of his grandad, who would've been 75 this year.

His efforts have raised over £1,000 for Headway – the brain injury association.

In 2001, Ben's grandad Alan Hamer sustained a life-changing brain injury in a road traffic collision. Headway supported him and his family in the aftermath, as Ben's mum, Emily, explained: "He was unconscious for nearly six weeks with horrific brain injuries and physical injuries.

"Within a few days, while Dad was in the Neurological Critical Care Unit in Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, we were introduced to a lady from Headway. She talked us through the realities and practicalities of life with a brain injury survivor. She was kind but honest and helped to prepare us for the long and difficult journey ahead.

"Dad spent six weeks in intensive care, a month on a high dependency ward and another couple of months on a rehab unit before coming home and later spent another six months as a day patient in a head injury rehab unit. Headway helped guide us throughout."

Sadly, Alan passed away earlier this year after an unexpected seizure and stroke. Despite his sadness, helping others and keeping his grandad's memory alive helped motivate Ben.

"I'm very proud of the work I've done for Headway, and I am hugely grateful to all those that donated. Finding the motivation each day to go and run was a massive challenge, but it thankfully didn't stop me from completing my fundraising goal."

Despite completing his running challenge and meeting his initial fundraising target, Ben isn't stopping there. He's hoping to raise even more money for Headway.

"He's decided to keep it going and branch out into more awareness raising, doing talks and presentations to local groups and to run fundraising events to keep the donations coming in," said Emily.

"We are very proud of Ben. It was an amazing thing to undertake at such a sad and difficult time. He began running just before Grandad's funeral, and everyone was so supportive."



Jodie's charity polo event



Jodie Saunders arranged a charity polo event, in support of Headway – the brain injury association. Jodie, a keen horse rider, suffered a brain injury when she came off her horse at university.

She said of the accident: "My brain injury didn't appear that serious at first, however I had a scan and they found a bleed on my brain which turned out to be quite serious. My balance has been quite affected, I needed help to walk. Now it affects my emotions, my anxiety. I can't concentrate, and I get easily fatigued. Even making a tea can be strenuous."

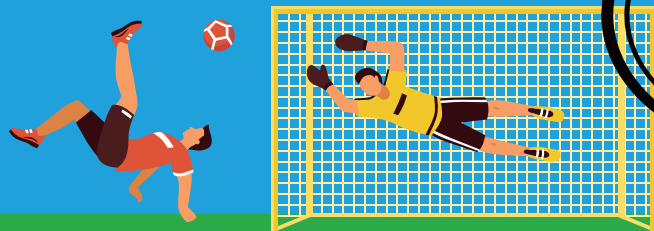
Jodie joined Fox Pitt's yard in 2016 on work experience and loved it so much she returned a year later. English equestrian William Fox-Pitt MBE also experienced a fall at a competition in France which left him in a coma for two weeks in 2015.

Jodie is a member of the New Forest Polo Club which has chosen Headway – the brain injury association as their charity of the year. Her fabulous fundraising efforts this year culminated in the Kuseyo Cup Charity Day in aid of Headway in August.

A big thank you to Jodie and the New Forest Polo Club for their support this year.



Aldermore's charity football tournament



THEY
RAISED OVER
£16,000!

Aldermore and former England footballer Mark Hateley, teamed up to support Headway's annual charity football tournament for the sixth consecutive year.

The five-a-side tournament, which featured a total of 21 teams on the day, raised over £16,000 for Headway – the brain injury association.

Teams included five Aldermore and MotoNovo Finance teams. The winning side, Portman Asset Finance Ltd took home the Adam Massen Cup, named in memory of Adam Massen, a member of Aldermore's asset finance team who tragically died from a brain injury in 2014.

Mark Hateley made 32 appearances for the England national team from



1984 to 1992, scoring nine goals. He was a member of the squads for the 1986 FIFA World Cup and UEFA Euro 1988.

Amber Perry, Corporate Partnerships Manager at Headway - the brain injury association, said: "We are really grateful to Aldermore for sponsoring this event for the sixth year. The donations raised from the event will ensure more brain injury survivors and their families have access to the vital support they need."



Sarah's mindfulness event

SARAH
RAISED OVER
£200!



Personal Trainer and rehabilitation specialist Sarah Barrington suffered a brain haemorrhage after being hit by a motorbike while on holiday in Malaga, leading to a month long recovery in a Spanish hospital.

She ran a fundraising and awareness for Headway in June, featuring dance, strength training, yoga, mindfulness and meditation, and gave visitors a powerful talk on her brain injury and her recovery.

Speaking at the event, Sarah said: "I wanted to make everyone aware of the work Headway does. They really supported me and I'm just one of many people who suffer brain injuries. It happens more often than you'd think."

Sarah, who is London based, also works as a rehabilitation specialist for Nuffield Health, where she has come across other brain injury survivors. She has plans to get more involved with Headway through giving talks and working with survivors in the future.





Concussion Awareness Campaign

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The Headway Approved Provider Scheme

The Headway Approved Provider's Scheme's mission is to collaborate with neurorehabilitation units to continuously provide exceptional care for those affected by brain injury and their family members.

This service is a testament to our unwavering dedication to this important cause. Many neurorehabilitation units are collaborating with us and we hope for more to join us on this journey!

Family members and brain injury survivors can find a list of current care providers on the Headway website [headway.org.uk/supporting-you/in-your-area](https://www.headway.org.uk/supporting-you/in-your-area)



Training with Headway

At Headway, we deliver a range of brain injury training courses both online and in-house. We offer a variety of courses to those new to the world of brain injury and professionals working with brain injury survivors.

We understand that exploring the world of brain injury and its effects can often seem daunting and confusing. That is why our courses have been designed to explore these topics in a clear, concise, and easy to understand way.

This year we expanded our training opportunities with the introduction of four new courses:

An introduction to brain injury

- This session has been created for family members and those new to the world of brain injury. It will give attendees a foundation knowledge of brain injury and a better understanding of the effects on the survivor and their carers/family.

Behaviours that challenge

- We'll start this session looking at the main models that explain challenging behaviour. We will then go on to explore proactive and reactive strategies to manage those behaviours.

Understanding MY brain injury

- Delivered by a brain injury survivor, this 40-minute session has been created to help brain injury survivors explore the hidden effects of brain injury and the rehabilitation journey.

Mindfulness and breathing exercises

- This practical session has been designed for family members, brain injury survivors and carers. It aims to look at the benefits of mindfulness and teach simple and easy to learn breathing exercises.

Find out more on our website [headway.org.uk/training](https://www.headway.org.uk/training)

Headway How-To

The Headway Brain Injury ID Card

Why should I apply?

This card can provide added confidence in everyday social scenarios. Each card is personalised, helping you to explain the effects of your brain injury and request any support you may need.

How do I apply?

The quickest way to apply is on the Headway website. Visit headway.org.uk/idcard or scan the QR code. You can apply for the card yourself, or ask someone, such as a family member, friend, or Headway support worker from your local group or branch, to apply on your behalf.

What do I need to apply?

To issue you with a Headway Brain Injury Identity Card, we need to see verification of your acquired brain injury.

The document must show:

- Your full name
- Your date of birth
- The cause of your brain injury
- Where the document was produced (for example, the medical professional's signature and the hospital's letterhead).

What documents do you accept?

We accept hospital discharge letters, medical notes, and letters from medical professionals (including occupational therapists). If you already access services from a Headway group or branch, we also accept a letter from them which includes your date of birth or email from them as verification of brain injury.

Please note that we do not accept PIP forms, appointment letters, or screenshots of the NHS App as these do not meet the above criteria.

A passport-style photograph is also required for your Headway Brain Injury Identity Card.

Please ensure:

- The photo is in colour
- The photo is clear and in focus
- The photo is without any creases or tears
- You are facing forward and looking straight at the camera
- Sunglasses are not worn (prescription glasses are permitted)
- You do not have a head covering (unless it's for religious or medical reasons)

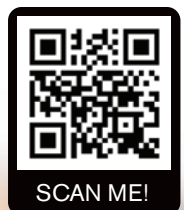
You will be prompted to upload your photo as part of the online application process.

What happens if I don't have these documents?

If you do not have brain injury verification documents, we can contact your nominated medical professional on your behalf to seek this verification. Please note, however, that busy healthcare professionals often take a long time to respond to these requests. Therefore, we strongly encourage applicants to upload verification with their application where possible.

We hope you find these instructions helpful when applying for your Headway Brain Injury Identity Card. You can read more about them on the website headway.org.uk/idcard

Or alternatively scan this QR code to head straight to the application page.



Making Hats (for Headway)

Alison Goodrum is a brain injury survivor from Norwich with a real creative talent. She's a milliner.



"The craft of millinery, and my development as a milliner, has been an exceptionally important part of my convalescence. A meditative practice. A creative act. A silver lining. The list goes on."

Alison had been suffering with troubling symptoms such as headaches and vomiting for many years, before receiving a life-changing diagnosis.

"When the consultant told me I had a brain tumour back in December 2018, a seemingly random jumble of shapes and colours - or, in my case signs and symptoms - snapped into sharp focus," she said.

"It may appear crass to say that my diagnosis was a welcome relief but, for me, discovering there was a clear reason for feeling so achingly awful was a powerful moment of revelation.

"I remember phoning the Headway UK helpline. It was just a few minutes before 5pm on a particularly bleak and wintry Friday afternoon. I thought it highly likely that no one would be around to answer my call. But I was wrong. Headway was there for me, in every sense. I was given precious time, kind words, excellent advice, as well as details of the charity's Brain Injury ID card, which I now carry constantly as a tremendous source of reassurance."

After Alison's diagnosis, she had a four month-long wait for surgery before a 12-hour operation at Addenbrooke's hospital in April 2019.

"Due to the skill of my surgical and nursing team, to whom I am indebted, my operation

milliner [mil-uh-ner]

noun

1. a person who makes or sells women's hats.



was declared successful and went as well as anyone could ever have hoped," she said. "Astonishingly, I was discharged in less than 48 hours, with low odds of my tumour returning. I consider myself to be one of the lucky ones."

Despite the challenges Alison has faced due to the tumour, she has managed to find silver linings from her experience and the opportunity to further explore a special talent for hat-making through her studio Goodrum & Merryweather.

"Whilst there have been significant losses, disappointments and trauma along the way, there have also been some surprising gains. More time spent with family, especially my long-suffering parents who shouldered an enormous part of the responsibility for my care; developing a new skill in the form of lip reading, possibly the best superpower short of invisibility; and, crucially, the opportunity to grow my creative interests, specifically in the form of hat-making and millinery, from mere hobby to serious concern."

Using her talent for hat-making, Alison is continuing to raise awareness for the work of Headway – the brain injury association, particularly following the summer's Hats for Headway Campaign.

Alison added: "Making a hat is an absorbing, labour-intensive process involving painstaking working-by-hand. Taking time is one of its core principles. Slow and steady, with occasional flashes of inspiration; very much like my own recovery."

You can find out more about Alison and her studio Goodrum & Merryweather on her website - goodrumandmerryweather.wordpress.com - or by following her on **Instagram @goodrumandmerryweather**.

Creative

Expression

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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
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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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