

Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ



the brain injury association

Dear Chancellor,

Ahead of the Autumn Statement, I am writing to urge you to budget for brain injury by prioritising direct investment to support lifeline services and survivors while helping the government to achieve its aims of helping disabled people to regain independence.

Headway – the brain injury association (Headway UK) supports a network of affiliated local charities providing essential rehabilitation and support for survivors and their carers. These services include brain injury rehabilitation, caregiver assistance, social reintegration programmes, vocational support, community outreach, and respite care.

However, without sustainable, targeted funding, these vital community-based rehabilitation services are at risk of disappearing due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, reduced local authority funding and a failing commissioning system.

In the past three years, seven local Headway charities have been forced to close due to unsustainable financial pressures, most recently Headway Northampton and Headway Norfolk and Waveney, which both closed this month.

Our *When Funding Fails* report, published in July of this year, shows that only 37% of local Headway charities believe they can sustain services over the next five years without changes to the way in which local authorities or ICBs commission specialist rehabilitation or reablement services.

These charities are vital partners to government and local authorities in supporting survivors and families, but many are struggling to survive. Without them, families face unbearable pressure. Carers will be left without respite and unable to meet loved ones' needs, leading to breakdown. This will force local authorities to step in with costly long-term care, such as residential placements or supported living.

Protecting these services now will prevent additional strain on statutory services and avoid significant future costs, while continuing to deliver savings to the public purse.

I recently discussed these issues with your government colleague in the Department for Health and Social Care, Minister Dalton. I was grateful for her commitment to work with the charity sector, recognising as she did in our meeting that the government needs a sustainable charity sector in order to achieve its ambitions of reducing inequalities.

While we welcome the publication of the Minister's forthcoming ABI Action Plan, any such plan must be matched by financial commitment. I recognise that the government's funding options are limited at present. However, there are clear opportunities for the Treasury to invest in supporting brain injury survivors:

- **Investment in community-based rehabilitation services:** Increase and ringfence funding for community-based specialist brain injury services, such as those provided by Headway.

This should be combined with national training for local authority and ICB commissioners and social workers on the complex, hidden, and fluctuating effects of brain injury, which are often misunderstood in care assessments and result in a reliance on more costly state-funded services.

- **Funding for vocational rehabilitation:** Local Headway charities are ideally placed to provide specialist vocational rehabilitation targeted at those living with the complex and fluctuating effects of brain injury.

In April I wrote to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to propose a centrally funded national vocational rehabilitation programme to support the government's ambition to get more disabled people back into employment. While I did not receive a response, I remain of the view that if the government invested in such a programme, run by Headway UK in conjunction with its local partner charities, it would produce demonstrable results that benefit all parties.

- **Funding to reduce re-offending:** Headway is doing transformative work in the criminal justice system, providing specialist training to prison and probation staff to help them better understand and support prisoners and people on probation that are living with brain injury and, in turn, reduce reoffending.

This innovative work demonstrates how local probation services are working with Headway – but a centrally-run programme, commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, would ensure benefits of this approach are realised across the country.

I would welcome the chance to discuss these proposals and explore how Treasury investment can deliver measurable benefits for brain injury survivors while safeguarding the future of community-based support.

Thank you for your consideration and for recognising the vital role charities like Headway play in improving lives and reducing long-term costs.

Yours sincerely,



Luke Griggs
Chief Executive