Headway News

The magazine of **Headway - the brain injury association**







HEADWAY WEBINARS





We are delighted to share additional topics for this year's Headway webinar programme, which is running for its third successive year! Our webinars cover a range of topics, delivered by experts in their field, in support of rebuilding the lives of brain injury survivors.









Things to know:

Hosted on Zoom, our webinars are free and open to all, including brain injury survivors, carers, family members, health and social care professionals, and anyone interested in the discussed topic.

Each session is 30 minutes long, followed by a 15-minute Q&A with the speaker.

The sessions are recorded and available to watch on our YouTube channel for those unable to attend the event.

Upcoming sessions for 2025 include:

26 June: Head injury in the Criminal Justice System - in Scotland Delivered by Professor Tom McMillan, Professor Emeritus

> 24 July: Personality change after brain injury Delivered by Dr Vaughan Bell, Neuropsychologist

4 September: Epilepsy after brain injury Delivered by Clare Walton, Director of Research at Epilepsy Research Institute

23 October: Post-traumatic stress disorder and brain injury Delivered by Dr Lucilla Carlacci De Mattia, Clinical Psychologist

20 November: Cognitive communication issues after brain injury Delivered by Anisha Desai, Speech and Language Therapist with a specialism in brain injury

> For more information and to register interest, visit headway.org.uk/webinars or use the QR code below.



Welcome

Welcome to the summer edition of Headway News.

In this edition

we reflect on

the strength, achievements, and resilience of the brain injury community, particularly during this year's Action for Brain Injury Week (ABI Week).

Taking place from 19-25 May, our annual awareness campaign was titled On a good day and explored the often hidden, fluctuating effects of brain injury. On pages 12-14, survivors share honest accounts of how symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, memory loss, and mood changes can vary drastically from day to day. The campaign not only helped increase public understanding but also reached the heart of policymaking with a cross-party meeting in parliament to discuss the urgent needs of people living with acquired brain injury.

Elsewhere, we celebrate some truly inspiring stories of recovery and determination. On page 27, we meet Alex, a brain injury survivor who defied the odds to complete the London Marathon. Dressed in a homemade brain costume to raise awareness of post-concussion syndrome and vital funds for Headway, his pride in crossing the finish line is evident to all.

From land to sea, page 26 introduces us to British sailor Robin Elsey-Webb, who is making an extraordinary return to offshore racing following a devastating brain injury in 2023. Robin will take on the 2025 Fastnet Race as part of the Kernow Ocean Racing in support of Headway.

Creativity takes centre stage on page 25, where we share the journey of award-winning milliner Carrie Jenkinson. After her traumatic brain injury, Carrie feared her creative career was over, until she bounced back to create headpieces for none other than Lady Gaga.

Finally, we're thrilled to announce the return of the **Headway Annual** Awards, taking place at London's Iuxurious Royal Lancaster Hotel on Friday 12 December. Turn the page for details on how to nominate a brain injury hero in your life.

Colin Morris **Director of Communications**



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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Website:

www.headway.org.uk

Advertising:

CommunicationsTeam@headway.org.uk

Fundraising:

community@headway.org.uk

Volunteer!

Would you like to help us improve lives after brain injury? You can join us today in our shops or at our events as a Headway Volunteer. Read more about volunteering on our website: www.headway.org.uk/ donate/volunteer

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The Headway Annual Awards are back and this year we're heading to the elegant 5-star Royal Lancaster Hotel in London.

The Headway Annual Awards celebrate the inspirational achievements of people living with brain injury and the dedication of those working to support them. Each finalist, chosen by a selection panel, will be invited along with a guest to a glittering luncheon at The Royal Lancaster in London on Friday 12 December 2025.

Do you know someone who has defied their brain injury to achieve a great milestone this year? Or perhaps you know someone that often goes above and beyond when caring for someone with a brain injury? Or maybe you know of a long-standing Headway volunteer who is overdue public recognition and thanks?

The categories this year are:

- Alex Richardson Achiever of the Year sponsored by Slater & Gordon
- · Carer of the Year (sponsorship opportunity available)
- · Volunteer of the Year sponsored by Anthony Gold Solicitors LLP
- Stephen McAleese Outstanding Contribution to Headway Award (sponsorship opportunity available)
- The Headway Extra Mile Award for staff working in local Headway charities, sponsored by Irwin Mitchell

Nominate someone special now!

Head to headway.org.uk/nominate or scan the QR code.



Your views

The gift of a good day

As part of our ABI Week On a good day survey, we asked brain injury survivors and carers to tell us what makes a day 'good', so that others may take some inspiration from their words.

Here are some of the things shared with us.

"Receiving positive feedback and/or supportive comments regarding my behaviour/ achievements (even if only minor)."

"Being able to do such as playing pool or going to

and using fatigue

management techniques

that I learned from the occupational therapist."

activities they enjoy football matches."

"If I've achieved something on my own that I would probably avoid, like using a bank card or gardening. If I've actually remembered a day and date or what is happening on that day, makes me a little bit more 'worthwhile'."

"When he is well-rested and isn't trying to do too much. Well hydrated and eating well."

"I often find doing exercise alone helps to contribute to feeling happy with myself and my brain and body's ability."

> "Being with like-minded people at Headway who understand and can relate to you."

ON A GOOD DAY I CAN HAVE **A LAUGH** ON A BAD DAY I BOTTLE MY ANGER SEE BOTH SIDES OF BRAIN INJURY **BRAIN INJURY WEEK 2025** "Being well-rested

> "When my plans and expectations go according to plan, it gives me a good feeling."

"Generally, just when something positive happens - I have a positive interaction with someone, get a new job, get paid and feel financially secure. These contribute positively to my mood, which I believe help my symptoms or I notice them less at least."







Network News

Recognition for Headway Suffolk

Headway Suffolk supports people who have had a brain injury through traumatic accident, stroke, virus, tumour, neurological condition or other similar event.

They joined three other charities who were presented with trophies by High Sheriff Yvonne Gilchrist-Mason, at the Apex in Bury St Edmunds. The event was also a celebration of 20 years of the Suffolk Community Foundation, a grant making organisation, bringing together philanthropists, private trusts, local businesses and the public sector with local charities. They support the role of High Sheriff - a ceremonial position that changes annually.

All the arts with **Headway Gloucestershire** for ABI Week



To celebrate Action for Brain Injury Week 2025, James Edward Marks of PlayLa.Bz spearheaded a collaboration with Music Works and CoDa Dance Group, and Headway Gloucestershire.

It was an amazing day, which included a special day of dance, music, immersive tech and play at Headway Gloucestershire. The goal was to foster greater understanding of the

challenges brain injury survivors have in navigating daily life.

"It was a very magical day with the Headway Gloucestershire crew, seeing the range and diversity of ABI survivors that they support daily, trying new sensory feel good things to engage with inner & outer world feelings."

(James, Createch CIC Co-Founder)

After the first session, the team put together a visual which showed what participants felt after taking part.

Headway Cardiff's David hailed as 'inspirational' by local MP

Award-winning brain injury survivor David Sinden was hailed as 'inspirational' by his local MP in his efforts in helping others.

Digital artist David, from Penarth in Wales, met with Stephen Doughty MP during a visit to Headway Cardiff & South East Wales. The pair chatted with fellow service users and discussed the importance of raising awareness of living with a brain injury, as well as enjoying David's portrait exhibition After?, where he documents survivors of brain injury.

Stephen Doughty MP said:

"Brain injuries have a profound impact on people's lives, so it was great to hear all about the fantastic work done by Headway to support survivors. From suffering a serious brain injury to now dedicating his time to helping others, David's story is a truly inspirational one."



Coming soon: The ABI Games!

Well-loved event returns to **Worcester University Arena for 2025**

Headway Worcestershire is thrilled to announce that the third ABI Games will be held at Worcester University Arena on 20 August 2025!

How can I participate?

Building on the phenomenal success of previous events, this year's games promises to be even bigger and better, with significant interest from Headway groups and branches across the UK, eager to participate both in person and virtually.

"This exciting expansion reflects the growing recognition of the ABI Games as a powerful platform to celebrate the resilience and achievements of individuals with acquired brain injuries.

"We are committed to supporting all groups and branches in maximizing their fundraising efforts. It goes without saying the ABI Games also welcomes entries from any adult in the UK who has experienced an acquired brain injury." (Glen Jansen, Fundraising Manager, Headway Worcestershire)

The games will feature 24 engaging activities designed to promote inclusivity, connection, and well-being.

A unique opportunity for Headway charities and branches

Recognising the importance of supporting this vital event, Headway Worcestershire has developed a comprehensive information pack to assist other Headway charities in securing local sponsorship deals.

The pack resource also provides practical guidance and templates to help branches raise essential funds to support their participation. This can be downloaded by visiting www.abigames.org.uk.

Get involved!

Whether you plan to attend in person or participate virtually, we encourage all Headway charities and branches to join us in celebrating the achievements of individuals with acquired brain injuries.

For further information on the ABI Games, including details on participation and access to the fundraising information pack, please visit our website at www.abigames.org or contact us directly via email at abigames@hwtl.org.uk or

phone 01905 729 729

Together, we can make the 2025 ABI Games an unforgettable event that inspires, unites, and empowers!







Network News

Headway writes to Government ministers regarding welfare reform proposals

Luke Griggs, Headway's CEO, has written to Liz Kendall, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Stephen Timms, Minister of State for Social Security and Disability, following the publication of the Green Paper, Pathways to Work, in March.

Luke highlighted that some brain injury survivors may be able to return to work following their injury, and would welcome that opportunity, but the lack of rehabilitation services across the UK means that this is not possible. He also pointed out that, with some Headway charities having closed and more at risk of closure, this problem will only get worse.

Headway is urging the government to:

- · Recognise the crisis facing community-based rehabilitation organisations
- Work with Headway the brain injury association to address this through investment
- Consider exploring how Headway could provide a centrally-funded national vocational rehabilitation programme to support the government's ambition to get more disabled people back into employment.

Of course, Luke also stated that many brain injury survivors, through no fault of their own, will never be able to work again, and that some aspects of the proposals risk pushing survivors into

"We ask you to work with us and to invest in reablement services where vocational support can help survivors gain employment. At the same time, we urge you to reconsider the harshest elements of these reforms, leaving survivors unable to work through no fault of their own."

(Luke Griggs)

In addition to Luke's letter, Headway will also submit a formal response to the Pathways to Work consultation.



New Parliamentary Champions for Headway

Three new parliamentarians have joined Headway as our latest Parliamentary Champions.

They are: Wendy Chamberlain (pictured), the Liberal Democrat MP for North East Fife, Ian Byrne, the Labour MP for Liverpool West Derby, and Baroness Morris of Yardley, a Labour member of the House of Lords.

Headway's Parliamentary Champions have committed to work alongside us to increase understanding of

brain injury and lobby for policy and legislative change to make the country a better place for those living with acquired brain injury.

If your Member of Parliament isn't on our list please consider asking them to become a Headway Champion. You can do this via the tool at www.writetothem.com.

You can read more about all of Headway's Parliamentary Champions at www.headway.org.uk/aboutheadway/working-with-us/ parliamentary-champions

Headway attends launch of the **All-Party Parliamentary Group for Acquired Brain Injury**

The first week of March saw the re-establishment of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Acquired Brain Injury.

APPGs are cross-party groups of MPs and members of the House of Lords, working together to champion a particular interest.

The APPG for brain injury exists to:

· Raise awareness of ABI and seek improvements in support and services for people directly affected by ABI and also their families and carers.

- Provide a voice for those who are not always heard by ministers and MPs.
- · Be the main forum for ABI in Parliament, raising key issues across health, social care and welfare which all affect people living with ABI in the UK.

The APPG has at least 20 members across both Houses of Parliament. Headway's Parliamentary Champion Sir John Hayes MP is the group's new chair, succeeding Sir Chris Bryant MP, who is now a government minister. The group's other officers, who together with Sir John lead the APPG, are MPs Andy McDonald and Ian Byrne, as well as Baroness Morris of Yardley. The APPG has a larger membership of MPs and peers from political parties across the political spectrum. The UK Acquired Brain Injury Forum is the group's secretariat.

Headway's Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Richard Wood, attended the meeting and spoke about Action for Brain Injury Week (19 - 25 May).

"The APPG enables brain injury survivors and MPs to work together in Parliament to seek improvements in support and services for people with ABI and their carers. I look forward to working with Sir John Hayes and the APPG to urge the government to fix the neurorehabilitation postcode lottery, invest in community-based reablement services, and secure a fully funded ABI strategy from the government."

(Richard Wood, Policy and Public Affairs Manager)







ANDI'S STORY:

Resilience, hope, and never giving

In November 2000, Andi Ramsay was just 19 years old 'with dreams, and a future full of possibilities', when suddenly he was 'lying in a hospital bed, skull fractured, brain bleeding.

"That day, my life changed forever," Andi said.

Andi, a personal trainer and behaviour change specialist, had been hit by a van and suffered an intracerebral haemorrhage - a catastrophic brain injury.

"Doctors weren't hopeful," he remembered. "They told my family I might not wake up.

"If I did, I'd likely never live independently again, let alone work or lead a meaningful life."

Andi proved the doctors wrong - and didn't once stop fighting.

"What followed was a battle unlike any I'd ever faced," he said. "I spent years clawing my way back to some semblance of normality.

"Physically, I had to relearn how to walk, how to use my hands, how to speak with clarity. Mentally, I fought through waves of confusion, frustration, and a deep sense of loss for the person I once was. It wasn't just my brain that was broken; my confidence, my identity, my sense of purpose - all of it was in ruins."

It took Andi 11 years to return to work,

following the results of an MRI which showed the extent of the damage he had sustained.

"A quarter of my brain looked like dead space," he said.

Andi recalls that rebuilding your life after a traumatic brain injury is 'messy, frustrating, and often painfully slow': "It isn't like a movie montage. It's trying to tie your shoelaces for the hundredth time and failing. It's staring at words on a page and feeling like they're written in another language. It's feeling like you're letting everyone around you down while fighting to keep your head above water."

But it's also about the small victories, Andi says. "The first time I walked unaided.

"The first time I managed to write my name legibly. The first time I laughed and realised it was genuine.

"Those moments, as small as they seemed, were monumental. They reminded me that progress is possible,

even when it feels like the world is against you."

Andi has now written a book, with the aim of supporting other survivors through recovery, spurred on by the strength and pride he felt being able to read again: "For me, reading survivors' stories gave me hope that I could get better."

"In those early days, when hope felt like a distant memory, I leaned on the support of organisations like Headway, who helped me rebuild my life piece by piece. They gave me the tools to relearn, to cope, and, most importantly, to believe in myself again."

That's why Andi has written Do Not Comply - something he refers to both as his 'mission' and his legacy.'

"Writing Do Not Comply was one of the hardest things I've ever done. It meant revisiting moments I'd rather forget-the fear, the pain, the heartbreak. But it also reminded me of how far I've come and how much I've learned along the way.

"It's a message to anyone who feels like they've been knocked down too many times. It's for the people who feel like giving up, who think the world has written them off. I want them to know that no matter how bad things seem, there is hope. You can climb out of the darkest places.

"To me, 'DO NOT COMPLY' is a mindset. It's about standing tall in the face of adversity and saying, 'hey, I'm not done yet."

You can find Andi's book on Amazon.



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Survivors share the fluctuating

effects of brain injury to mark

ACTION FOR BRAIN INJURY

WEEK 2025

19-25 MAY

This year brain injury survivors highlighted the gap between capabilities on a good day versus a bad day to mark Action for Brain Injury (ABI) Week 2025, Headway's annual awareness campaign.

This year's theme, On a good day, explored the fluctuating and unpredictable nature of brain injury.

The campaign, which ran from 19-25 May, put a spotlight on how symptoms - such as fatigue, headaches, mood changes and cognitive problems - can impact a brain injury survivor's ability to work, their hobbies and activities, and their relationships.

Throughout ABI Week, Headway shared real-life stories from brain injury survivors, talking candidly about living with a brain injury, exploring how some moments feel easier while others bring often debilitating challenges.



SEE BOTH SIDES OF BRAIN INJURY

BE PATIENT BE FLEXIBLE BE THERE

Raj Gataora, from Nottingham, was driving home from work in 2005 during terrible weather conditions when a deer ran in front of his car, causing him to swerve and crash.

Doctors initially thought Raj, then aged 21, wouldn't eat, drink or even breathe by himself, but he set out to "prove everyone wrong" and even went back to education, graduating from Nottingham Trent University with a degree in Criminology.

A good day to Raj, now 41, includes meeting up with peers at Headway Nottingham, where he has been attending for several years, as well as enjoying activities like rock climbing or going to the gym.

He said: "A good day for me looks like having a laugh with people who have been through what I have been through, and we all share stories with one another.

"I have become very confident since coming to Headway Nottingham. I just feel comfortable when I'm here."

A bad day can see Raj become overwhelmed and withdrawn.

He said: "On a bad day, when I'm around loads of people it can feel rather claustrophobic.

"I don't like loads of information blurted out, it becomes overwhelming for me, and I become withdrawn."



SEE BOTH SIDES OF BRAIN INJURY

KATIE Brain injury survivor Katie Stratton, from Bedford, was a happy, healthy mum-of-two when she was diagnosed with a benign Meningiomas brain tumour in 2019, aged 29.

Doctors operated within a matter of weeks to remove it, but Katie still lives with symptoms.

Katie, now 35, said: "On a good day I can go to the shop and dance around the house - I love my dancing!

"I have a lot more energy on a good day. I feel more able to do things - like different activities with the kids, meet my friends, go for a coffee or to different groups.

"On a bad day I tend to stay in my bedroom more and try to sleep.







SEE BOTH SIDES OF BRAIN INJURY

LORNA Brain injury survivor Lorna Collins, from
Buckinghamshire, was 'destined for glory' in the equestrian world when a fall from her horse at age 18 saw her dream of becoming the first woman to win the Grand National come to an abrupt halt.

Lorna, now 43, landed on her head when her horse tripped over during a training session in the year 2000. She sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and developed several psychiatric illnesses post-injury.

"On a good day I'm really organised and have a busy schedule", she said.

"I might express myself through words or paint a picture. I'll have a lovely time with my animals; I might go for a run with Wilby, my Whippet, or ride my horse."

A 'bad day' can see Lorna battle dizziness, fatigue and feelings of anxiousness.

"My head is cloudy because I can't think straight," she said.

"I get very anxious and disorientated with my identity and not remembering my childhood."

Inspiringly, Lorna "doesn't regret" her TBI and said it has led to "finding value out of difficult times".

She added: "Sharing my story with campaigns like Headway's *On a good day* is utterly crucial and a great privilege.

"If we can educate people to be more compassionate, sympathetic and sensitive then that can only be a positive thing for everyone - not only for people with brain injuries but also the general



Raj, Katie and Lorna aren't alone in struggling with fatigue, memory and concentration issues, and dealing with anxiety, as these were the most common fluctuating effects of brain injury reported in Headway's research for ABI Week 2025.

Earlier this year, Headway launched two surveys: one for individuals with a brain injury and one for carers to share how their day-to-day experiences shift.

Results from the surveys flagged that 80% of survivors and 84% of carers feel low in mood on a survivor's bad day; conversely, 80% of survivors and 91% of carers feel good on a survivor's good day.

Colin Morris, Director of Communications at Headway, said:

"This year's campaign is all about seeing both sides of brain injury.

"On a good day highlights the need for more understanding, respect and positive change towards those who might be having an all-too-common bad day.

"It might appear 'easier' to support survivors on their good days, but when they experience fatigue, headaches and other debilitating symptoms, these are the moments when people's support can mean everything."

You can see more from this year's campaign on the website: headway.org.uk/on-a-good -day or scan the QR code.





ON A BAD DAY

the most commonly fluctuating symptoms of brain injury are:

FATIGUE MEMORY **ANXIETY**

CONCENTRATION



...the brain injury survivor has

of carers feel good when...

GOOD DAY

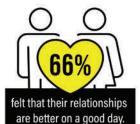


OF BRAIN INJURY SURVIVORS

find working or studying difficult when brain injury symptoms make it a bad day.



feel their relationships are worse on a bad day.



OF BRAIN INJURY SURVIVORS

find it difficult to do things independently when brain injury symptoms make it a bad day.











Marisa Roberto





Laurence





lan Kwabena





Liam Peter





Jon PH

A huge thank you to service users at Headway Cambridge and Peterborough, Headway Somerset, Headway Sussex and Headway Tyneside for sharing their own experiences of good and bad days.





Brain injury survivors share their stories in parliament during ABI Week

On a Good Day, reached the heart of UK politics as we joined parliamentarians for a cross-party meeting focused on acquired brain injury.

The meeting was chaired by Sir John Hayes MP and attended by MPs and peers from across the political spectrum, including our newest parliamentary champion, Baroness Morris of Yardley.

Colin Morris, Director of Communications, opened the session by highlighting the stark contrast between good and bad days for brain injury survivors. He described how these fluctuations impact every part of life from relationships and work to social situations and hobbies, and why it's vital for society to better understand the invisible effects of brain injury.

The most powerful voices in the room, however, came from survivors themselves. Lorna and Warren, two remarkable individuals living with the long-term effects of brain injury, shared their personal experiences with honesty and courage.

Lorna, who's story can be found on page 14, told attendees: "Sharing my story as part of On a Good Day is a privilege."

Warren also spoke movingly about his own journey and the toll brain injury has taken. He reflected: "I really do want to pay my heartfelt thanks to you all for listening to me and bearing with me and especially to my daughter who has flown over to be here to support me today and of course to everyone involved with Headway."

"The one thing that scares me the most is that the essential and critical lifeline

that local Headway charities provide could all be taken away from us survivors. It can't be right that some of the most vulnerable and fragile in our society have to rely on nothing else but the amazing hearts of others".







QUALITY OF LIFE AFTER BRAIN INJURY

FINDING **MEANING IN** RELATIONSHIPS

'Quality of life' (QoL) is a term often used in healthcare literature, but what does it mean?

A simple definition is offered by Britannica: "The degree to which an individual is healthy, comfortable, and able to participate in or enjoy life events."

QoL can be affected by difficult life events, such as a brain injury. Many brain injury survivors and their carers report QoL worsening in various ways, such

as feeling isolated, being less able to do things independently, or being unable to enjoy hobbies.

So what can help to improve QoL after brain injury? A team of researchers recently investigated seven priorities of QoL for traumatic brain injury survivors and here we discuss one identified as being a key priority for QoL:

Finding meaning in relationships

Relationships are an important part of life, providing us with a sense of emotional support, belonging, identity, practical support and comfort, especially in challenging times.

We have relationships with our families, friends, colleagues, pets, neighbours, or even strangers. Of these relationships, it is the ones that offer support during all stages of recovery after brain injury that are most meaningful.

Unfortunately, many survivors report a change in their relationships after brain injury and this can lead to feelings of isolation.

With relationships being so important to our wellbeing and quality of life, what can help to improve them after brain injury?



THOUGHTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

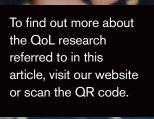
Relationships can commonly be affected by a brain injury, but we also know that some relationships can grow stronger. What has helped to improve your relationship with others after brain injury?

"I'm very lucky that my wonderful husband loves my weird self as much as he ever did. My therapist tells me that many people sadly aren't their genuine selves around their friends or partners. A brain injury leaves us unable to put on the masks we used to wear. So a lot of relationships are damaged."

"Definitely relationships change. My sister had a TBI and most of her preinjury friends vanished - they just didn't understand and didn't have the patience to try or couldn't accept that she had to do things differently. It took me a while to realise that progress wasn't a straight line and there would be set backs along the way. No-one tells you that. Since her injury, and more recently, she has made new friends which is wonderful to see. But it doesn't take away her negative feelings towards all those who left her so isolated."

"My TBI was nearly 26 years ago. Over that time my relationships have gone both ways. Initially getting used to the new me was hard for me and my wife. I was finding out who the new me was whilst my wife felt she was cheating on the old me with the new me. In short we separated but still loved each other. It was a joint decision and tore our little family apart. Eventually we started from the beginning, going on dates was strange but we decided we wanted to still be together. We renewed our wedding vows and are still together now. It isn't easy and it's a work still in process."

"A brain injury does change relationships - my oldest friends have resurfaced. Others have failed to understand exactly what this is and avoided making the adjustment. I have been lucky in my husband and my son - they are kind, and understanding. Of course, neither like to be reminded exactly what is going on, and why, on some days I am not my normal 'firing on all cylinders' self after a mild TBI. They think I should be better. I sometimes get caught in thinking that too and push myself too hard and then crash. Then they and I recall exactly why I have to rest in the middle of the day. The relationships with them have strengthened if anything, overall. One thing which has worked and still works for me is mindfulness. Education is always a good thing. I wrote my immediate family an explanatory note, in the end."











Poems for Carers Week

This year, the network of Headway independent charities and branches marked Carers' Week which took place between 9 and 15 June - with a poetry competition. We're delighted to share the winners with you!

"We had some fantastic entries this year. What talented people - words with such meaning! This decision has been really difficult, all the applicants are worthy of being winners. Thank you to everyone who took part and to carers who enable ABI survivors to become who they want to be."

(Diane Derbyshire, Network Support Co-ordinator)

Never judge the Misunderstood

Nikki Webber, (ABI Survivor)

Take independence And let me be free in life Never take it away I can't be me without you I am not ever what I want to be

But at times people see past me

This is a pain in my heart, hurts my head, and I can't sleep in the dark. I cherish the life I've got but freedom is something I have never forgot but care to me is like an apple tree.

It fills me with wisdom and grace,

It gives me vitality and strength,

And I just want to say thank you to carers and people who have learnt how to care, For people with different abilities,

That should never be overlooked or misunderstood,

But to understand my choice,

Firstly you have to hear my voice,

And to sculpture my future, you have to hold the pencil with me and not for me,

Because only I can paint the picture of who I want to be,

please see who I am when looking at my face,

You carers helped turn me into an adult Not just a child,

the skills I have are like eagle's wings but sometimes I smile and it hurts within, because being me is not who I can be in life alone on my own.

I need you to care for more than just what you see,

because I am the person inside of me

And it ain't easy

The judges said: "This poem illustrates the internal struggle shrouded in pain of needing to be cared for and often ignored, not seen for who they really are and wanted to be. The journey of growth from reluctance to acceptance, with a reminder that each individual's soul has its own desires and hopes.



In the quiet halls

by Northwood Care Home Blackburn Residents, (ABI Survivors)

In the quiet halls of Northwood's embrace, Reside hearts mending from life's cruel chase. Acquired brain injury, a silent thief, Steals away moments, leaves loved ones in grief. Yet within these walls, hope finds its light, Through carers who labour both day and night. Their gentle touch, their patient care, Transform despair into dreams that dare. The silent warriors, unseen in their might, Guide souls through darkness towards healings bright. With each tender gesture, each comforting word, They weave a tapestry of love, undeterred. Through trials and triumphs, they stand tall, Echoing resilience within Northwood's hall. For every challenge met, every tear dried, They are the heroes, our hope and pride. So let us honour these guardians of grace, Whose dedication lends joy a place. In Northwood Complex Care, they shine so bright, Turning shadows into purest light.

The judges said: "So much imagery and poignancy in every line, this poem makes the reader believe that Norwood is a wonderful place to be. Never having been there, the reader is left with such a powerful impression of personal courage, determination, hope and hard work by residents and staff. From the first line to the last, you can feel the mutual respect and value that both the carer and the cared for, have for each other."

Thank You

We are so grateful to Fletchers Solicitors for their kindness, support and generosity in providing the three prizes again for this year's Carers Week Competition.



Not a job I wanted

by Lynne Moran (Carer)

It's not a job I wanted but I took it on the chin My hubby had brain/heart injury Hi, my name is Lynne

I was stuck with no formal training Pharmacist, Physio etc It was tiring and emotional OH it was so draining



As the months went by, I saw some improvement With no help from others It was a struggle and very hard To pay my bills and rent

The benefit system belittled us In ways we couldn't understand Hubby was ill and couldn't work We needed a helping hand

I struggled with forms, reviews & appeals Eventually I was successful To beg, steal & borrow was demeaning and resentful

I wore many hats, appointment clerk, physio and more A career move I didn't want I guess I knew the score

Several months later, I found a group for us Hubby was scared to go I threw caution to the wind I knew the status quo

Sue, Leanne, Karen and Liz were so welcoming and friendly I found it wasn't just for Hubby But was also there for me

It's been 12 years now an we've enjoyed the group It's grown and changed a lot We've lost and gained members Some names I have forgot

The judges said: "Lynne describes her experience from the perspective of a family member being thrown into the caring role and the struggles, loneliness, frustration, humiliation and often "taken for granted" situation they find themselves in... often with the assumption that the carer will sort everything out. This poem provides a window into the life of a carer written with raw honesty and acceptance."





INTERVIEW: exploring connection and isolation

At Headway, we are proud to be actively involved with connecting researchers and people affected by brain injury, recognising the vital role that research plays in helping to improve affected lives.

Here, we speak to Trainee Clinical Psychologist and researcher Amarachi Nwaneri about her research into social connection and isolation among BAME carers.



Can you start by telling us a bit about yourself?

Hello, my name is Mary-Olivier Amarachi Nwaneri, but I prefer to be called Amarachi, reflecting my Nigerian heritage. I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist at the University of East Anglia (UEA). Before my doctorate, I worked as a support worker and an Assistant Psychologist in both physical and mental health settings. Additionally, I worked for two years as an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Research Associate and Project Manager.

What is your interest in brain injury?

I was born in Nigeria, and one of my lasting childhood memories is the time I spent with my grandfather, who suffered from a stroke before I was born. The long-lasting impact of this left him immobilised and impaired in his cognitive functions. However, what I remember most is the loving care and support my family and extended relatives gave him until his death.

As a child, I also recall a strong sense of community around us. Nigeria's culture is inherently collectivist, which contrasts sharply with the individualistic nature of the UK. This curiosity about cultural differences emerged as I experienced variations in perceptions and support offered for health conditions and the mental health impact on individuals and their families in the UK.

These experiences sparked my interest in the social connections within families in the UK, especially those affected by brain injuries.

What is your current research about?

Research has found that people from Black, Asian and Minority ethnic (BAME) and mixed ethnicity backgrounds are often at increased risk of developing certain types of brain injury after birth. These injuries can lead to long-term difficulties. Family members of the injured person often report feeling isolated and disconnected. Despite these research findings, there has been limited exploration of how BAME/mixed ethnicity families experience social connection and isolation after the injury in the UK.

My research aims to explore the experiences of social connection and isolation among BAME/mixed ethnicity family members in the UK who have family members who have experienced brain injury.

My hope is that by exploring and making sense of how these family members experience social connection and isolation after brain injury, appropriate culturally sensitive and family-inclusive practices can be developed.

You can contact Amarachi to find out more about this study at A.Nwaneri@uea.ac.uk



Be a part of the Headway Golf Day 2025!

After a triumphant event in 2024, we cannot wait for the next Headway Charity Golf Day 2025!

The Headway Charity Golf Day is more than a game - it's a chance to be a hero off of the fairways too, a swing for change, and a drive towards a brighter future. Whether you're a seasoned pro or just discovering the joys of the game, we invite you to join us for a fantastic day where golf meets giving.

Take on a solo challenge, join with friends and family, or create a team of colleagues and clients and get ready to tee off for a cause. However you choose to play, know that every divot you make and every birdie you score contribute to improving life after brain injury.

Event details

- **Tuesday 16 September 2025**
- Carden Park, Cheshire
- Individual ticket: £140
- Team entry: £540

Sponsorship opportunities

Whether you'll be joining us on the day or celebrating with us from afar, we invite you to browse our range of sponsorship and branding packages on offer. You may choose to become our headline sponsor or perhaps sponsor a specific aspect of the event, such as breakfast, dinner, or a hole on the course.

Get in touch with our community events team for more information: community@headway.org.uk

What to expect at the **Headway Charity Golf Day**

"The Headway Golf Event 2024 was worth every one of the 34 hours it took me to travel there from Western Australia. Whether it's for business. leisure or even personal experience of brain injury, you won't find a better event to reconnect and enjoy a fabulous day out." - Dr Bruce Powell, brain injury survivor.

"This Charity Golf Day presents a wonderful opportunity for golfers of all levels to come together, enjoy a fantastic day on the greens, and make a difference in the lives of brain injury survivors." Holly Howey, Event Organiser.

"Absolutely brilliant day, fantastic weather, great company - everyone pulling in the same direction. Definitely back for the next one." - Andrew McBride, Hugh James.

"The day has been fab. We've had some lovely weather; golf course has been amazing and amazing to just be part of something to hopefully raise lots of money." Katie Lynch, Blume Solicitors.







Dear Retail Volunteers, As we welcome the summer sunshine and mark Volunteers Week 2025, I want to take a moment to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You are the friendly faces and caring hands that bring our Headway shops and distribution centres to life - every single day. Thanks to 465 amazing volunteers, we've already recorded 33,000 hours of your time this year. That amounts to over £400,000 of in-kind support - money that goes straight into our vital brain injury services. If we keep this momentum going, we'll exceed 100,000 hours by the end of 2025, a contribution worth more than £1.2 million. Whether you're sorting donations, serving customers, or sharing a smile at the counter, your efforts ripple out into our communities. Each sale funds our free helpline, award winning publications, and brain injury ID cards. Every conversation raises awareness of brain injury and shows the world how Headway supports survivors and their families across the uk. Your kindness, enthusiasm, and dedication make everything possible at Headway. From all of us here - and from the families and survivors you help every day -Together, we're making every high-street step count. Warm wishes, David Byrne Head of Retail, Headway – the brain injury association TEERS We'd love even more wonderful volunteers to ioin us. If you live near one of our shops or our distribution centre, pop in for a relaxed, no-pressure taster session. Meet our wonderful teams, see how we work, and find out how just a few hours a week can change lives. Speak to your local A huge thank you too to all Headway volunteers across shop manager to arrange your session. our network, for the devotion, passion and care you give in Find your nearest Headway shop everything you do. headway.org.uk/charity-shops

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Milliner Carrie Jenkinson

Award-winning milliner Carrie Jenkinson felt "useless" and like "giving up" when she



sustained a traumatic brain injury in 2023.

But time, rest, patience and expressing herself creatively not only aided her recovery but also led to landing one of her biggest clients of her career-American singer, songwriter, and actress Lady Gaga.

Carrie, from Sutton Benger, Cotswolds, sustained two brain haemorrhages after she fell and hit her head off the pavement while attending the theatre in 2023.

The mum-of-two woke up in hospital with an eight and half centimetre fracture in her skull and spent months relearning everything from her craft to cooking and making a cup of tea.

"When I came home, I kept thinking everything would get better," she said. "But it just got harder and harder to function. I couldn't get dressed properly. I couldn't make a cup of tea or cook anymore. I thought I was completely useless."

Carrie was determined to get back to creating her incredible headwear, which have featured in prestigious fashion magazines such as Vogue, Grazia, and Harper's Bazaar, as well as adorning the heads of members of the British royal family and superstars including Beyonce and Lauryn Hill.

Now adding to her list of famous clients is superstar Lady Gaga, who commissioned Carrie to make eight hats for her Jazz & Piano 2024 summer residency at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Carrie said: "When Lady Gaga contacted me I thought it might wear me out with my injury, but it gave me a boost. I'm a huge fan of Lady Gaga! She's the perfect client for me because I make quite outlandish designs."

This year also marked a major milestone in Carrie's career, when she was invited to be part of the Royal Ascot Millinery Collective- "the biggest honour you can get as a hat designer," she said.

During her recovery, Carrie found Headway and was able to access support for her mental health, link up with a support group for fellow survivors, and obtain a Brain Injury Identity Card. She is keen to let other survivors know that



there is hope and a filled life to be lived after brain injury.

She added: "You do get better. You come out the other side with a bit more patience and understanding.

"Give it time and rest. Learn to listen to your body and it will mend itself- not in the same way but it mends itself."







British sailor Robin Elsey-Webb is making a powerful return to offshore racing this year with the launch of the Kernow Ocean Racing and BlackDog Collaboration - in support of Headway.

After suffering a life-threatening brain injury in 2023, caused by a suspected serious assault while abroad - including multiple severe skull fractures, bleeding on the brain, and a broken neck - Robin has fought his way back to competitive sailing. He will now be taking on the 2025 RORC season championship, with the Fastnet Race as the campaign's major focus.

"This year is all about seeing where I'm at, racing competitively again, and proving to myself that I can still do this," he said.

Following his injury, Robin underwent emergency neurosurgery and spent two weeks in intensive care in Miami and a further two weeks as an outpatient being closely monitored. His recovery has been extraordinary-thanks to determination, family support, and a deep drive to return to life at sea.

Having raced offshore since a young age, Robin's sailing career includes solo and crewed achievements across Europe and the Atlantic. The goal this year is the 600 mile Fastnet Race 2025; one of the biggest offshore races in the international calendar.

After Brain Injury Robin is using his return to racing to share a message with others affected by brain injury. He said: "Life is different now, but that doesn't mean it's over. I want people to know that there is life after brain injury. I am acutely aware of how fortunate I am to still be able to do what I love and hopefully inspire other survivors to

A Message of Hope

Supporting **Headway**

push for their goals."

As part of this campaign, Robin is proud to be supporting Headway, both through awareness raising and fundraising. He added: "We didn't know about Headway when I was first injured. We were completely in the dark, trying to manage everything ourselves. It was only later that we found them and realised how much they could have helped. I want others to know they're out there."

Helen Craig, Fundraising Manager at Headway, said: "We are so inspired by Robin's unwavering determination to return to the highest level of ocean sailing. Taking on this immense physical and mental challenge reflects the inner resilience, strength, and courage of brain injury survivors and the families we support every day."



Follow Robin's story:

www.facebook.com/ robinkernowoceanracing/

Support Robin's fundraising:

www.justgiving.com/page/ robinelseywebbfastnet2025

Back on the waves

- Robin sails for awareness

Alex's marathon Effort!

Huge well done to brain injury survivor and runner Alex, who has shared his sheer pride at crossing the finish line at this year's London Marathon - a bucket list race he thought he may never be able to run due to a long, slow and difficult recovery journey.

Alex Paget, from London, took on April's London marathon dressed in a giant homemade brain costume to raise awareness of brain injury and post-concussion syndrome (PCS), which he lives with, as well as funds for Headway.

Alex said: "Sunday was great fun - it was painful and tough. I certainly underestimated the impact of running with the weight of the costume. But I am really happy with how it went!"

Avid runner Alex lives with PCS, a debilitating continuation of concussion symptoms, following an accident on his bike nearly four years ago while taking part in an Ironman challenge in France. He still struggles with fatigue, headaches and cognitive issues, and faced several flare ups in the weeks leading up to the marathon, so "even turning up to the start line was an achievement, let alone getting round the route", he said.

Alex added: "The support was incredible. Not a second went by where I couldn't hear people shouting my name. Each time I slowed down the support got louder - that helped

massively. Crossing the finish line, I felt emotional, excited, happy, and proud to have done it - to have come far enough to be able to do it."

Alex added: "Thank you so much to everyone who has donated and supported me throughout. Headway were there for me throughout my recovery, and I want people to know about the charity and what they can offer in way of support."

KEY FACTS

- Alex made his brain costume by hand!
- It was made of PVC pipes, cardboard, expanding foam and fabric
- The homemade costume added 8kg to his race
- The whole thing took him roughly 25 hours to make
- Alex crossed the finish line in an incredible 4 hours and 17 minutes
- Alex has raised over £15,000 for Headway!

Holly Howey, Events Manager at Headway, said: "We are so unbelievably proud of Alex - and all of our runners- who ran in aid of Headway. A marathon is no mean feat and Alex not only achieved it but did so with the added weight of his amazing costume. We can't thank all our runners enough for their efforts. Every penny they have raised goes towards helping survivors and their loved ones navigate life after brain injury."







CHARLIE'S EPIC MOTORBIKE CHALLENGE

in memory of his best friend



In May and June, renowned actor and avid motorcyclist Charles Dale embarked on an unforgettable monthlong charity motorcycle ride across England and Wales in memory of his dear friend Shaun Griffiths, who tragically passed away following a brain injury in October 2024. His adventure became known as Shaun's TT One Hundred.

Charles - or Charlie to his friends - is a Welsh actor known for his film and many tv appearances including Coronation Street, The Lakes and latterly as Big Mac in the BBC's Casualty.



Charles with Headway Event Manager Holly Howey and 'Hairy Biker' Si King.

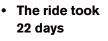
Charlie said: "Just over six months ago one of my oldest and best friends suffered a catastrophic brain injury because of what can only be described as a "silly" household accident - he slipped on the stairs. Unfortunately for Shaun this resulted in a bleed on the brain and just over a week later his family had to make the most difficult decision ever, to withdraw life support. Shaun died shortly after; he was 63.

"When you get to my age you are unfortunately no stranger to death, but losing loved ones to old age or illness, though no less painful, has always sort of made sense to me. This however was different, I couldn't make sense of it. Shaun slipped on the stairs, something we've all done, and yet my lovely, always smiling friend of over 40 years, was gone. I had to do something, so after talking with his family, 'Shaun's TT One Hundred' was born."

With support from celebrity connections and leading names in the biking world, the ride saw him smash out an exciting high-profile event raising vital funds for two charities: Headway - the brain injury association and Brain Tumour Research.

Jen Murgatroyd, Director of Fundraising at Headway UK, said: "We're proud to join Brain Tumour Research in celebrating Charles' remarkable journey. This collaboration is a powerful opportunity to raise awareness and vital funds, bringing hope, support, and lifechanging services to those affected by brain injury and their families. A heartfelt thank you to everyone involved and a huge well done to Charles!"

Key Facts:





Brain Tumour

 Charlie travelled over 3200 miles

- · He visited 103 cafes along
- · At time of writing he has raised over £6000!

You can still support Charlie's journey in memory of Shaun - visit: givestar.io/gs/charles-dale--shaunstt-one-hundred

Or scan the QR code.



Charles with Headway CEO Luke Griggs



Every year, Headway supporters come together for Hats for Headway, when we encourage people to wear their favourite - or wackiest - hat and share a picture on social media to help raise awareness and funds for people affected by brain injury.

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 in 2025.

We also love to spotlight some of our favourites - so here you'll find our winners and some wonderful honourable mentions for this year's competition. A big thank you to Fortnum and Mason for providing the winner a luxury hamper!



"We are delighted to win the "best corporate photo". Every year we love getting involved in the HatsForHeadway campaign. Rehabilitation is at the forefront of what we do, and we see firsthand the life changing support that Headway brings to individuals and their families. Headway is a lifeline for so many people". (Sophie Jones, Head of Personal Injury & Medical Negligence, Red Kite Law.)



Wyre and Fylde



What inspired you to submit this amazing hat for the Hats for Headway competition?

I always wear bright, colourful clothes since my first head injury at 4, because my gran taught me that people are always going to stare at me because of my disabilities, so why not give them something colourful to look at? The squid was the most outrageous hat I could find!

How do you feel about winning the best hat for Hats for Headway?

It means a lot to win. To be celebrated for my bold clothing.

What does Headway Cardiff and South East Wales mean to you?

Headway Cardiff means everything. It is hope and acceptance. It's where I've met some of my favourite people. I feel accepted and empowered to be myself. Headway is the highlight of my week. Every member of the team is a beacon of light, helping us to navigate the dark waters of life after head injury.

Any advice for anyone wanting to take part in Hats for Headway next year?

My advice is to be bold and embrace the wacky!







SERVICES SPOTLIGHT

Headway issues over 15,000 **Identity Cards to survivors**

Headway - the brain injury association has reached a major milestone in issuing 15,000 Identity Cards to survivors.

The Headway Brain Injury Identity Card is designed to help brain injury survivors explain the effects of their condition and request any support they may need.

Each card is personalised and displays the key ways in which the survivor's brain injury affects them, from communication and processing difficulties to balance issues, anxiety and poor memory.

The cards also play a vital role in the Headway Justice Project, by including a 24-hour criminal legal assistance number which can be called to request legal advice or representation from solicitors trained in understanding brain injury.

Dad-of-two and former Merchant Navy Chief Officer David Lambert, from Lancaster, has been an ID card holder for several years following a motorbike accident while at a track day at Oulton Park in 2017.

The 44-year-old was in a coma for 11 days and spent several weeks in hospital due to breaking his spine in five places and sustaining a frontal lobe traumatic brain injury.

David said: "I don't react to emotions properly and people don't expect it because I don't look like I have a brain injury. I look healthy and can speak with people and do certain tasks.

"It's so hard to explain to people and can be humiliating.

"The Headway ID card has made a massive difference in my life. It helped me get out the house again.

"Having the card meant I had something there which I can show to people, use it to explain my symptoms, and ask people to give me 10 minutes and some space for the emotions to pass."

Chris Marriott, Justice Programme Manager at Headway, said reaching 15,000 ID Cards is a "fantastic milestone" which reflects the "growing awareness and support for brain injury survivors across the UK."

travelling, attending appointments or if they come into contact with the police. It really is a privilege to be part of this."

Read more about the Headway ID card on the website: headway.org.uk/idcard



shopping,



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

Personal yet professional legal advice.

Freeths vastly experienced Personal Injury team, led by the highly respected Jane Goulding has an unrivalled reputation for handling brain injury claims, helping our clients receive the life-changing rehabilitation and compensation they deserve.

Please call Jane today for a free introductory chat on 0345 050 3296 or email jane.goulding@freeths.co.uk









freeths.co.uk

FREETHS









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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