

From Awareness to Action



the brain injury association

Demanding better care for people affected by brain injury



Headway - the brain injury association Manifesto 2024

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An acquired brain injury (ABI) can strike anyone at any moment, instantly altering the course of life. An ABI is an injury sustained to the brain after birth that can profoundly impact vital functions like walking, talking, thinking, and feeling, often resulting in severe and permanent losses. It can mean saying goodbye to both the life you once knew and the person you once were.

Injuries to the brain can have various causes such as trauma, e.g. falls, assaults or road accidents, in addition to stroke, tumours, infections, or illnesses.

The physical ramifications of brain injury are vast and varied, encompassing mobility challenges, coordination issues, limb stiffness or weakness, hemiplegia, ataxia, sensory impairments, fatigue, speech difficulties, and epilepsy.

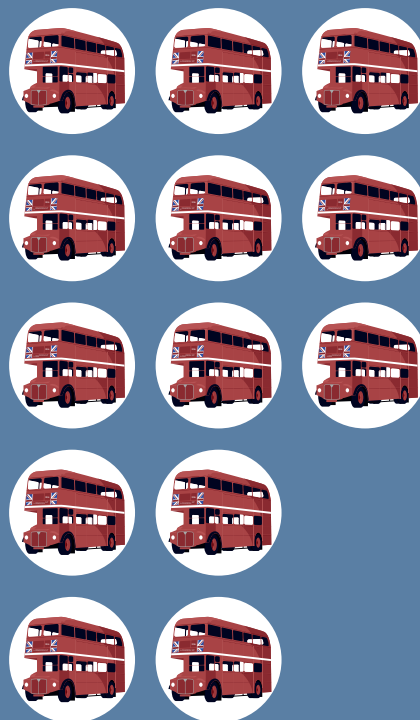
Moreover, many survivors contend with debilitating hidden effects – cognitive, psychological, emotional, and behavioural difficulties – leading to issues like lack

of insight, impulsive behaviour, risk of misunderstanding, communication struggles, and social isolation.

These hidden effects often fluctuate and are widely misunderstood..

Every 90 seconds someone is admitted to hospital with an acquired brain injury.

That's enough to fill 13 double decker buses every day.



Over the course of the next parliament around 1.8 million people will be admitted to hospital with an acquired brain injury.

Urgent government action is needed to improve the lives of those currently affected by brain injuries, as well as those who will be affected in the future.

Every 90 seconds

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Brain injury can affect anyone, anytime.

Headway's FIVE ASKS of government

Headway is calling on the next government to deliver meaningful change. We want the government to **understand** brain injury, to **prioritise** brain injury, and to **invest** in services to support brain injury survivors and their loved ones.

ASK 1



FAIR ACCESS

end the neurorehabilitation postcode lottery

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Increase the number of neurorehabilitation professionals, in particular neuropsychologists.

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Ensure that commissioning of specialist neurorehabilitation services – acute, post-acute and community-based – is sufficient and consistent across the UK.

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Improve collaborative working between NHS, local authorities and VCSE organisations to ensure funding for in-patient and community neurorehabilitation and support services is sufficient and the transition between services for neurorehabilitation is seamless.

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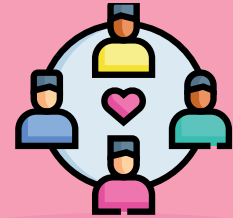
Ensure there is a named neurorehabilitation lead in every health authority across the UK.

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ASK 2



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

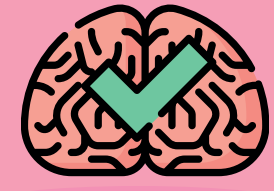
invest in local brain injury reablement services

Without delay, provide urgent financial support for local community-based rehabilitation and reablement services.

Acknowledge the effectiveness of early interventions in rehabilitation and commit to securing long-term and consistent funding for these essential services nationwide.

Provide a clear clinical and care pathway which includes ongoing rehabilitation for all brain injury survivors who need it.

ASK 3



INCREASE UNDERSTANDING

raising awareness of brain injury

Compile precise statistics from all government departments to gain a comprehensive understanding of the widespread prevalence of brain injuries.

Launch a public awareness campaign to educate the public about the impacts of brain injury, aiming to reduce stigma and enhance support for survivors.

Recognise and promote Headway's Brain Injury Identity Card across all government departments and agencies to facilitate proper identification and support for brain injury survivors.

Ensure that frontline public service staff interacting with ABI survivors receive specialised training on understanding brain injury and are equipped to utilise brain injury screening processes. This includes staff in social care, homelessness services, veterans' support, domestic abuse survivor services, and the criminal justice system.

Promote awareness and understanding of ABI in non-government organisations where staff may encounter ABI survivors such as those working with homeless individuals, domestic abuse survivors, veterans, and offenders.

Introduce mandatory training in concussion awareness throughout sport at all levels alongside or as part of safeguarding training to enhance awareness and safety measures in relation to head injuries in sport.

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90 seconds**

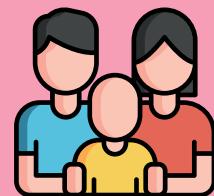
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ASK 4



FAMILY CARE

enhance support for brain injury survivors' loved ones

Enhance acute-phase support for families and carers by:

Providing facilities for families to stay close to brain injury survivors in specialised neurorehabilitation settings.

Establishing an accessible grant scheme (modelled on Headway's Emergency Fund) to assist families in the immediate aftermath of an ABI. Recognising that family members need to be near their loved ones during this critical period, this support acknowledges the likelihood that they are unable to work.

Improve long-term support for families and carers by:

Ensuring improved and equitable access to community-based support and rehabilitation services for brain injury survivors.

Enhancing access to counselling and other support services for family members affected by ABI.

Facilitating the early identification of carers by clinical staff and hospital social workers. This allows for seamless connection to local authority services and ensures that every carer of a brain injury survivor undergoes a comprehensive carer's needs assessment.

ASK 5



REFORM SOCIAL CARE

make social care equitable and sustainable

Commit to an ongoing increase in social care funding so that it is sufficient and sustainable, and brain injury survivors can access the care they need to lead fulfilling lives.

Provide mandatory training for social care staff to understand and address the unique needs of brain injury survivors.

Improve staffing levels by making social care careers more appealing through better pay, career prospects, and working conditions.

Promote the closer collaboration of health and social services to ensure seamless transitions and continuity of care for individuals with complex needs living with acquired brain injuries.

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If you need help or support, or have a question
about brain injury, contact our freephone nurse-led helpline:

0808 800 2244

helpline@headway.org.uk

0115 924 0800 | enquiries@headway.org.uk



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