



Summer 2015

£2.25

HeadwayNews

REVEALED THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE HIDDEN DISABILITY

2013-2014 STATISTICS BASED ON UK ADMISSIONS

EVERY 90 SECONDS
someone in the UK is admitted
to hospital with an **ABI**



EVERY 3 MINUTES
someone in the UK is admitted
to hospital with a **HEAD INJURY**



EVERY 4 MINUTES
someone in the UK is admitted
to hospital with a **STROKE**



**ADMISSIONS
PER DAY**

956 All ABIs
445 Head injuries
358 Strokes

**HEAD INJURIES
UP 6%**

**STROKES
UP 9%**

**ALL ABIs
UP 10%**



SINCE 2005-6

**TOTAL
ABI
ADMISSIONS
348,934**

**TOTAL
HEAD
INJURY
ADMISSIONS
162,544**

**TOTAL
STROKE
ADMISSIONS
130,551**



MALES = 1.6x
more likely than females
to be admitted for a
HEAD INJURY



FEMALES UP 24%
in admissions since
2005-6 for a
HEAD INJURY



21,217
Head injuries
& strokes only

11,834

**EACH YEAR
348,934**

people are admitted
to hospital
in the UK with
an ABI

298,433

17,450

the magazine of the brain injury association

Total ABI admissions include head injuries, strokes, brain tumours, and other conditions such as meningitis, encephalitis and hydrocephalus. Not all these people will be left with a long-term disability, so ABI is used as short-hand for 'ABI-related diagnosis'. Admissions do not equate to individuals as one person can have multiple admissions. Overall, individual patients make up approximately 85% of all admissions and over 90% of head injury admissions.



the brain injury association

Who's your Headway Hero?

Nominate now for the Headway Awards 2015



www.headway.org.uk/nominate.aspx

#HeadwayAwards

#HeadwayHeroes

Closing date for nominations is Monday 27 July

Main Image: Sarah Whitchurch receives her Achiever of the Year Award, sponsored by Slater & Gordon Lawyers, from James Cracknell and Deborah Johnson

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AnthonyGold

Slater & Gordon
Lawyers

No5
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Lawyers ahead of the curve

HeadwayNews

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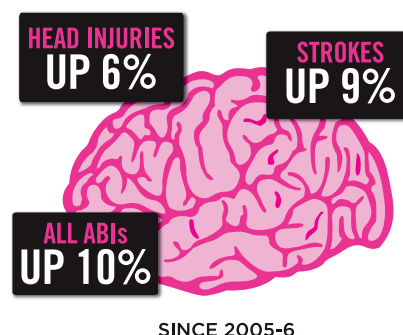
Headway is a charity that supports people affected by a brain injury and their carers. We help people understand about brain injury, offer support, and run a free information helpline (0808 800 2244). We also produce a range of publications that explain the effects of brain injury and what can be done to help. You can visit our website at www.headway.org.uk.

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Welcome...

It's taken a lot of hard work and a charity dedicating its limited resources to collate an incredible amount of data, but we finally have a picture of ABI occurrence in the UK. And it's not a pretty picture.

Headway's ground-breaking research project, the first of its kind ever produced, has highlighted a 10% increase since 2005-6 in the number of people admitted to hospital each year with a brain-injury related diagnosis. This rise will be no surprise to those running Headway services across the UK and who are under increasing pressure to meet a growing demand.



The report was issued at the start of Action for Brain Injury Week, which once again saw a tremendous amount of local activity as groups and branches took the opportunity to raise awareness of their vital work in the community. A review of the week is included in the centre pages, along with a few of the highlights from Hats for Headway Day – including a couple of famous faces who joined in the fun!

The numbers behind the hidden

Headway research reveals concerning rise in ABI hospital admissions

The number of people admitted to hospitals in the UK with an acquired brain injury (ABI) related diagnosis has increased by 10% since 2005-6, according to a new report issued by Headway.

The statistics also reveal that while males remain 1.6 times more likely to be admitted for a head injury, the number of females sustaining non-superficial head injuries has risen by a shocking 24% since 2005-06.

EVERY 90 SECONDS

someone in the UK is admitted to hospital with an **ABI**



HEAD INJURIES
UP 6%

STROKES
UP 9%

ALL ABIs
UP 10%



SINCE 2005-6

This is the first dataset on all ABI-related hospital admissions ever produced in the UK and includes non-superficial head injuries, strokes, brain tumours, encephalitis, and a variety of additional conditions.

"These statistics make for uneasy reading," said Luke Griggs, Director of Communications at Headway. "Every 90 seconds someone is admitted to a UK hospital with an ABI-related diagnosis that could lead to significant long-term disability, with the number of people affected increasing year-on-year."

"Perhaps of greatest concern is the dramatic rise in the number of females admitted with head injuries. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact reasons for this, and further research is urgently needed in order to identify ways to understand this alarming increase."

Dr Andy Tyerman, consultant clinical neuropsychologist in the Community Head Injury Service in Buckinghamshire and a trustee of Headway, said: "What this excellent piece of research suggests is that not only are more women sustaining head injuries each year, but also we do not know the reasons behind this silent epidemic."

"Historical chronic underfunding into research that could help identify the

severity and causes of acquired brain injuries – particularly traumatic injuries – has hampered efforts to understand and hopefully reduce the number of people affected each year.

"This research may be the first step in finding the answers we desperately need."

Impact

While not every person admitted to hospital with an ABI will be left with long-term deficits or disability, Headway believes the increase in the number of ABI-related diagnoses is evidence of a growing demand for acute rehabilitation and community-based support services.

"Many of those admitted to hospital will face an arduous battle to rebuild their lives," said Luke. "Even those who make good recoveries are still likely to require some short-term support and information."

"Such a significant increase in the number of people admitted to hospital with ABI-related diagnoses, coupled with the fact the majority of these people will survive, suggests an ever-increasing demand on support services."

"These include rehabilitation services provided by Headway across the UK to help people rebuild their lives and regain a degree of independence."

disability

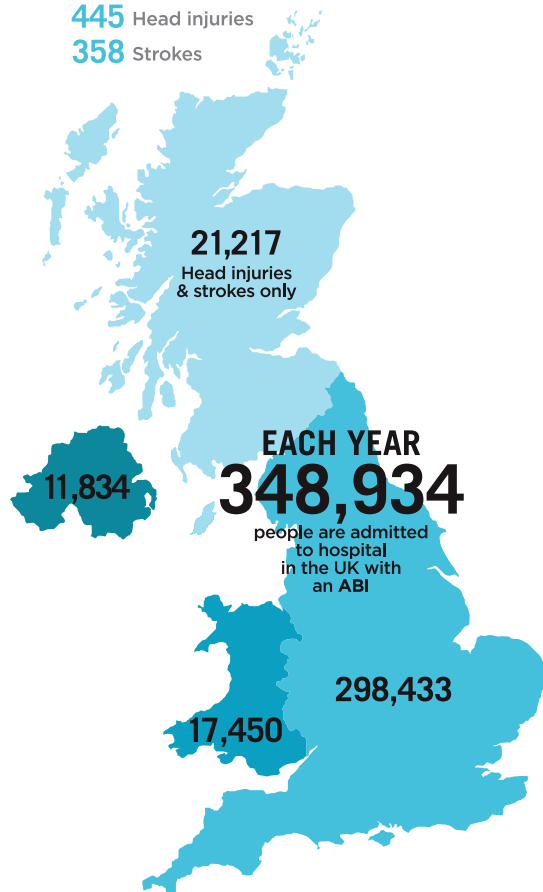


ADMISSIONS PER DAY

956 All ABIs

445 Head injuries

358 Strokes



"Sadly, this increase in demand comes at a time when Headway groups and branches are struggling to survive due to reduced local authority funding.

"It's a great shame that at a time when more and more people are in need of help, local authorities are reducing the financial support they are providing."

The Headway study builds on a 2005 report by Professor Alan Tennant that fed into the National Service Framework for Long-term (Neurological) Conditions. Professor Tennant, widely regarded as the leading expert in the epidemiology of brain injury in this country, examined head injury incidence in England over a two-year period.

Commenting on the Headway report, Professor Tennant said: "It is ten years since I published a Department of Health-funded study entitled *Admission to hospital*



MALES = 1.6x

more likely than females to be admitted for a

HEAD INJURY



FEMALES UP 24%

in admissions since 2005-6 for a

HEAD INJURY

following head injury in England: Incidence and socio-economic association. The results confirmed that acquired brain injury is very common and constitutes a major public health concern.

"Headway's detailed ABI admission statistics provide the clearest picture to date of the pool of people who require support, from short-term advice and information, to long-term inpatient rehabilitation.

"The report also provides up-to-date evidence with which to approach commissioners, and to request funding for rehabilitation and support services in areas of the greatest need.

"I sincerely hope that this excellent research receives the attention it warrants in order to contribute to an improvement in future service provision."

Key findings

- There were **348,934 UK admissions to hospital with acquired brain injury (ABI)** in 2013-14. That is 566 admissions per 100,000 of the population.
- **ABI admissions in the UK have increased by 10%** since 2005-6.
- There were approximately 956 ABI admissions per day to UK hospitals in 2013-14 – or **one every 90 seconds**.
- In 2013-14, there were **162,544 admissions for head injury**. That equates to 445 every day, or **one every three minutes**.
- **Men are 1.6 times more likely than women to be admitted for head injury.** However, **female head injury admissions have risen 24%** since 2005-6.
- In 2013-14, there were **130,551 UK admissions for stroke**. That is an **increase of 9%** since 2005-6 and equates to **one every four minutes**.

- To download the full report, entitled *Acquired Brain Injury: The numbers behind the hidden disability*, visit **www.headway.org.uk/brain-injury-stats.aspx**.
- Regional and national figures are also available on the Headway website.

Nominate now for the 2015 Headway Annual Awards!

Each year, the Headway Annual Awards honour the inspirational achievements of people living with brain injury, and the humbling dedication and commitment of those working to support them.

The ceremony provides an opportunity to publically thank some very special people who are deserving of recognition, while also raising awareness of brain injury and the fabulous work of Headway groups and branches across the UK. And here's your chance to be involved by nominating someone special!

There are four categories:

The Alex Richardson Achiever of the Year Award



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Lawyers

This award recognises the inspirational bravery and determination of brain injury survivors to rebuild their lives. It is named after a young man who was just 21 when he passed away having sustained a traumatic brain injury. Since that day, an incredible amount has been achieved in his name to help others affected by brain injury.

Carer of the Year Award



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Withy King

A brain injury can have a huge impact upon the family of the



injured person. This award honours those who demonstrate incredible strength, courage and determination to ensure their loved ones receive the best possible care, attention and support.

Volunteer of the Year Award



Sponsored by
Anthony Gold

Volunteers play a vital role in helping Headway on a national and local level to provide services and support to people affected by brain injury. They are the lifeblood of the charity and deserve all our thanks and praise.

The Stephen McAleese Outstanding Contribution to Headway Award



Sponsored by
No5 Chambers

Stephen dedicated his life to promoting understanding of brain injury and helping others from all walks of life. He was a passionate ambassador for Headway who

Left: 2014 finalist Amy Perring
Below: Achiever of the Year
Sarah Whitchurch is interviewed
on her local ITV news



achieved much and inspired so many.

- Go to www.headway.org.uk/nominate.aspx to make your nomination.
- Champagne reception sponsored by Irwin Mitchell Solicitors.

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solicitors

Planning a holiday

Summer holiday season is upon us! With all the excitement and effort involved it's easy to forget one of the most important things – travel insurance.

With the right insurance policy, you can be covered for any unexpected situations, such as the need to cancel your holiday or

Headway hosts third joint conference with SIA



More than 150 delegates, speakers and exhibitors attended the third joint Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Conference which took place at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens during ABI Week.

Throughout the day a variety of topics were explored by specialist speakers, such as clinical psychologist Dr Kevin Jones who explained the psychological impact that these major traumas can have. Satinder Hunjan QC, from No5 Chambers, then spoke on the issues surrounding catastrophic injury litigation in the modern era.

In addition, spinal injuries surgeon Naveen Kumar provided delegates with an understanding of the intricacies of treating non-traumatic spinal cord injuries, from initial handling of the patient through to rehabilitation.

Following a fascinating session delivered by London Air



Naveen Kumar addresses delegates at the third annual joint Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Conference

Ambulance Medical Director, Dr Gareth Davies, who addressed the importance of pre-hospital care, brain and spinal cord injury survivor Jonathan Lea took to the stage. Jonathan gave a moving personal account of his experiences with healthcare providers and his challenges to secure funding.

The day was concluded with a talk from Headway Acute Trauma Support Nurse Sue Best and Clinical Nurse Specialist Anne Preece, who explained their work in providing clinical and practical

support to brain injury survivors and their families at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham.

The event also boasted over 30 exhibition stands ranging from providers of specialist rehabilitation equipment through to case management firms.

● Thanks to the support of the event sponsor, No5 Chambers, as well as the speakers, staff, exhibitors and delegates, all of whom contributed to a successful event.

No5
CHAMBERS

this summer? Don't forget your travel insurance!

if you require medical treatment while abroad. Many policies will also pay to bring you back to the UK should you suddenly require urgent care, which in serious cases can cost many thousands of pounds.

If you or a travelling companion have sustained a brain injury however, standard insurance may

not be suitable. Fortunately, Headway offers information and an insurance policy to ensure those living with brain injury have access to appropriate cover.

● For more information and a list of further insurance providers, download our *Holidays and travel* factsheet from the Headway website at

www.headway.org.uk/factsheets.aspx.

● Alternatively, go to our main travel insurance page at **www.headway.org.uk/travel-insurance.aspx** to find out about Headway travel insurance in partnership with PolicyDirect.

Obituaries

Sir William Doughty 1925-2015

Headway is mourning the loss of former Chairman Sir William Doughty, who died in March aged 89.

Sir William had a long and distinguished career in industry and was a member of the CBI Council before joining the NHS as a non-executive director. He served as Chairman of the North West Thames Regional Health Authority from 1984-94, proving himself to be an effective and immensely popular leader. In 1990 he received his Knighthood for services to the NHS.

Time spent in hospital as a boy had left Sir William with a huge respect for those who work in the health service, at all levels, while his years in industry had taught him, above all, that organisations are about people. Sir William therefore spent a great deal of time speaking to everyone he could – from nurses, junior doctors, and consultants, through to numerous civil servants and government ministers.

Sir William was first elected as Chairman of Headway UK in 2000. Under his leadership the charity enjoyed considerable growth and success. The finances of Headway UK were placed on a much firmer footing. This enabled the charity to expand the team supporting its network of groups and branches, with Sir William prioritising this initiative because of the value he placed on the work undertaken by local Headways.

Sir William was always willing to draw on his considerable experience to provide guidance and support to both staff and trustees of Headway. He was much admired and respected by those who had the privilege of working with him. Greatly loved by Lorna, his wife of 62 years, his three sons and four grandchildren, Sir William died peacefully at home on 21 March, in his 90th year. Sir William was an extraordinary man who made an outstanding contribution to the work of Headway.



Sir William Doughty

Will Woolley 1977-2015



Will Woolley, a trustee of Headway Gateshead and South Tyneside, sadly passed away on Sunday 26 April 2015. He was 37 and leaves behind a wife, Louise, and four children.

Will joined the Headway group in 2008, three years after sustaining a brain injury following a road traffic incident. Will's brain injury affected several aspects of his life, but he was determined to not let it hold him back. After joining Headway, Will completed a vocational rehabilitation course

before going on to teach automotive repair at a local college as well as running an autocentre.

Will was passionate about Headway and determined to give something back to the charity that had supported him. Having been appointed to the board of Headway Gateshead and South Tyneside, Will used his personal experiences to help other members of the group adapt to life after brain injury.

Will was a passionate supporter of all the Headway groups and branches in the North East of England, contributing to the development of the network and playing a leading role in events such as the annual Look Ahead in the North conference. His infectious smile and positive spirit will be missed by all who knew him.

Eye on...Spinal Injuries Association

The third annual joint brain and spinal injury conference, run by Headway and the Spinal Injuries Association (SIA), took place in May during ABI Week. So we thought now was the perfect time to take a look at the work of the SIA.

The SIA is the leading national charity for spinal cord injured (SCI) people. Being user-led, the organisation is well placed to understand the everyday needs of people living with spinal cord injury and is here to meet those needs by providing key services, sharing information and experiences, and campaigning for change.

SIA understands that spinal cord injury is life changing. No matter how the damage is caused, the impact is monumental and affects every aspect of your life, as well as the lives of those closest to you. SIA is here to support you from the moment your spinal cord injury happens, and for the rest of your life.

The charity is dedicated to helping everyone touched by spinal cord injury by supporting a person's physical and emotional needs.

Much of SIA's support is provided by those who have experienced first-hand the many challenges faced post-injury, such as returning to work, starting a family, going on holiday, or any of life's milestones that might be taken for granted before sustaining such a life-changing injury.

Supporting the professionals that contribute to the treatment and care of SCI people is another vital aspect of SIA's work. They do this



by providing information and an education programme tailored to the needs of professionals.

SIA is committed to sharing and celebrating significant achievements too, such as those announced at the annual Rebuilding Lives awards ceremony on 4 June.

During the evening, the winner of each award will be announced by a number of SIA's Ambassadors and supporters. You will be able to catch up on all the news from the event at www.spinal.co.uk/page/RLSCI.

All of SIA's work is made possible thanks to the kind and generous individuals and organisations that run, cycle, sponsor and hold events all year round. Just recently, starting on Spinal Cord Injuries Awareness Day, 23

supporters cycled and hand-cycled from London to Amsterdam and raised over £20,000.

It took three days, but they kept each other going and many are planning to return for the big cycle next year, as well as taking part in a brand new event, *Going the Distance*, which is an eight-bridge walk around London.

- To find out more about SIA and its events:
Tel: **01908 604191**
Email: sia@spinal.co.uk
Website: www.spinal.co.uk
Twitter: [@spinalinjuries](https://twitter.com/spinalinjuries)



Headway helpline: Frequently Asked Questions

In 2014, the Headway helpline answered 8,500 enquiries – the highest figure recorded in the history of the service and an incredible 60% increase in demand since 2010.

Approximately 70% of the enquiries we answer on the helpline are from people that are directly affected by brain injury – survivors, families and carers; the remainder are enquiries from professionals such as doctors, nurses, rehabilitation teams and solicitors.

Q) After a tough few years of recovery following my husband's brain injury, I'd really like to book a holiday for us both. I'm worried about his physical and cognitive difficulties though, and would appreciate any tips you can give to help it go smoothly.

A) A holiday can be a great way to get away from the pressures of everyday life and offers a chance to regroup and re-energise following the stress and strain of a long recovery. The complex effects of brain injury can make it difficult to find the right holiday. However, with the right information and some forward

planning, you can find the perfect getaway.

The first thing is to judge whether your husband's issues make a 'standard' holiday difficult. If so, there are numerous providers of specialist holidays for people with physical and cognitive disabilities, in the UK and abroad. Searching online for 'disabled holiday providers' should yield some good results - but make sure any travel agents you may choose are ABTA accredited

There is a wealth of options to consider for a range of budgets, from exotic overseas hotels to holiday cottages or camps in the UK and the internet makes it much easier to find services and access reviews.

The Equality Act 2010 says that holiday providers such as hotels, holiday cottages and tour operators should make every effort to be accessible to disabled people. In some cases this is not possible, so it's always worth contacting them before booking to discuss any special requirements. Similar laws and standards are in place across Europe, North America and many other parts of the world. Look out for disability access information on websites and don't be afraid to get in touch with providers if you have any concerns.

If you are going abroad, airports in the UK and airlines operating from this country will have policies in place to offer assistance and adapt to any special requirements. As with accommodation providers, you should get in touch with airlines to discuss this before booking,

Headway's confidential helpline is available from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Calls are free from landlines and most mobile networks. Email enquiries to:
helpline@headway.org.uk

0808 800 2244





and then again after booking to make sure any special assistance is in place. Help could include a personal assistant to guide you through an airport or extra time boarding an aircraft, train or ship. It is also a good idea to reserve seats to make sure you and your husband are sitting together and near to a toilet, which can be advantageous.

Whatever type of holiday you choose, you should always have adequate travel insurance to ensure you're covered if anything does go wrong. You must declare any pre-existing medical conditions or your insurance company may not pay out in the event of a claim.

You can find out more on our website at www.headway.org.uk/Travel-insurance.aspx.

You may also find it helpful to ask questions to Headway's Health Unlocked community, where our members will be only too happy to share their wealth of experience. Visit www.healthunlocked.com/headway to find out more.

Finally, please feel free to contact us again on the helpline if you would like to discuss things in more detail or get information tailored to your circumstances, from help finding holiday

providers to questions about funding for holidays.

Q) After much effort and an appeal, I received an 'indefinite' award of Disability Living Allowance three years ago. This was such a relief, but I have now heard that I'll need to be re-assessed for the new benefit, Personal Independence Payment. Is this true, and will I have to go through the same process again?

A) Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a new benefit that replaces one of the key benefits for people with a disability – Disability Living Allowance (DLA). PIP is now fully operational for new claimants and people whose time-limited DLA award comes to an end. No new DLA claims can now be made.

The Government has confirmed its commitment to move every DLA claimant onto this new benefit, and will begin this process from October 2015. At that point, everyone receiving a DLA award, including those for whom the award was 'indefinite', will be invited to apply for PIP and an application pack will be sent to you. Claimants will be selected at

random for this process so there's no way to know exactly when you will receive the pack, but the process is expected to be completed by October 2017.

It's really important that you make sure your address and contact details are accurate and up-to-date with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), as a delay returning the PIP application pack may result in you losing DLA.

The structure of PIP is quite similar to DLA, however the assessment criteria are quite different. Because of this, some DLA claimants may not qualify for the new benefit, while others may receive a higher award. As before, it's really important to get support completing the application form and the helpline can offer advice on how to access this help. You should also ensure you send any relevant evidence, such as from doctors, support workers, or social services, when making the claim.

You can find out more about PIP and services to support you in making a claim on our website at www.headway.org.uk/personal-independence-payment.aspx.



We'll support you...

**Leo Abse
& Cohen**
Solicitors
Cyfreithwyr



Leo Abse & Cohen Solicitors has over 50 years experience of working for accident victims. We have a team of solicitors who specialise in acting for those who have suffered a brain injury to make a positive difference.



Not every brain injury claim is the same. We will spend time getting to know you and your circumstances. We develop both a personal and professional relationship with you, your family and carers, and home or hospital visits can be arranged at a time convenient to you.

Our support does not end when the case finishes. As a specialist head injury solicitor we see our role as much more than helping you with the legal process and obtaining maximum compensation.

Post settlement we will assist you with your financial matters, ensuring your future is safeguarded. We focus on providing specialist rehabilitation to assist with your recovery and strive to ensure the family is supported every step of the way with the aid of a dedicated case manager.

We also specialise in Court of Protection, looking after the financial affairs of those who do not have the capacity to manage their own affairs.



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on 08459 006 007

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Who cares wins...

'My minor head injury caused major damage'

Headway's new statistics have revealed a dramatic increase in the number of female head injury admissions to UK hospitals. Here, Mel Lightfoot shares her story of how a seemingly innocuous head injury has changed her life.

In 2010, 52-year-old Mel, from Gosport, slipped on a wet pavement and hit her head while on a shopping trip to B&Q. She was taken to hospital with a suspected concussion and was discharged just a few hours later, with nothing more than a leaflet about head injury.

In the days following the accident, Mel began to struggle with poor concentration, language difficulties and memory problems. Determined to resume her routine as normal, however, the mother-of-two initially tried to ignore the symptoms.

It wasn't until several weeks later, with the problems persisting, that Mel eventually realised that something was seriously wrong and sought medical advice. After several months she eventually received an incorrect diagnosis of severe depression.

"In the early stages, I didn't for one moment think that there would be any lasting damage," said Mel. "I struggled with my speech and found it a challenge to remember basic things and, although I suspected that my head injury may have caused concussion, I thought the difficulties would eventually go away.

"As time went by and the problems persisted I knew

something wasn't right, but I found it a real battle to get a brain injury diagnosis. The depression diagnosis just didn't feel right to me, and so I paid for a private consultation and was eventually diagnosed with Mild Dysexecutive Syndrome the following year."

"I tried to fight and save my career, but I had to accept that I had gone from being a capable

member of staff to needing my work checking as I was making mistakes because of my brain injury," said Mel.

"It was a horrible feeling and I eventually lost my job. I was devastated.

"The impact on my family life has also been a huge strain. One of the most challenging problems is that brain injuries are often invisible and so it is difficult for people, even friends and family, to understand or even acknowledge they exist."

Three years ago, Mel discovered Headway Portsmouth and South East Hants and, with the charity's support, she began to rebuild her life.

"I don't know where I would be today without the friends I made at the charity's Gosport support group," said Mel, who lives with her husband, Clive.

"I even started volunteering at the charity's office at the Mountbatten Centre in Portsmouth. It is only a couple of hours a week, but it gets me out of the house and it feels a bit like being back at work.

"I am determined not to let my injury define me – I'm still me, albeit a slightly different me."



Mel Lightfoot with her husband Clive

Research Matters

Acute treatment for traumatic brain injury

Although acute management of traumatic brain injury (TBI) has made great progress in recent years, there is still much to discover. Here we present summaries of recent papers in the field.



Familiar sounds help coma patients

For many years people have been encouraged to speak to patients in comas or vegetative states in order to provide them with sensory stimulation. However, the effectiveness of this has remained a mystery. Now, a study published in a recent edition of the journal *Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair* has provided the first evidence that patients' outcomes may be improved by familiar sounds.

The research, by a team of US neuroscientists, looked at the efficacy of a form of coma stimulation called Familiar Auditory Sensory Training (FAST). This involves playing recordings of personal stories from the patient's life, as told by a close friend or family member.

15 patients with disorders of consciousness, between 28 days and one year after injury, were allocated to two groups and had CDs played to them. Eight patients allocated to the FAST

group heard the familiar stories while the seven placebo group patients were played silence. Each protocol was then administered for ten minutes, four times a day, for six weeks.

The patients were then tested for their responsiveness to different kinds of sensory stimuli using two scales, the Disorders of Consciousness Scale (DOCS) and the Coma-Near-Coma (CNC) scale. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) was also used to examine the level of activation of the patients' brains in response to auditory stimuli.

The results of the DOCS tests showed very little difference between the FAST group and the placebo patients. However, significantly higher levels of arousal and responsiveness on the CNC scale were found in the FAST patients.

The fMRI results also indicated that the FAST group had greater brain activation. In fact, the level of brain activity in the FAST patients was similar to that seen in healthy subjects. One fascinating finding was that FAST group patients had significantly increased brain activation in response to a familiar voice calling out the person's name.

The researchers suggest that the FAST procedure may prime the brain to be more responsive, particularly to familiar sounds. The small number of patients in the study means that it can't be said that this will work for everyone, or



even the majority of people. However, there is the possibility that FAST could be used as a clinical procedure in the future.

Reference

Pape, T. *et al.* (2015) Placebo-controlled trial of Familiar Auditory Sensory Training for acute severe traumatic brain injury: a preliminary report. *Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair*, OnlineFirst Jan 2015.

Drug therapy shows promise

Therapeutic options for treating acute TBI remain very limited. However, a type of statin called simvastatin, usually used to lower cholesterol, has shown the potential to aid recovery in animals. A recent study by researchers in China, published in the journal *Brain Research*, has further investigated this potential, with encouraging results.

The scientists were interested in simvastatin's ability to promote the growth of neural stem cells, which can help the brain to repair itself. They studied the effects of the drug on rats, investigating the way it worked in injured regions of their brains.

The rats were randomly divided into three groups of 28. One group was treated with simvastatin, one with saline and one with nothing. The rats' functional recovery was then evaluated at regular intervals up to 35 days after treatment, before their brains were examined for the presence of neural stem cells.

The simvastatin-treated group showed a significant increase in neural stem cells in the injured areas of their brains, as well as enhanced production of other forms of cells and proteins. Most importantly, they also showed improved functional recovery in walking, balance, motor skills, sensory function and reflexes.

The authors suggest that simvastatin may have a neuroprotective effect after TBI and could be a beneficial treatment due to the stimulation of cell production in affected areas.

Reference

Chuncheng Xie, *et al.* (2014) The effect of simvastatin treatment on proliferation and differentiation of neural stem cells after traumatic brain injury. *Brain Research*, (1602), 1-8.

Disappointing results in progesterone trial

Sadly, the unreliability of replicating the results of animal trials with humans has been demonstrated by a large-scale clinical trial of progesterone.

The neuroprotective effects of this female hormone have been widely documented in recent years, including previous Research Matters articles and the Headway website. Early-stage trials in humans yielded encouraging results, showing that progesterone was effective in reducing inflammation and inhibiting the death of cells.

On the basis of these results, two large phase-three clinical trials



were initiated in the United States; the PROTECT III trial and the SYNAPSE trial. PROTECT III was halted early, but a total of 1,195 patients in the early stages after TBI were recruited for SYNAPSE from trauma centres in 21 countries. 591 patients were administered with intravenous progesterone and 588 were given a placebo, with 16 patients omitted from the trial.

The recovery of the patients in both groups was then measured using the Glasgow Outcome Scale. The proportion with a favourable outcome (good recovery or moderate disability) was 50.4% with progesterone and 50.5% with placebo. This indicates no clinical benefit from the progesterone treatment.

After such high hopes these results are a huge disappointment and the authors suggest that the complexity and variability of brain injuries is the reason for the long history of failed TBI trials. Scientists will continue their efforts in other areas and we can only hope for better results in future.

Reference

Skolnick, B. *et al.* (2014) A clinical trial of progesterone for severe traumatic brain injury. *New England Journal of Medicine*, (26), 2467-76.

Brain injury campaigners out in

A strong and powerful mood seemed to sweep the UK in May, with people across the country taking action and making their voices heard. No, we're not talking about the General Election, but rather Action for Brain Injury Week 2015!

Voices heard

In Wales, the message of taking positive action for brain injury resonated particularly strongly with one member of **Headway Cardiff** who doffed her cap and took to the podium to campaign for better community rehabilitation services in the region.

On Friday 22 May, Pat Derbyshire joined with other members of Headway Cardiff's Service Users Forum to share her experiences of brain injury in front of Welsh Assembly ministers and senior members of Cardiff and Vale Health Board.

Pat, who worked for the Royal College of Nurses before suffering a subarachnoid haemorrhage in 2012, said: "A neurosurgeon saved my life but Headway Cardiff showed me how



Wearing his bat for Headway, Cameron Arnell completes his cycling challenge

to live that life. Many people affected by brain injury do not have access to such support and are not so fortunate. I am one of the lucky ones."

Headway Suffolk also took the direct action route during ABI Week by opening its third satellite hub.

With hubs already operating in Woodbridge and Haverhill, the latest Headway Suffolk centre is based in the centre of Stowmarket, with a fourth launched in Mildenhall on 2 June 2015.

The hubs have been opened to reduce transport time for members and to enable more people affected by brain injury to access support across the county.

Headway Cardiff member Pat Derbyshire speaks out about brain injury

'Some days are better than others'

Driven by the desire to raise awareness of the hidden effects of brain injury, **Headway Jersey** supporters made their voices heard by taking to the streets to promote their 'Some days are better than others' campaign.

Members of the team handed leaflets out to the public at the local BHS store, while Cameron Arnell led the fundraising charge by completing 90 miles on a static exercise bike during each day of ABI Week.

"People need to understand that, while somebody may look absolutely fine on the outside, they may be battling the concealed effects of brain injury on the inside," said Lou Stirling, Fundraising and Events Co-ordinator at Headway Jersey.

Getting active

Meanwhile, members of **Headway Cambridgeshire** also took a physical approach by taking to the group's new gym to illustrate the importance of exercise after brain injury.

Even the Mayor of Cambridge, Councillor Gerri Bird, got into the spirit as she turned out to mark the launch of the local group's specially-adapted exercise facility.

Thanks to a generous donation by Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, the new gym will enable people with a range of abilities to enjoy exercise sessions as part of their

force during week of action

rehabilitation – and it even comes with its very own qualified instructor.

It's all clinical

Julie Sharp, Volunteer Committee Member at **Headway Leeds**, marked the week by setting up camp at Leeds General Infirmary with her team of volunteers. Together, they collected donations and handed out leaflets, raising more than £200 in the process.

The team also took the opportunity to provide the hospital with Headway factsheets during a visit to the neurology wards where they met with Head Injury Nurse Specialist, Laura Sedgley.

For **Headway Sefton** and **Headway Liverpool**, joining forces with the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Centre (BIRC) was the key to success when hosting their third annual awareness event in Liverpool.

Professionals and people affected by brain injury enjoyed a series of



Fabulous fundraisers take an informative stand in Leeds

exhibitions, presentations from a panel of brain injury survivors and entertainment from Winsor County Primary School's samba band. Kevin Foy, Consultant Neuropsychiatrist at BIRC, also delivered a speech focusing on cognitive issues after brain injury.

Having a ball!

Contrary to the wacky style of some Headway hats, silly was replaced by sophisticated for guests at the Swindon Charity Ball who donned their finest evening headwear to raise £4,500 for **Headway Swindon**.

"We are absolutely thrilled to have received such fabulous support from the community," said Jane Weston, Centre Manager at Headway Swindon.

"Thanks to the Swindon Charity Ball, we can now afford to purchase computers and assistance cards to help our members regain confidence and independence after brain injury."

Meanwhile, **Headway Sheffield** got into a different kind of swing for ABI Week as they teamed up with **Headway North Derbyshire** for an evening of tenpin bowling.

'Who Are You Now?'

With recent statistics revealing that there were more than 40,000 brain injury hospital admissions in the capital last year, **Headway East London** concluded the week's celebrations by announcing the launch of a new website initiative.

The online project, called 'Who Are You Now?', began in late 2013 and was made available as an independent website during ABI Week this year to share local people's stories of brain injury and highlight the value of Headway East London's services.

- To read some survivors' stories, please visit <http://whoareyounow.org>



Mayor of Cambridgeshire Councillor Gerri Bird officially opens the new gym facilities



On the ball: Headway Sheffield and Headway North Derbyshire go head-to-head for ABI Week

You carrot be serious!



Above: Former Arsenal and England striker Alan Smith shows his support

From schools and businesses to *Coronation Street* stars and TV presenters, Headway supporters across the country sported their wackiest bonnets with pride to make this year's Hats for Headway Day better than ever before.

Headway Swindon service user Mark Jennings' carrot-themed masterpiece earned him the money-can't-buy prize of a signed script of the 50th anniversary episode of *Coronation Street*. The script was generously donated by Corrie actor and Headway Preston and Chorley patron Ben Price.

Meanwhile, the Widnes branch of the national Italian restaurant chain Pesto stole the show for 'best group photo' with their kooky array of colourful caps. 25-year-old Laura Shannon, General Manager at the Pesto branch, signed her

colleagues up for the fundraiser after a brain haemorrhage in Costa Rica left her with a brain injury.

"The support I received from my colleagues for Hats for Headway Day has been astounding," said Laura.

"My original target was to raise £250, but the Pesto team, along with our customers, my family and friends, have helped me to raise more than £1,500 for the charity!"

A huge thank you to everyone who got creative to raise awareness and funds for families affected by brain injury across the UK.

● You can see more fun photos from Hats for Headway Day by visiting our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/headwayuk



Above: Individual winner: Mark's decision to take the healthy option pays off at Headway Swindon's 'Bake-Off'!

Hats 4 Headway Day



Right: Group winner: Laura (centre) and her team unite for Headway at the Widnes branch of Pesto



Above: Sky News presenter Kirsty Gallacher sportingly dons her Sonic the Hedgehog cap



Left: Cardiff-based Hugh James Solicitors enjoying their Welsh-themed 'Hetiau gyfer Headway' festivities



Above Right:
Coronation Street actors Andrew Paul (who plays the Street's newcomer Dan Jones), Alison King (Carla Connor) and TV presenter Les Dennis (Michael Rodwell) put their heads together to support Hats for Headway Day



Above Left: Headway Great North runner Mary-Alice Stewart transforms into Alice in Wonderful for her Mad Hatter's Tea Party



Above : Hat-trick: Gym instructor 'Magic Mark' Waugh astonishes members of Headway Edinburgh with his sleight of hand!



Above: Volunteers of all ages turn out to raise awareness of brain injury at Headway's charity shop in Mapperley



Above: All hands on deck for 'Me Headway Hearties' who enjoyed a pirate-themed day at the Northwich shop



Left: Isle of Wight creations range from gardening and fry-ups to a hat decorated with old copies of Headway News!

'A special thank you to my understanding wife'

Three years ago, 33-year-old David Thomas sustained a brain injury while playing rugby. It put his career and relationship with his wife, Helen, under increasing pressure as he struggled to cope. Today, David is slowly rebuilding his life, with Helen providing ever-present support. Recognising the role Helen has played in helping him to get this far, David chose an imaginative way to say thank you...

In 2012, David was playing rugby when a fierce tackle caused a severe whiplash effect as David fell backwards, forcing his brain forward against his skull.

"I remember having an instant headache and feeling incredibly dizzy after the hit," said David. "I didn't realise at the time how serious it could be and I adopted the stereotypical 'macho man' approach of taking painkillers after the match, with a few pints, before going home.

"Three weeks later, I suffered another dizzy spell and fell to the ground, spraining my ankle.

"I went to the doctors about my ankle, but when he asked me questions about the dizziness and headaches, he referred me to Newham General Hospital in London. Doctors there identified a severe head trauma caused by a suspected concussion and bleed in my brain."



David in hospital after his head injury

David and his backing band serenade Helen...



...before the couple share an emotional embrace

Before his brain injury, David had managed gyms and had been a health and fitness trainer. For nearly a year after the incident, he tried to continue life as normal and ignore the headaches, mood swings and dizzy spells that were caused by his brain injury. However, he was eventually forced to press pause on his career.

"It was very hard both for me and Helen when I stopped working," said David. "Our entire relationship dynamic changed. Helen became the primary breadwinner, which put pressure on her and, while I know it sounds daft, made me feel slightly emasculated. I felt as though I had lost my identity."

With the support of Helen, David is slowly rebuilding his fitness career. This year, the couple marked their five-year wedding anniversary with a trip to Egypt. But, on their return, romantic David had something even more special

planned to thank his wife for her unwavering support. Having taken Helen out to a local restaurant, David surprised his wife by leading a supporting cast of opera singers and members of the Hackney Colliery Brass Band in a touching rendition of the couple's wedding song, *Rule the World*.

"Helen has been the most incredible support for me and she truly deserved a public display of affection," said David. "It has been a horrendous few years, but my brain injury has taught me to value the time I spend with my beautiful wife." Thankfully, the romantic scene was caught on camera and David is now asking people who view the film to make a donation to Headway.

● To see David's moving tribute to Helen, visit the Headway YouTube page at www.youtube.com/headwayuk

A vintage display in Alcester

Television's antiques expert and friend of Headway Eric Knowles may have some serious competition on his hands as staff at Headway's Alcester shop have proved they know a thing or two about selling classic items.

Rachel Avery and Rebecca Jeffs, Manager and Deputy Manager respectively, spent months collecting hundreds of vintage items donated by members of the public in preparation for the town's long-awaited Artisan Market. Organisers had hoped to attract hundreds of shoppers to the event, but sadly it was cancelled.

Determined to not let their hard work and the generous donations go to waste, Rachel and Rebecca decided to set up their own 'pop-up' Vintage Market. The initiative proved a huge success, with more than £300 worth of vintage donations sold at the event.

"We had been appealing for vintage-themed stock donations for months and we were looking forward to the event," said Rebecca, who started out as a volunteer at the charity shop a year ago when a close friend, discovered she had a brain tumour.

"It was nice to welcome new people to the shop while offering them something different."



Rachel Avery and Rebecca Jeffs proudly show their vintage-style shop front

Rachel added: "The vintage items on sale included everything from bean slicers and sewing machines to an unusual brooch valued at £45.

"We would like to thank everyone who came along and helped make our quirky fundraiser such a success."

● Anyone interested in volunteering or donating stock is welcome to come along to the shop at 33 High Street, Alcester; or call **01789 765262**.

● To find your nearest Headway shop, visit **www.headway.org.uk/charity-shops.aspx**



In character: Shop Manager Rachel Avery at the Alcester Headway charity shop

James Cracknell leads Team at London Marathon 2015

Double Olympic gold-medallist James Cracknell proudly led Team Headway as they pounded the streets for this year's Virgin London Marathon.

On Sunday 26 April, 37,000 runners descended on the capital



James Cracknell lead Team Headway in style

for the biggest ever London Marathon. Amongst them were 77 intrepid Headway heroes, 44 of whom were running for Headway UK and raised a phenomenal £85,000 for the charity so far.

Headway Chief Executive Peter McCabe kicked off the festivities on Saturday evening with a pre-marathon Pasta Party event, which gave Headway runners and their families an opportunity to socialise and stock up on carbs to prepare for the big day. The pre-event celebrations also played host to guests from a variety of Headway groups, including Devon, Dorset, Swindon, Surrey, South Staffordshire and East Northants.

A race of a different kind

While most people were just looking to finish the gruelling event, Headway Vice President James Cracknell decided to spice things up by getting into a personal duel with Formula One racing star Jenson Button. The two fitness fanatics pushed each other on, with James just pipping his racing rival to the finishing line in an incredible time of 2:50:43.

James first tackled the marathon for Headway in 2011, less than a year after a cycling accident in the USA left him with a life-changing brain injury.

Solicitor support for Headway shop

Volunteer stock sorters at the Headway charity shop in Poynton have been kept busy thanks to a generous donation by a Manchester-based law firm.

Shop Manager Sue Watkins and her dedicated team of volunteers were delighted when CFG Law handed over a van-full of items including toys, books, clothes, and DVDs.

Crispin Balmer, Serious Injury Solicitor at the law firm, paid a special visit to the Headway shop

to drop off the big donation last month, before taking the time to meet with the team and learn more about the work of Headway.

"Our staff have been collecting items from their own homes for many months so that we could make a large group contribution to this very important charity," said Crispin.

"I was thrilled to be invited to the new charity shop in Poynton to make our donation and I am sure my team will continue to look for ways to support Headway in the future."



Crispin Balmer (far left) with Sue Watkins (centre) and volunteers Phil Hall, Anne Donoghue and Ann McHugh

Shop Manager, Sue Watkins, said: "On behalf of everyone at the shop, I would like to thank CFG Law for their efforts. Donations such as this go a long way to helping the charity improve the lives of brain injury survivors, their families and carers."

Headway



Thomas Bolton appears a little boxed in during the event...

Four years on, James's dedication to raising awareness of brain injury is still going strong. He proudly displayed the Headway logo while running and when completing several media interviews, during which he praised the work of the charity.

"It was an honour to be a part of Team Headway, running alongside a group of people who each have their own personal reasons for supporting this fabulous charity," said James. "It's an iconic event that attracts the attention of millions of people from across the world – whether they're participating, lining the route to support family and friends or cheering from the comfort of their homes.

"I wore the Headway logo with pride and I want to thank everyone who donated or turned up to cheer us on through the last and most difficult miles," said James.

Joining James in the charity's colours of blue and white was fellow Headway hero Thomas Bolton who put a sci-fi spin on this year's event by tackling the marathon while dressed as Doctor Who's Tardis!

Thomas, who donned the quirky costume to raise funds for Headway East Northants, turned heads as he swept through the capital sporting the police box outfit he fashioned out of an old canvas wardrobe.

"I've always liked to try outlandish ideas and thought what better place to do it than the marathon!" said Thomas. "I am thrilled to have raised almost £2,000 for Headway East Northants as I feel the charity can really make a difference to the lives of many local people living with brain injury."

Meanwhile, 24-year-old Danielle Anderson took to the streets of London just 18 months after a series of suspected migraines turned out to be a ruptured aneurysm that left her with a brain injury.

"Thanks to the support of Headway after my brain injury, I'm finally fighting fit," said Danielle. "My friend also sustained a brain injury around the same time as I did. Headway's online factsheets helped our families understand the effects such injuries can have. I wanted to give something back by running the marathon to raise awareness of Headway."

Jane Davies and her husband, Paul, also had strong personal reasons for running. When Jane's step-brother Stuart sustained an

acquired brain injury as a result of a motorbike accident six years ago, he struggled to master the basic life skills he once took for granted. His family eventually turned to Headway Worcestershire for support.

"Without this amazing charity, Stuart would not have recovered to the extent he has achieved following his brain injury," said Jane. "Paul and I are both passionate about raising the profile of the work Headway does to support families affected by brain injury not just in our area, but across the whole of the UK."

Jo Plant, Director of Fundraising at Headway, said: "Each Headway runner has a personal reason for undertaking this epic challenge and many have had to conquer significant life-hurdles before even reaching the starting line. We are so grateful and proud of every member of Team Headway.

"Special thanks go to Claire Phillips and Jean Tudor from Headway East Northants for their support throughout the weekend and an enormous thank you and well done to everyone who took part in the Virgin London Marathon 2015!"

● For further information on our fundraising events, contact Emily Suffield on **0115 924 0800** or fundraising@headway.org.uk



Headway heroes loading up on carbs at the pre-event Pasta Party

Nikita falls for Headway



Going... going...

Afearless daughter has literally taken a leap of faith, out of a plane at 10,000ft no less, to raise awareness of the charity that helped her father rebuild his life after brain injury.

On Sunday 10 May, Nikita Miller completed a tandem skydive to raise funds for Headway after a brutal assault in 2014 left her father, 47-year-old Nick Miller, with a devastating brain injury.

In August 2014, Nick was involved in an unprovoked assault. A single punch to the head was all it took to leave Nick unconscious on the road. The attack left him with a life-changing traumatic brain injury that would cause him to struggle with walking, talking and even recognising close family members in the early days of his recovery.

Nikita's epic challenge marked a poignant time for the Miller family as, that very week, the man responsible for her dad's injury was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison for the offence.



Gone!

"It was like a weight had been lifted and jumping out of the plane for Headway felt like a great way to thank the charity for supporting us and leave the court case behind," said Nikita.

"We were thrown into a confusing world of brain injury, but the Headway website provided us with tonnes of valuable information about how to cope with what was happening to our family. We were also provided with coping strategies to help my dad manage his anger after brain injury."

With the fundraising support of her work colleagues at Dyson Energy Services, Nikita has managed to raise £640 from the challenge so far.

"The scariest part of the skydive was landing, particularly when the

adrenaline kicked in," said Nikita. "I felt really excited on the plane but my instructor Alec Flint managed to keep me relaxed. In fact, I couldn't stop smiling all the way down!"

"It's great to know that every penny will go towards supporting other families living with the effects of brain injury."

- To sponsor Nikita, please visit her fundraising page at www.doitforcharity.com/nikitam
- Feeling inspired to get active for Headway? Why not take on your own charity challenge by visiting www.headway.org.uk/fundraise.aspx or call the fundraising team on 0115 924 0800.



Sky's the limit: Nikita with her Skyline instructor, Alec Flint

Big Lottery windfall opens new doors for Headway groups

People affected by brain injury in Wakefield and East London are enjoying improved local services thanks to generous grants awarded by the Big Lottery Fund.

Members of Second Chance Headway, in Wakefield, and Headway East London are celebrating after thousands of pounds were provided by the Big Lottery Fund's community grants programme, which supports local charities to provide better rehabilitation and outreach projects.

Second Chance Headway was awarded a huge grant of almost £350,000, which has enabled the group to launch a community project designed to improve service users' self-esteem after brain injury.

The new initiative will feature a variety of activities for Headway members, including everything from arts and crafts, cooking, woodwork, photography and drama to developing speech and language skills, social skills and memory.

The funds, which will support around 200 beneficiaries over a three-year period, will also facilitate outreach projects to help Headway members improve their life skills after brain injury so that they can lead more independent lives.

Service users Alan Haywood and Louise Edwards are among the

many members of Headway Second Chance in Wakefield who will benefit from the funding.

Alan Haywood, who was only eight years old when he was knocked down by a car and sustained a brain injury, said: "Before I discovered Headway, I slept rough and was very quiet and would bottle things up.

"Headway has turned my life around and the generous financial backing of the Big Lottery Fund has enabled Second Chance Headway to employ more staff and continue developing the vital lifeline the group offers to me and others affected by brain injury."

For members of Headway East London, a Reaching Communities grant – also awarded by the Big Lottery scheme – will ensure support for people affected by brain injury via the funding of a specialist case worker in London hospitals for four years.

For the first time, Headway East London will be able to work directly with local hospitals to offer services to survivors and carers in the early stages of care and rehabilitation. The group will also provide family members with support and information to help them navigate the health, social care and benefits systems and signpost them to other services.

Alex Beattie, from Headway East London, said: "We are extremely

grateful for these very generous and much-needed funds.

"Following a brain injury, a person's life can be thrown off balance and their ability to carry out daily activities can change extremely quickly.

"The Big Lottery grant will enable Headway East London's dedicated team to utilise their existing skills by delivering essential advice and support to brain injury survivors and their families when they are discharged from hospital into the community."



Louise Edwards and Alan Haywood welcome Big Lottery Fund success

An Apple a day for Headway Surrey members

Members of Headway Surrey looking to develop their computer skills are benefiting from an innovative new iPad loan scheme.

The initiative, which started out as a computer club for the group's members, recently expanded to include a free iPad loaning library for those who cannot access computer devices at home.

As almost half of Headway Surrey's members do not own computers or mobile phones, the group hopes the scheme will enable every member to benefit from technology as part of their rehabilitation.

"We had been providing traditional computer training at our Guildford centre for a number of years," said Oliver McGeachy, Chief Executive of Headway Surrey.

"However, it became clear that technology was moving on at a tremendous rate and there was a real danger that our members would miss out on opportunities to broaden their interests and

improve their quality of life after brain injury."

Headway Surrey first established the 'IT familiarisation' project more than a year ago to gauge the importance of technology in rehabilitation after brain injury.

Now, thanks to the generous support of The Rotary Club of Guildford and Community Foundation for Surrey, who have collectively raised £7,500 for the charity, Headway Surrey has finally been able to expand the initiative into the community.

"We introduced tablets and laptops into our centre-based activities last year and it was like turning a light on," said Oliver.

"Our members suddenly discovered a whole new world of communication and much of our cognitive rehabilitation work is now done on-screen.

"Members can access our iPads for free as we believe nobody should be disadvantaged by their inability to afford technology.

"It is not about providing formal IT training. It is more about giving members the opportunity to use equipment and facilities many of us take for granted and allowing them to experiment with up-to-date technology.

"So far everyone is thoroughly enjoying the experience."



Headway Surrey service users Monica (left) and Sue (right) celebrate Hats for Headway Day during a computer club session

Double delig

Excited members of Headway Milton Keynes have twice the reason to celebrate this summer as the group has been awarded not one but two community grants, collectively totalling almost £40,000.

The grants, both awarded by the MK Community Foundation, will help Headway Milton Keynes to expand its services and have already enabled the group to run a series of art workshops designed to support rehabilitation after brain injury.

Service user John Hearne is one of many Headway members who has already benefitted from the art programme funded by the first grant, which was awarded as part of the MK Community Foundation's Small Communities grant scheme.

The art project involved Headway members trying their hand at creating ceramics at pottery painting cafe *Kilning Me Softly*. This eventually led to an exhibition of the Headway members' work at the MK Gallery.

John began attending Headway Milton Keynes after a near-fatal car accident in 2004 left him with a traumatic brain injury. As a result of his injury, John struggles with co-ordination and vision problems and the art sessions became an invaluable part of his recovery.

"The workshops provided me with an alternative way to process my thoughts and express myself in a way that didn't depend upon language skills," said John.

ht for MK artists



John Hearne creates ceramic pieces as part of the group's community funded art sessions. Inset: Ceramic plate created by the Headway Milton Keynes art group

"I came to Headway Milton Keynes feeling very different, but when I saw that other members were facing similar challenges after brain injury I realised I was not alone. I hope the art exhibition highlights the invaluable work Headway Milton Keynes does to help people like me build a new life after brain injury."

The second MK Community Fund grant of an incredible £24,850 will allow the group to launch a new clinical support programme that will include physiotherapy, occupational therapy and counselling sessions.

Sam Booth, Services Manager at Headway Milton Keynes, said: "We rely heavily upon the generosity of community supporters. We are delighted and incredibly grateful to the MK Community Foundation for this invaluable opportunity to expand the charity's services."

A crafty way to raise awareness

Creative members of Headway Tayside also decided to add a splash of creativity to their fundraising efforts by participating in a series of craft and poetry workshops.

David Arbroath was among those who took up their brushes to breathe new life into pots and jars for the glass painting project held at the Headway Tayside support group in Dundee.

Once the hard work was finished, the group then had the chance to create a collage of their artwork and poetry as part of a final team-building group project.

And the group's arty talents do not stop there.

This year, the local ASDA in Dundee named Headway Tayside as its 'Charity of the Year'. As well

as pledging to raise funds for the Headway group, the supermarket staff even helped Headway Tayside to host a charity fundraiser at the store to raise awareness of brain injury in the community.

Gill Moir, Director at Headway Tayside, was delighted to see ASDA staff unite with the charity's volunteers to create bespoke goodie bags to sell at the event.

"We are deeply proud of the commitment and enthusiasm with which our Headway members and volunteers find creative ways of raising awareness of the charity to improve life after brain injury," said Gill.

"A huge thank you to everyone at the ASDA store who has supported us this year and to those wonderful individuals who made our little fundraiser so worthwhile."



Proud: Headway Tayside member David Arbroath painting his glass. Inset: Collage of artwork and poetry created by members of Headway Tayside

Black Country strikes the right chord with convention

Members of Headway Black Country's Survivors Chorus ensured the group's first ever brain injury convention hit the right notes!

The convention was officially opened by Headway Black Country's patron, Ian Austin, who introduced the day's varied programme that appealed to the wide range of delegates including brain injury survivors, service commissioners and brain injury professionals.

Moving personal stories of three survivors of brain injury and one carer were followed by two uplifting performances by *Survivors Chorus*, the charity's

music group which is led by Lance Jackson. Guests were then treated to a series of informative presentations by Dr Steve Sturman, Consultant in Neurology and Rehabilitation from University Hospitals Birmingham, followed by Kay Harries from Irwin Mitchell Solicitors and Alison Gadd from Dudley Brain Injury Service.

Delegates were also able to browse the exhibition stands hosted by representatives from Black Country Neurological Alliance, Brain Tumour Support, Dudley Brain Injury Service and other third sector organisations.

Stephen Phipps, Chief Officer at Headway Black Country, was

delighted with the turnout to the event, which was sponsored by Irwin Mitchell Solicitors.

Stephen said: "We are thrilled with the overwhelmingly positive response and interest the day generated. The people we support were at the heart of the day's proceedings, which brought home to the audience the everyday challenges they face.

"We are very grateful to Irwin Mitchell Solicitors for sponsoring our first convention and making it such a success."

● Find out more about the Headway Black Country convention by following a link on the charity's website: www.headwayblackcountry.co.uk



Headway Black Country patron, Ian Austin, delivers his introductory speech



Good times: Headway Bristol members settle into their new Headway home with a game of indoor mini-golf

New Headway homes in the South West

Two Headway groups are set for a fresh start this summer as they both get used to fabulous new surroundings in which to expand their services.

Staff at Headway Salisbury and South Wiltshire were thrilled to launch a new hub and activity group at Fisherton House, on Wilton Road, in Salisbury.

Meanwhile, Headway Bristol members ensured they gave their much-loved old centre a proper send-off before moving into the group's new and improved home at the Frenchay Beckspool Building in the city.

Headway Salisbury and South Wiltshire members are already enjoying the benefits of their new building, which is fully accessible to anyone with a disability and was officially opened by John Glenn MP at a ceremony in April.

The premises will also play host to the group's new activity sessions, which will give survivors of brain injury and their carers the opportunity to socialise, join in with the craft sessions and workshops, or simply enjoy a cup of coffee and a chat.

"The expansion of our services marks a very exciting time for our group," said Sarah Allen, Development Officer at Headway Salisbury and South Wiltshire. "It is reassuring to know that our new hub and activity group will



Staff at Headway Salisbury and South Wiltshire cut ribbon to pronounce the new hub officially open

enable us to reach out to more local people who may be in need of support after sustaining a brain injury."

Headway Bristol members are also getting acclimatised to new surroundings in which the group's centre-based activities are delivered.

Before the move, service users were invited to leave their mark on the old Headway Bristol building by creating a 'memory wall' of comments as part of the group's final project at the old centre.

"It was undeniably a sad and strange day for everyone who has spent many years making very joyful memories in our old building," said volunteer Maureen Chambers, who has been involved with Headway Bristol for more than 13 years.

"However, the new building is much brighter, more spacious and airy than our last place and it promises an exciting future for everyone here at Headway Bristol."

The new centre has enabled members of the group to benefit from improved facilities, including a computer room, art room, and library. It also comprises a fully accessible wet room, space in which to conduct counselling sessions, and a huge garden that is perfect for outdoor games and barbecues.

"We would like to thank North Bristol NHS Trust for working with us to create such wonderful new facilities," added Maureen. "Thanks also go to Stan Hurley, Mike Snell and Jon Sheppard who worked hard to make the move go as smoothly as possible for service users and gave guided tours during the first week at the new premises."

- To volunteer or get involved with Headway Salisbury and South Wiltshire, please contact Sarah Allen at info@salisburyheadway.co.uk
- For information about Headway Bristol or to offer your support, email Emily Cope on Emily.Cope@nbt.nhs.uk

Headway hero conquers Kili in less than a day!

A courageous Jersey man has completed the charity challenge of a lifetime by scaling the world's tallest free-standing mountain in a phenomenal 18.5 hours.

Harry McAlinden, 56 and originally from Scotland, chose to climb the world-renowned Mount Kilimanjaro to raise funds for Headway Jersey after the group supported his childhood friend, Frank MacFarlane, who sustained a brain injury in 1999.

The mission, which usually takes climbers more than six days to complete, saw Harry successfully trek to the top of the 3,000ft mountain – and back down again!

– in less than 19 hours, raising more than £4,000 for Headway Jersey.

But Harry is no stranger to physically demanding challenges.

In 2010, Harry was running in the London Marathon when he bumped into his childhood friend, Frank, who was running for Headway Jersey. Shocked to hear about Frank's brain injury, Harry decided to start volunteering at the group, where Frank was a member.

"I love to undertake challenges for Headway that most people would think are near impossible because many people living with a brain

injury face massive challenges every single day of their lives," said Harry.

"Eight days into my training I began to experience altitude sickness, but I feel blessed to have managed to complete such an epic challenge and in the process help a charity that is so close to my heart."

After 25 weeks of intensive training and one-on-one support from Simon Mtuy, who is the world record holder for the fastest unsupported ascent and descent of Mount Kilimanjaro, Harry finished the climb five-and-a-half hours quicker than anticipated.

Louise Stirling, Fundraising and Events Co-ordinator at Headway Jersey, said: "Thanks to Harry's phenomenal achievement, our Headway centre can continue to offer a wide range of services six days a week to support local survivors of brain injury and their families."

Harry would like to thank his girlfriend Elizabeth for her continued support, as well as Fit2Function, Round the Rock, Hare and Tortoises Events, Mel Owers Decorators, and Viera Hugo Construction for their generosity.

● To host your own fundraising event for Headway Jersey, please contact Louise Stirling at loustirling.headway@gmail.com.



King of the world: Harry McAlinden at the top of Mount Kilimanjaro

July 2015

Friday 3rd – Sunday 5th

**The Way Ahead Conference,
Yarnfield Training & Conference
Centre, Stone, Staffs *****

Wednesday 8 July – Llanelli

Cognitive Rehabilitation Issues **

September 2015

Sunday 6th

London to Brighton Cycle *

Wednesday 9th – Sunday 13th

London to Paris Cycle *

Thursday 10th – Saturday 19th

China Trek *

Friday 18th – Sunday 20th

Ben Nevis *

Friday 25th – Sunday 27th

Three Peaks Challenge *

October 2015

Thursday 8th – Saturday 17th

Kilimanjaro *

TBC

Deputy Conference *

* For further details of events, contact Emily Suffield on 0115 924 0800.

** For details of the training Headway can offer, contact Angela Palmer on 0115 947 1919 or visit the Professionals section of the website for descriptions of the courses available and the online booking form.

*** For further details, contact Sam Clarke on 0115 947 1908.

Headway - the brain injury association is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Charity No 1025852) and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (Charity No SC 039992). Headway - the brain injury association is a company limited by guarantee Registered in England No. 2346893

Headway News welcomes contributions from readers. We are always pleased to receive articles but cannot guarantee that they will be published. If you have any questions about writing an article, then please contact the communications team on 0115 924 0800 or email enquiries@headway.org.uk

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Bryan Neill is a member of Headway - the brain injury association's Personal Injury Solicitor's List

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