



Winter 2015

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HeadwayNews

'But you don't *look* disabled'



the magazine of the brain injury association



Bring on the Baton!

Each year a number of dedicated teams choose to join the Headway Challenge Baton scheme. The challenge enables organisations to undertake an exciting year of fundraising to support Headway's vital services throughout the UK.

2015 certainly was another fun-filled year for one of our challengers!

Staff from Aldermore Bank spent the year taking part in everything from Hats for Headway Day, bake-offs and office tuck shops, through to Tough Mudder, fun runs and a table football competition!

Their flagship event – a five-a-side football tournament held at St George's Park, home of England's national team – raised an incredible £6,000 alone as the firm smashed its £10,000 target for the year.

James Radford, Director of Group Operations and Aldermore Community Team Sponsor, said: "Headway welcomed us with open arms and supported us from the start.



"This was our first charity adoption and Headway guided us in terms of what has been done with

previous organisations, as well as providing fundraising tips.



"They also valued the reason we chose them and what it especially meant to our Reading employees who sadly lost a close colleague as a result of brain injury last year.

"The scheme has shown us that it is not just about fundraising, it can be about what we can give back to the community, such as donations of clothes, or supporting campaigns.

"Most importantly, we have been able to come together as a bank and raise a lot of money for Headway and other charities. We are very pleased to have beaten our £10,000 target!"



Images: Aldermore taking part in their various fundraising activities

Inspired to take the challenge?

Headway is inviting organisations to join the Challenge Baton Scheme for 2016–2017.

Contact: partnerships@headway.org.uk for more information

HeadwayNews

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Contents

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...

How would you feel if you were accused of being a fraud or a cheat? Imagine if you were giving everything to compete in a sport you loved, challenging yourself to defy the effects of your brain injury while raising awareness of ABI, while all the time having to defend yourself against prejudice and judgemental eyes.

International para-climber Dave Bowes competes across the world, also entering non-disabled events in order to challenge himself. It comes at a cost, with competing exacerbating the effects of his brain injury. But with the effects of his brain injury hidden, Dave also has to cope with people whispering behind his back 'But he doesn't look disabled..'

Cover image: Dave Bowes shares his story



Read more about Dave's inspirational efforts to challenge discrimination and prove there can be life after brain injury on pages 14 and 15.

Elsewhere in this edition, we preview this year's *Headway Annual Awards*, launch our new website, and bring you a bunch of great news stories from across the Headway network.

Finally, we wish all our readers a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

The Communications Team

Headway launches new ‘modern

For more than 15 years, the Headway website has been an invaluable source of information and support for people affected by brain injury. And now, that support has been strengthened further with the launch of a new modern, mobile-friendly website to suit the changing habits of internet users.

The new Headway website was launched at the end of October following months of hard work to prepare not only the bright and welcoming new design of the site, but also to create a new resource centre to enable the charity to better support its network of groups and branches.

The project was led by Andrew Taylor, Website and Social Media Manager at Headway, who said: “We know that the Headway website is the first point of contact many people will have had with the charity – and may well be the first time they have found any support or information to help them adapt to life after brain injury.

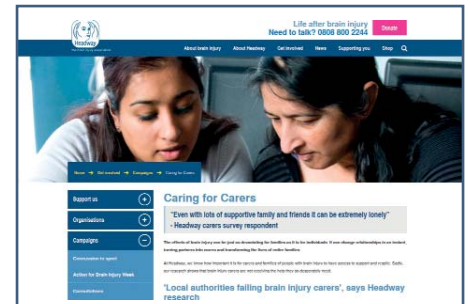
“We’ve always worked hard to provide as much high-quality information as we can to those affected by brain injury and we’re proud of our successes, particularly the *Highly Commended* status the British Medical Association bestowed on the site in 2011.

“But internet browsing habits are changing and it is vital that we kept pace with that change in order to make our information as accessible as possible.

“The Headway website has seen a significant growth in demand over the past few years. Visits to the site rose by an impressive 196% from 2010 to 2015. However, a large part of that growth is driven by visits from smartphones and tablets.

“The increase in visitors using smartphones and tablets is continuing, with over a third of our visitors now using a mobile device.

“To meet this demand, the new website is optimised for touch-



screen devices as well as traditional computers. It is also designed with accessibility in mind, helping people to access our information using a range of methods.

“We’re very proud of the fresh new look of the site and the fact that our information is now more accessible than ever to a new generation of internet users.”

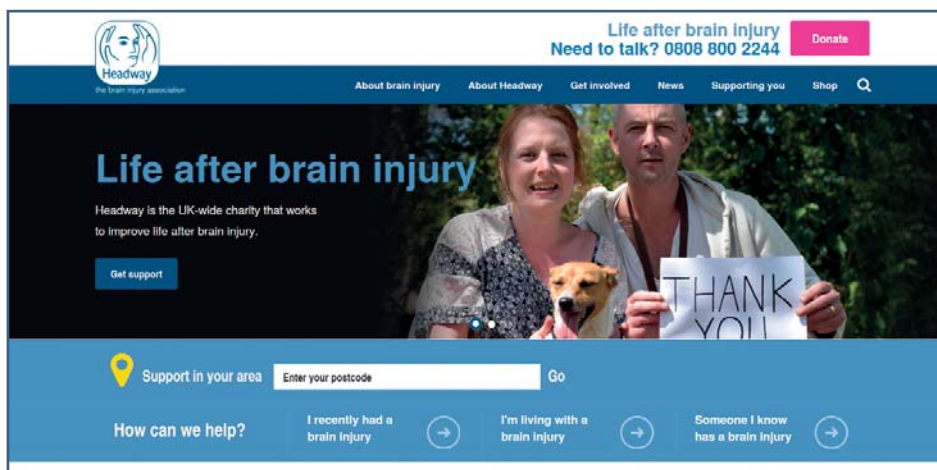
Multimedia

A priority for the development team was to increase the range of multimedia content on the site.

“The passion and determination of brain injury survivors, carers and family members to share their experiences of brain injury in order to help others has always inspired those of us who work or volunteer at the charity,” said Andrew.

“We wanted to ensure our new website provided more opportunities for their voices to be heard. We are now more able to feature video testimonies in addition to the more traditional written format, while we can also share more television and radio news items featuring the charity.”

The site also includes television news clips and features about



The new homepage

and mobile' website

brain injury, as well as messages of support for the charity's campaigns from high-profile people such as former England Rugby Union captain, Lewis Moody.

Local support

Finding local support services is also easier now, thanks to a new feature on the homepage. On entering your postcode, a map will display groups and branches and charity shops – complete with contact details and links for further information – in your vicinity.

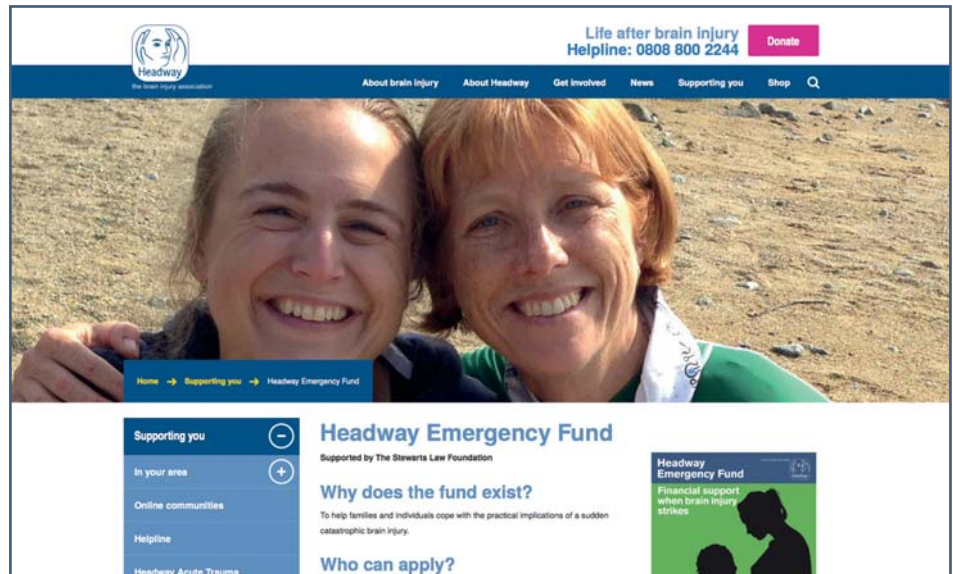
Users can also choose to display other useful services in their area, including Headway-approved care providers and solicitors.

Resource centre

A significant amount of development work has also gone into preparing a new-and-improved resource centre to support Headway groups and branches.

Sitting in a secure area of the site, the resource centre enables Headway to more effectively communicate with its network across the UK, ensuring groups and branches have access to key documents and information that can assist them in providing local support.

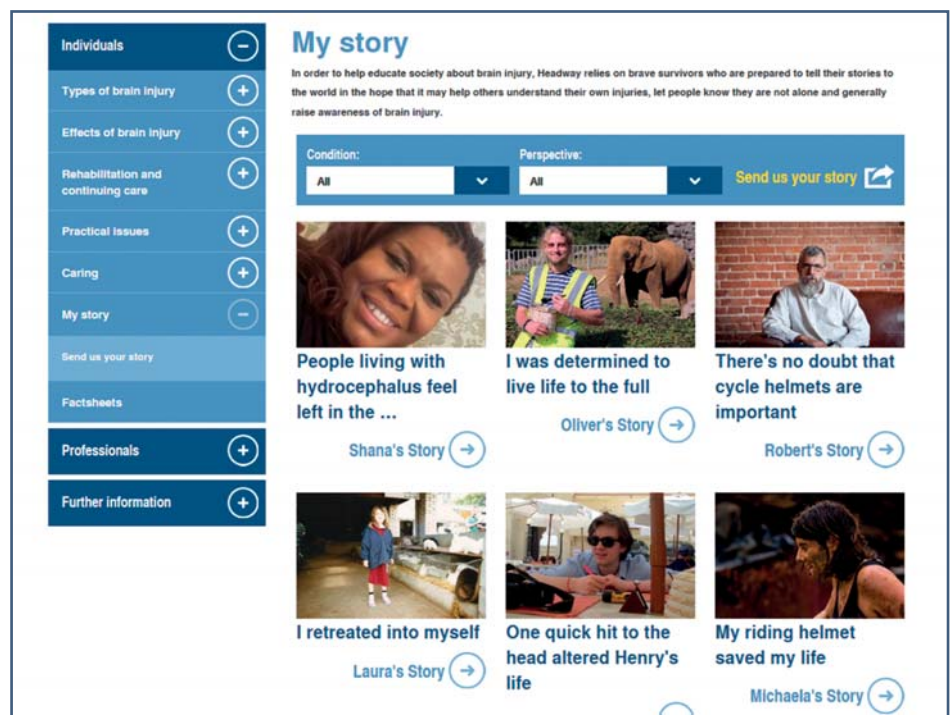
"This is a major development for the charity and one that will help us to support more people affected by brain injury," said Luke Griggs, Director of Communications at Headway.



"We are delighted with the new look and feel of the site. It is far more accessible to people using a variety of devices and will result in a greater number of people finding the information and help that they need – either directly from the site or from local support services.

"A great deal of work has gone into this project and I would like to thank all those who contributed, particularly Andrew for his hard work and dedication to the creation of what we feel is a fabulous new site fit for the modern age. We hope you agree!"

● Visit www.headway.org.uk to see the new site for yourself!



The 'My story' section of the new site

New group to reach out to 'vets suffering in silence'

A new Headway branch to support armed forces personnel and veterans affected by brain injury has been launched in Catterick, North Yorkshire.

The Headway Forces Support Group is the first group of its kind in the country. Led by former Army Captain and brain injury survivor Rob Cromey-Hawke, who is the Acting Chairman of the new branch, it will deliver a range of support services to brain injured forces personnel and veterans and their families across North Yorkshire and the North East of England.

The new branch will initially run monthly peer support meetings that will aim to break down stigma surrounding service personnel asking for civilian help and support by providing a safe space for people to share their experiences with others from military backgrounds.

The innovative project is being run in association with Help for Heroes. The military charity is providing significant support, ranging from enabling the group to use its bespoke meeting and physiotherapy facilities at the Phoenix House centre in Catterick, through to referring people to the group.

In 2012, Rob Cromey-Hawke, 31, had been on a tour of Afghanistan when the service vehicle in which he was travelling drove over an explosive device. The incident left Rob with a severe spinal cord injury, hearing loss and a traumatic brain injury. His brain injury causes him to suffer from ongoing memory problems, persistent dizziness and an acute sensitivity to light.

Not knowing where to turn for support, Rob was introduced to Headway's Alastair White who invited him to join the steering group for the new branch.

"Once you have been medically discharged, you are on your own," said Rob, who lives near Skipton, North Yorkshire, with his partner Karen and their two children, Connor and Charlie.

"The idea behind the Headway Forces Support Group is that anyone who has served in the Armed Forces gets the help they need – whether their acquired brain injury is a result of an incident while serving or not. We want to facilitate a smooth transition of care from what was provided before medical discharge to that available afterwards.

"Too many vets are suffering in silence, and we want to change that."

Future plans for the Headway branch include an education programme designed not only for military families affected by brain injury, but for the military chain of command, the NHS, and medical specialists to help everyone understand what support is available and areas for improvement.

An online community forum that will enable military personnel from around the country to access support and engage with the group's discussion on issues relating to brain injury is also being considered. It is hoped that the Headway Forces Support Group will serve as a template for the creation of other similar branches around the country.



Left to right: Alastair White with committee members Warren Maxwell, Alan Purdy, Rob Cromey-Hawke, Laura Gabbey-Cristofini and Johnny McConville

BMA-zing run of awards continues

Headway has received an early Christmas present with news that the charity's publications have received glowing praise from the British Medical Association (BMA) in its annual Patient Information Awards programme.

For a remarkable seventh year running, Headway information has been recognised for its high-quality and accessible content, with two honours received at this year's ceremony.

The factsheet *Making a complaint about health and social care services* received a Highly Commended award, while *After a Brain Injury: An Information Resource for Families and Carers* was Commended by the judges.

The *After a Brain Injury* resource is a comprehensive handbook for brain injury survivors and their carers and covers the Bradford area. It contains local information on each stage of the brain injury pathway, from hospital admission and treatment, to ongoing community-based support.

Headway's Director of Communications, Luke Griggs, said: "We are immensely proud that our information, which is produced by a small team of dedicated staff, has been honoured yet again by the BMA.

"It is a huge achievement for Headway to have collected 20 such awards in the past seven years against strong entries from charities and patient groups



across the UK that possess much greater resources."

- To download a copy of *Making a complaint about health and social care services* or other useful factsheets, visit www.headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury/individuals/factsheets

Capacity crowd for inaugural deputies' conference

A one-day conference to provide guidance to the increasing number of professional deputies working to support brain injury survivors has been hailed a success by delegates that attended the Headway event in Manchester in October.

Held in Partnership with the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG), the first Headway Deputy Conference included a talk from OPG Chief Executive, Alan Eccles, which incorporated information on recent developments within the OPG.

Other talks included a discussion on mutual dependence and gratuitous care by Senior Judge Denzil Lush, advice on running a successful deputyship by Julia Lomas from Irwin Mitchell, and guidance regarding questions to ask a financial adviser presented by Jenny Stone from Nestor Financial Group Ltd.

Special thanks to the Office of the Public Guardian, and sponsors Concerva Limited and Jane Lewis Health and Social Care for making the event possible.

- If you require information regarding professional or lay deputyship, Headway's award-winning publication *Supporting people to make decisions – applying the Mental Capacity Act* is available to purchase from our online shop or by calling **0115 924 0800**.



Sparkling Fizz leaves guests in WonderLAN

Eighties chart-toppers Bucks Fizz, a 'topsy turvy dinner', and a host of high-flying acrobats ensured guests at a Headway charity ball were left in WonderLAN in November.

The Alice In Wonderland-themed WonderLAN Ball was held to raise funds for next year's Look Ahead in the North event, otherwise known as LAN.

The spectacular event was held at Newcastle's Discovery Museum, with Eurovision favourites Bucks Fizz stealing the show.

The band was involved in a serious collision in 1984 following an appearance at Newcastle City Hall, which left band member Mike Nolan with a brain injury. More than 30 years later, three of the four original members of the band – Mike, Cheryl Baker and Jay Aston – returned to the city with special guest Bobby McVay



All smiles from the Cheshire Cat!



Cheryl Baker and her colleagues ensured the ball had plenty of fizz!

to treat guests at the ball to all their hits from yesteryear.

"It was an incredible night," said Alastair White, Network Support Manager at Headway. "The museum looked spectacular, with people dressed up as the characters from Alice In Wonderland. There was even a Cheshire cat performing tricks on a high wire above the dance floor.

"Bucks Fizz was the perfect band to keep us entertained, particularly those of us old enough to remember the hits the first time around! Mike's personal experience of brain injury also gave special meaning to the performance.

"We're thrilled to have raised more than £3,500, which will go towards next year's LAN weekend. Huge thanks to all those who made this possible, including EMG Solicitors for sponsoring the event and to Sorted PR for organising this fabulously entertaining and successful night."

Held at the Calvert Trust inclusive outdoor activity centre in Kielder,

Northumberland, LAN is a unique opportunity to bring together individuals and families affected by brain injury for a weekend of fun, sharing and challenging outdoor pursuits.

Emma Gaudern, a professional deputy who works for the specialist brain injury team at the Durham law firm, said: "The LAN event is an amazing opportunity for members of Headway in the North East to meet up, socialise and have fun.

"Attendees come back from the weekend away with confidence and a new group of friends who understand the challenges they face. It can be a life-changing experience.

"It is a weekend that is so important, but it can't take place without funding so we were determined to do our best to raise as much money as we could to support this important initiative.

"We're delighted with the way the evening went and we are already looking forward to next year's LAN weekend."

'I can't remember seven or eight years of my life'

Oliver Game, 27, from Thorpe-le-Soken in Essex, was just 20 years old when a motorcycle accident left him with near-fatal head injuries.

“The day that changed my life started as just a normal day,” said

Oliver. “I set off to work as part of the maintenance team at Colchester Zoo in Essex, putting on my helmet before mounting my motorcycle as usual.

“But then came the collision, which left me with major internal injuries and a severe brain injury.”

Oliver was rushed to Colchester General Hospital where he spent three weeks in a coma before being transferred to a general hospital ward for a further five months. He then spent the next six months in a brain injury rehabilitation unit.

“I couldn't talk or walk in the early stages of my recovery,” said Oliver. “My memory was also affected. I was left with severe post-traumatic retrograde amnesia, meaning I couldn't remember the past seven or eight years of my life. It's difficult to describe how odd it was to be 20 years old and feel as though I had lost more than a quarter of my childhood in an instant.

“Mum and Dad were fantastic. They visited me every day while I was in hospital and they've always been there for me. I know my accident and brain injury has been the worst thing that has ever happened to them but they



Oliver working as a painter at Colchester Zoo

have never given up on my recovery.

“While I was in hospital, my Mum was told about Headway Essex. I started going along to the group's support sessions in Colchester shortly after returning home.

“I have now attended the centre for three years and it has played such a big role in my rehabilitation. They helped me to strengthen my body's right-hand side, develop my computer skills, and improve my co-ordination, which had been significantly affected by my brain injury.

“The charity is largely responsible for helping me get to this point in my recovery. Headway brings people together and makes everyone feel they belong.

“I still struggle with memory problems and I have lost my sense of smell and most of my sense of taste. My language skills are often still a problem and I have to think before I speak to make sure the words come out properly. Finding the correct words can be frustrating at times.

“However, my employers were great holding a job open for me and I have now returned to working at the zoo four mornings a week – this time as a painter.

“When I was finally able to get out of my wheelchair, I was determined to live life to the full and that is what I will continue to do.

“I can't imagine what my life would be like today if my parents and Headway Essex hadn't been there for me.”



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"You do great things and provide a fantastic service in terms of support and advice.

You make a difference to peoples' lives and are very good at your job.

We thank you for everything."

Anne Cahill



We are active supporters of Headway. Kim Smerdon, head of our Personal Injury team, is a Trustee of Headway Thames Valley.

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Eye on...The Lewis Moody Foundation

Many sports fans across the country will remember Lewis Moody MBE as the tough-tackling former England Rugby Union captain who gained the nickname 'Mad Dog' due to his fearless and uncompromising style. Now retired, Lewis is putting his efforts and sporting connections to use in an altogether different way...

In March 2012, a shoulder injury forced Lewis to retire. Gutted at no longer being able to play the sport he loved, Lewis then received a letter from the father of a young man called Joss who himself could no longer play rugby as he was fighting cancer.

At Joss's father's request, Lewis travelled up to Sheffield RFC to meet Joss and take a training session for his team.

"Here was a young man, 15 years old, fighting cancer and yet he was doing it with so much courage and with complete and utter selflessness," said Lewis.

"He graciously watched his team mates play rugby, genuinely delighted for them, when all he wanted to do was join in."

The impact Joss made on Lewis was massive. Lewis stayed in contact with Joss and his family. The following April, Lewis took Joss and his family to Twickenham to watch England vs Italy. He watched the game and met all his rugby heroes post match.

For Lewis, this was the norm. For Joss and his family, it was a day never to forget. Joss lost his brave battle with cancer two weeks later.

Inspired by Joss Rowley Stark and the experience Lewis had with his family, Lewis and his wife Annie wanted to help other young families.



Lewis meets Joss Rowley Stark, who inspired him to launch his foundation

"I learned from meeting Joss that when a child is seriously ill, anything that lifts a family out of their daily routine and allows them to spend time together, doing something special, can have a lasting impact," said Lewis.

The Lewis Moody Foundation was established with two main objectives. The first is for 'now', when a child or parent is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, the impact on the family is huge and often life is put on hold.

The foundation supports families that are dealing with these life-altering daily routines of medicine, hospital visits and the constant worry this generates. It provides them with a day out of the ordinary to lift them and create special memories that will have a long-lasting effect.

The second aspect is the 'future'. The foundation works closely with The Brain Tumour Charity, raising funds for the charity's research

projects, in particular the childhood early diagnosis campaign *HeadSmart*.

"An estimated 20,000 children and young people in the UK are living with a life-threatening condition," said Lewis. "With brain tumours being the biggest cancer killer of children and adults under 40, it is paramount to us that our foundation grows, so that we can help and impact as many families as possible.

"Together we're tackling illness and fulfilling dreams."

● For further information on The Lewis Moody Foundation, visit www.thelewismoodyfoundation.org

— THE —
**LEWIS
 MOODY
 FOUNDATION**

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) I have been invited to several Christmas parties where people will be drinking alcohol. What is a safe amount for me to drink or should I abstain completely because of my brain injury?

A) It is easy for people to drink too much at Christmas, but it is important to be aware that a brain injury can make you less tolerant of alcohol.

Alcohol can amplify the existing effects of a brain injury. It can also make you more susceptible to sustaining new injuries as it can affect your ability to make decisions, make you more

impulsive, can affect your balance, and it can also make it harder to control your emotions.

If you are taking medication, as a general rule you should avoid alcohol. It is advisable to check with your GP or pharmacist as alcohol can prevent medications from working effectively. For instance, if you are taking anti-epileptic medication the risk of experiencing a seizure will increase if you drink alcohol.

There are plenty of ways to enjoy the social interaction of Christmas parties while staying in control of your alcohol consumption. If you do decide to drink, alternating alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic alternatives is important, as is ensuring you consume plenty of water. You can even suggest the host provides some non-alcoholic punch or 'mocktails'.

Q) I had a subarachnoid haemorrhage four months ago. I still feel really tired and can't manage basic things like I used to. Is this normal and how long will this last?

A) Many people with a brain injury experience feelings of extreme tiredness or fatigue. Fatigue is to be expected when recovering from surgery or a sudden event like a brain injury or subarachnoid haemorrhage. It takes extra energy to perform everyday tasks as your body and brain are working hard to compensate for your injury.

With the busy and demanding Christmas season fast approaching, it is important to pay attention to what triggers your

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



fatigue and learn to identify the early signs such as tingling in your hands, losing concentration or becoming distracted. It is important to allow for rest periods at regular intervals during the day, and not to feel that everything has to be done at once.

Remember that three hours of good participation is better than five hours followed by complete exhaustion. It is very difficult to say how long the bouts of fatigue will last as everyone's experience is different, but with a management plan you may be able to lessen the effects.

- The Headway booklet *Managing fatigue after brain injury* contains more information and tips for coping with fatigue.

Q) How can I make Christmas less stressful and more enjoyable for me after my brain injury? Last year I did not manage things very well, I forgot things and this caused lots of problems and upset.

A) The holiday season can be challenging for people with a neurological condition, and even those who usually manage their brain injury well may find that changes to their routine can cause stress. This can impact on you in a number of ways, including increased fatigue, memory problems, stress and anxiety.

It is easy to try and do too much too quickly, or to commit yourself to too many things. Pace yourself as you usually would, and take time for a rest, nap or just a quiet five minutes. You need to re-charge your batteries so

remember, moderation could help enable you to manage all the demands that the holiday season can bring.

Tips for organising:

- Write lists, notes and keep a diary of important dates.
- Use online, mail order or telephone ordering for presents and shopping to avoid busy and crowded shops.
- Buy non-perishable foods prior to the Christmas rush.
- If you are having family or friends over for a celebration meal, get everyone to bring something with them. Just make sure you have a sweet/savoury list so that there is a good mix for everyone.

If you have travel plans over the Christmas and New Year period, here are some useful things to remember:

- **Car travel:** Check the weather before you leave and carry out any vehicle checks such as topping-up your screenwash, tyre pressures and water. Carry a blanket and take a flask for long journeys. Always make sure your mobile phone is fully charged and plan your route with regular stops as necessary.
- **Bus/train travel:** Check National Rail Enquiries/National Express or any other operator, to make you aware of any cancellations or delays. Also ensure you make a seat reservation that suits your needs, such as requesting a seat in the quiet carriage or near a toilet if travelling by train.

It is also important to check what medical services might be available



to you at your destination, such as GP services or walk-in centres. Check you have enough medication to last you until after the Christmas and New Year period and get repeat prescriptions in early so that you are not rushing around up until Christmas Eve.

Many local newspapers publish lists of pharmacies and other services that are open over the festive period. NHS 111 and the NHS Choices website can also give you these details along with other services.

If you need more immediate advice or attention with a medical issue:

- NHS 111 (England and Wales): **111**
- NHS 24 (Scotland): **08454 24 24 24**
- Your GP surgery should have an out-of-hours message on its usual number. This will give you details of who to contact if necessary over the Christmas period.
- If you need emotional support or just someone to talk to the Samaritans provides a 24-hour service on **116 123**.

From all on the Headway helpline, we wish you a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year!

'But you don't look

"As a para-climber I often hear the phrase: 'He shouldn't be here – he doesn't look disabled.' Having a hidden disability can be very frustrating indeed."

When World Cup para-climber Dave Bowes, from Wirral, sustained a traumatic brain injury in a motorbike accident in 2007, he began to experience severe behavioural changes and other hidden effects that cost him his career and challenged his marriage.

Dave had been travelling to Brighton by motorbike with his two brothers when a car pulled out of a junction without looking.

"My head hit the side of the car at 40mph," said Dave. "The impact left me with a life-changing brain injury. I think I can remember most of the incident but I must have lost consciousness at one point

as my brother was convinced I was dead when he saw me lying motionless on the ground.

"I was rushed to hospital but, as I was conscious, could stand up and ultimately looked 'fine', I was discharged after two hours with no promise of follow-up care.

"When my wife Sheema took me home, my body was twitching uncontrollably and my voice was shaking but we put it down to shock. However, I began to struggle with horrific pain and extreme confusion over the weekend.

"Sheema drove me to a doctor on the Monday but I collapsed on her in the waiting room. By the time I was seen by a doctor my speech was so slurred I literally couldn't talk."

Shockingly, Dave's condition was dismissed as a mild concussion

but, not content with this diagnosis, the couple returned to the doctors every week for several months until their GP finally agreed to send Dave for a more thorough examination.

"Several months later, Dave was sent to a neuro-psychiatrist where he was put on heavy medication for two years before finally being examined by a brain injury clinician in London. It was not until four-and-a-half years after the accident that Dave was diagnosed with Persistent Post Concussion Syndrome and traumatic brain injury in several areas of his brain.

"We were always convinced something wasn't right and that a diagnosis of mild concussion simply didn't fit with my ongoing problems," said Dave. "Having been discharged with no scan just two hours after arriving at hospital, after such a serious collision, and having to fight to get a full and proper assessment, I worry that many others are slipping through the net and not getting the diagnosis or help they need.

"It was entirely down to me to research what was happening to me and for a long time the doctors refused to believe anything serious was going on.

"I didn't know about Headway until five years after my crash. In the end, I developed my own recovery plan and coping mechanisms, some of which I still use today and have passed on to



Dave competes against non-disabled opponents in ice climbing

disabled'

others now I am a member of Headway Wirral.

"This needs to be changed and that is why I choose to compete as an international para-climber. I figured competitive sport was the tallest soap box I could stand on to spread the word.

'The old Dave died'

"After the accident, my entire personality changed. The old Dave died that day and a new Dave was born.

"Sheema and I had been married for just three months at the time of the incident and I became uncharacteristically aggressive. My mood swings put enormous pressure on our marriage. The effects of my brain injury have been unbelievably tough on Sheema, but she has taken our vow of 'in sickness and in health' very seriously."

Eight years on from Dave's ordeal, the couple have two children, Vinnie, four, and Maya, one.

"We still have relationship-testing times but I want to be a father my children can look up to by raising awareness of brain injury and Headway internationally," said Dave.

This year, Dave entered the Para-Climbing World Cup for the second time and won the silver medal in the European Championships. In February, Dave even tried his hand at ice-climbing, competing against non-disabled opponents. He did

Dave scoops the silver medal in the Para-climbing World Cup



incredibly well to finish third among the British competitors, ranking 48th worldwide.

"The invisible consequences of my brain injury mean I receive much criticism for competing as a para-climber," said Dave. "I often hear the phrase: 'He shouldn't be here – he doesn't *look* disabled!'"

"When people look at a competitor with one arm or one leg, it's easy to understand the extent of that person's disability.

"However, when people look at me with my neatly-cut hair and 'normal' appearance, it's difficult

for them to comprehend just how debilitating a brain injury can be.

"I even grew a mo-hawk and a beard in the hope that a new and more extreme image might help people understand how different I feel from everyone else. A hidden disability indeed."

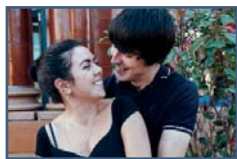
- You can follow Dave's progress as he competes in World Cup competitions to raise awareness of Headway by following him on Twitter and Instagram @Bowesdave

Courageous finalists prepare

With this year's Headway Annual Awards luncheon fast approaching, we meet the inspirational finalists who will be recognised and thanked at the ceremony on 11 December.

Alex Richardson Achiever of the Year

Slater Gordon Lawyers
Sponsored by Slater and Gordon Lawyers



Jamie McKechnie with wife Ellen

● Jamie McKechnie

When Jamie sustained a near-fatal brain injury in an unprovoked 'one punch' assault in 2011, the BMX-bike fanatic had two goals: to one day get back on his bike and to walk unaided down the aisle to marry his fiancée, Ellen. With the ongoing support of **Headway South East London North West Kent**, Jamie successfully achieved both life targets. Jamie is now developing a community bike business that offers training opportunities to help young people overcome adversity and develop their careers.



Jeff Mayle with parents Wendy and Peter

● Jeff Mayle

Jeff was just 17 years old when a skateboarding accident in 1992 left him in a coma with a traumatic brain injury. From achieving top grades in A-level Maths and Chemistry prior to his injury, Jeff was forced to start from scratch, with cognitive and physical

challenges forcing him to abandon his dream of becoming a Chemical Engineer. Undeterred, Jeff refocused and adapted to his brain injury and is working towards a degree in computing. He also provides a brain injury survivor's perspective in his role as a trustee of **Headway Cardiff**.



Steven Lomas from Headway Stockport and South Manchester

● Steven Lomas

Steven has battled back from a severe brain injury as a result of a 2004 car accident that left him in a coma for six weeks. Overcoming issues including fatigue and difficulties controlling his emotions, Steven has shown incredible determination to gradually rebuild his life and he now lives with his wife Joanne. This year, he achieved a First Class (BSc Honours) degree in Professional Broadcast after turning the camera on himself to raise awareness of traumatic brain injury and thank **Headway Stockport and South Manchester** for supporting him with his video, *Re-Cognition*.

Carer of the Year

withy king
Lawyers ahead of the curve

Sponsored by Withy King



Charlie and Jake's second wedding in New York

● Charlie Korving

When Charlie's husband Jake was knocked off his bike in October 2011, he sustained a brain injury

that caused him to forget Charlie's name, the couple's relationship, and their wedding day. Charlie stayed strong and fought hard to ensure Jake received the best possible care throughout a long and challenging journey to recovery. With support from **Headway Dorset**, she put her life and dream job on hold to provide the 24-hour care Jake needed. Three years later, the couple renewed their vows in a ceremony in New York.



Caring Kathryn Edgington with her friend Marie Marsden

● Kathryn Edgington

Ever since Marie Marsden sustained a brain injury after a road traffic collision in 2014, friend Kathryn has been an ever-present source of support. While juggling her own family and work commitments, nothing is too much trouble for Kathryn when it comes to helping her friend. With support from **Headway South Staffordshire**, she provides practical and emotional support to Marie and her husband Brian.



Molly and Warren Veale

● Molly Veale

In 2005 Molly's partner, Warren, was involved in a near-fatal motorbike accident. She immediately quit her university course and condensed a 40-hour working week into three days so that she could be by his hospital

to take to the stage

bedside as much as possible. This involved travelling from their home in the north west to London where for three nights a week – for eight years – she slept in her car in order to be near to Warren. Molly helped her now-husband relearn how to walk and talk and even complete two charity triathlons with support from **Headway Lancaster and Morecambe Bay**.

Volunteer of the Year

AnthonyGold Sponsored by Anthony Gold Solicitors



Host for Headway: Volunteer Richard Witts with Steve Beavis and Gill Leandro

● Gill Leandro

When Gill retired in 2002, she began volunteering at **Headway West Kent**, providing one-to-one maths support sessions as part of members' rehabilitation programmes. She soon became a regular volunteer at the local group, and for 13 years has been hosting five-course meals for members, offering her home for weekly woodwork sessions, providing a 'buddy service' to members and raising money for the charity.



Humphry helping a Headway Suffolk service user

● Humphry Adair

Consultant surgeon Humphry has been involved with **Headway Suffolk** since the group's inception in 1982. A devoted board member, Humphry has spent the past 30 years juggling a

successful medical and lecturing career while supporting Headway Suffolk to develop its services, even running weekly woodwork sessions for members.



Jean Martin Savage helps Headway Darlington and District members train using adapted bikes

● Jean Martin Savage

Jean has played a pivotal role in the development of **Headway Darlington and District** since joining the steering group in 2012. Utilising more than 25 years of experience of helping people with rehabilitation after brain injury, Jean has managed the local group's helpline service, organised training courses and delivered support sessions to members and their families.

Stephen McAleese Outstanding Contribution to Headway Award



Sponsored by No 5 Chambers



Jim Isaac from Headway North Devon

● Jim Isaac

In 1995, Jim became a founding member of **Headway North Devon**. Two decades later, Jim defies his own daily pain following a spinal cord injury to continue delivering weekly support services to people affected by brain injury. He is described as the 'backbone' of the local group for the way he organises and runs Headway North Devon's various support

meetings, quizzes and workshops with a kind-hearted spirit and sense of humour.



Peter Shaw hosts a fundraiser with son Neal and Headway North Derbyshire volunteers

● Peter Shaw

After Peter's son Neal sustained a brain injury in a road traffic accident in 1999, Peter became a key member – and eventually Chair – of Headway in Chesterfield. Thanks to Peter's sterling work spending countless hours organising fundraising events, supporting members and campaigning for better local services, the branch developed into **Headway North Derbyshire** in 2007 with Peter still giving his time and energy as Chair of the group.



Warm heart: Robert Wilson tackles sub-zero temperatures skiing to the South Pole

● Robert Wilson

Over the past two decades, Robert has raised more than £40,000 for **Headway Oxfordshire** by tackling extreme challenges across the world, inspired by his friend and brain injury survivor, Chris. Robert has taken on numerous challenges, including skiing 100 miles to the South Pole, completing three marathons, and cycling from Geneva to Nice. Robert also delivers brain injury talks in schools and even plays the Dame in the charity's annual pantomime!

Congratulations to all of our wonderful finalists!

It's Great up North!

On Sunday 13 September, the sun beamed down upon 36 Headway Heroes as they took to the streets of Newcastle for the 35th Great North Run.

The tenacious fundraisers were among the 57,000 runners to pound the iconic half-marathon route from Gateshead to South Shields. Together, Team Headway raised an impressive total of £18,000 to support brain injury survivors and their families across the UK.

For Alex O'Donnell, wearing the Headway t-shirt meant supporting his dad who suffered a subarachnoid brain haemorrhage and was left with a devastating brain injury when Alex was a young child. The impact affected the lives of Alex's entire family as his mother juggled raising two young boys with becoming her husband's full-time carer.

"The impact my dad's brain injury had upon my family was huge," said Alex, who has so far raised £625 for Headway.

"Life was especially difficult for my Mum as she provided 24-hour care for my dad, alongside raising me and my older brother through our teenage years. It is so important to raise awareness of the effects serious brain injury can have upon families. They do say every little helps!"

Headway Hero Kerrie Cook decided to run for the charity in memory of her son Reece who tragically passed away of a brain injury on 29 July, just ten days after his 16th birthday.



Alex O'Donnell (centre) gives the Headway cheering station a wave

Reece had been enjoying a summer holiday with friends when they got into difficulty while out at sea. He sustained a fatal brain injury, passing away peacefully in hospital four days after the accident, having never regained consciousness.

Since his passing, Reece's family has completed a series of fundraising challenges to collectively raise almost £10,000 to help Headway support other families similarly affected.

Kerrie even managed to persuade her friend Natalee Gunn to join her in completing the Great North Run.

"Reece was larger than life itself and always made people smile as a loveable rogue," said Kerrie. "Ten minutes is all it took to change our lives forever. It really could happen to anyone."

"Headway does amazing work. I have no doubt the charity would have helped us had Reece survived. If I can help them to help

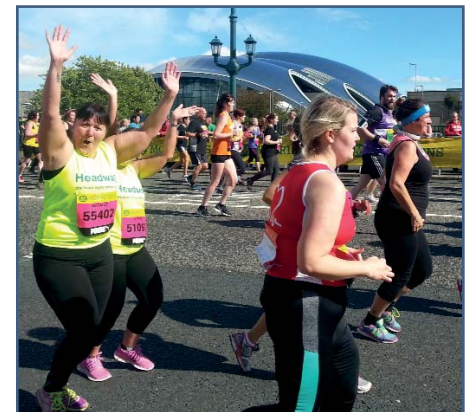
another family like ours to smile and to get through the pain then that is what I will do."

Rachel Broughton, Fundraising Manager at Headway, was among the charity's supporters at the Headway cheering station on the striking Tyne Bridge.

"It was a privilege to cheer on our incredible fundraisers to the finish-line," said Rachel.

"Each of our runners had their own personal reason for supporting Headway and wore their Headway vests with a notable sense of pride. Completing the course was clearly a proud and moving moment for everyone who took part."

- Would you like to take part in a charity run on behalf of Headway? If so, contact Ellis at projects@headway.org.uk for more information about how to get involved.



Side by side: Natalee Gunn and Kerrie Cook smile through the pain

Young volunteers put brain injury on the curriculum

Creative students at a college in Alsager donned their wackiest costumes for a charity walk to raise funds for Headway.

Alsager Sixth Form College students dressed up in their most eccentric outfits for a trek around the local area, raising £1,000 for the charity.

With many of the students already volunteering in Headway's shop in the town, the charity was the natural choice for the altruistic academics.

Michelle Clare, Manager of the Headway shop in Alsager, said:

"We would like to say an enormous thank you to the students and staff at Alsager Sixth Form College for their incredible efforts to raise funds and awareness of the work Headway does to support families affected by brain injury.

"It is so important to educate young people about the complex and varied impact brain injury can have upon entire families. It is fantastic to see students finding creative ways of generating awareness of this widespread and serious issue."



Students at Alsager Sixth Form College get creative for the cause

UnLymmed smiles as new shop opens

The Headway retail team is celebrating the launch of its latest charity shop in the North West of England.

Local supporters, shoppers, and stock donors came together to enjoy refreshments in October as shop manager Denise Marsh officially opened the charity's latest shop at The Cross in Lymm, near Warrington.

Carol Tennet, Head of Retail at Headway, said: "Every new shop we open is exciting as it means we are reaching out to more families in need of our support, while raising the charity's profile on the high street and making more people aware of brain injury.

"I would like to thank everyone who has helped make our new shop a reality, including law firm Hugh James, which provided invaluable assistance with completing the lease.

"We are really excited about the Lymm shop and we're sure it will be a huge success. However, to make it so we need the support of the local community.

"So, if you live in the area, whether you are a brain injury survivor or simply want to help a good cause in your spare time, come down, say hello and see if you can help us improve life after brain injury."

- Anyone wishing to volunteer is welcome to visit the new Headway shop at 21 The Cross, Lymm, WA13 OGA or contact Shop Manager Denise Marsh on **01925 755670**.



Shop Manager Denise Marsh cuts the ribbon

Radio Won!

Peckish staff at Headway's charity shop in Poynton were delighted when their entry into a local radio competition resulted in a free buffet being delivered straight to their doorstep.

But winning the weekly prize on Cheshire radio station Silk FM was just one of three recent reasons for the team to celebrate, with the shop enjoying its first birthday and Manager Sue Watkins being named the 2015 Poynton Employee of the Year!

Unbeknown to Sue, several of her loyal customers had nominated her for the award to thank her for always delivering top-quality service with a smile.

Sue was presented with a trophy and £75 of shopping vouchers at the *Poynton In Business Annual Dinner* on 20 November.

"I had no idea the customers had nominated me and I feel very honoured to be recognised as Employee of the Year," said Sue.

"The work of our Headway team goes a long way to helping rebuild the lives of families

"I would like to thank Richard Holland from Poynton in Business and also town mayor Rebecca Horsman, both of whom have supported the Headway shop since it opened one year ago."

Sue Watkins



Sue Watkins (right) and Deputy Manager Helen Share break out the birthday balloons

affected by brain injury and this has been a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of the charity's work and presence in the community."

But that wasn't the only prize to come the shop's way. Sue entered her team into the 'Wednesday Workers' competition, a weekly slot hosted by Cheshire radio station Silk FM, and explained why Headway's dedicated volunteers deserve to win a free lunch.



The team were thrilled to receive the phone call saying they had been chosen as winners of the competition, which was set up by the station as a way of putting a smile on people's faces midway through the working week.

"I am delighted for Sue," said Carol Tennet, Head of Retail at Headway. "It's such a well-deserved honour as she works so hard, takes a great deal of pride in the making the shop as welcoming and professional as possible, and is always so supportive of her excellent team of volunteers and staff.



Headway Shop Manager Sue Watkins receives lunch from Silk FM delivery man

"It is also pleasing to see the rest of the team rewarded. They work so hard to keep the shop clean and always deliver top-quality customer service.

"The tasty prize even came with fresh homemade cakes – I would have been quite jealous if it wasn't for the lovely birthday cake!"

● To find out how you can get involved with your local shop, please visit www.headway.org.uk/supporting-you/in-your-area/charity-shops

'Charity giving should always be about choice'

The charity sector has received negative press over the past few months, with the aggressive tactics of a small number of large national organisations risking damage to all charities. Here, Director of Fundraising **Jo Plant** sets out Headway's fundraising principles while highlighting the flexibility of legacy gifts.

"I am passionate about my job and the work of Headway," said Jo. "I know this passion is shared by my team and the many volunteers and staff across the UK who are fundraising for local Headway groups and branches.

"The values of a fundraising team should reflect the values of the organisation. For Headway, those values include respecting the rights of donors to choose who they support, in which way, to what extent, and when.

"Charitable giving should always be about choice. It's about trust and respect, and knowing that your values and principles are reflected by the charity you choose to support.

"Our fundraising principles include not employing third-party agencies to cold call and pressurise people in their own homes. We will never bombard people with endless mailshots, or put on the 'hard sell'.

"We are proud of the principles we work to and believe in and we trust our generous supporters feel similarly."



"Whether it seemed like the daftest question in the world or the most serious of matters, Headway picked us up and guided us on our way. Nine years on, they still do. Thank you for your support – and thank you to everyone who supports Headway!" Sarah and Colin Kavanagh

The flexibility of legacy giving

Jo continued: "Being able to afford to give is also a big concern for many who genuinely wish to help. Some people may have a connection to Headway through brain injury but are unable to donate money during their lifetime, particularly when financial pressures mean that cash has to go on the essentials of living. At Headway, we recognise these difficulties.

"One way of giving long-term support to the charity is to think about leaving a gift in your will. The option of leaving an amount or small percentage of your estate in your will, after ensuring your family is provided for first, offers a means of donating to a cause after you have gone. It can also provide an immediate sense of fulfilment knowing that you will be helping in the future.

"While large legacies make national headlines, here at Headway, any gift – large or small – makes a difference and allows us to continue providing essential services. These gifts may not make national newspapers but they certainly make headlines at Headway!"

- Visit www.headway.org.uk/donate/our-fundraising-principles to read our principles in full.
- If you would like to consider leaving a gift in your will to Headway, please view the information available on the Headway website or contact Lisa Thompson on **0115 924 0800** or by email at legacy@headway.org.uk.
- To download a free will planner, visit www.headway.org.uk/donate/a-gift-in-your-will

A bright future...with a little help from some friends

Service users, volunteers and staff at Headway Swindon have proved that having – or making – friends in the right places really can make a difference.

The group was facing the very real prospect of being homeless due to the lease on its premises coming to an end and a planning application to move to a new home being in jeopardy.

After a successful lobbying campaign with assistance from Headway UK the group is now looking forward to an exciting future in a new, fit-for-purpose

home after planning permission was finally granted by the council.

“We are delighted to be able to begin the process of moving into our new home,” said Jane Weston, Centre Manager for Headway Swindon. “A few weeks ago, we were facing a very different future.

“Our planning application to move to an unused building in the Dorcan Complex in the town was at serious risk of rejection. This was a real setback, particularly as we were convinced that we could easily overcome the objections that were being raised.”

The group formulated a plan to contact local influencers and decision makers – including members of the Planning Committee who would hear the appeal. They called upon the help of Headway UK’s communications team to verify and improve upon the plan and assist with preparation of the communications.

“We are very proud of the work we do, but perhaps we took it for granted that others would know of, and equally value, our work.

“Although we have regular contact with the local CCG, and a good relationship with a local MP, we have never invested time in building up relationships with local councillors. When it came to it, we didn’t have enough advocates within the council to speak up on our behalf.

“We sought to rectify this by asking for help from the contacts we already had, and then contacting the Planning Committee members to ask for their support. Letters were sent by carers and service users, as well as from our Chair Anna Cole, explaining the benefit of Headway to the lives of vulnerable people in our community.

“The information and advice we received from Headway UK’s communications team during this process was invaluable.



Mass support: Jane Weston (from right) with fellow staff and trustees at the Planning Committee meeting

Full steam ahead for fantastic fundraisers

A creative fundraiser from Norfolk has helped to raise more than £2,000 for her local Headway group by organising an innovative steam engine party, complete with hog roast.

Volunteer Liz Plumb recruited a team of volunteers to host her annual steam engine event, which sees charity supporters and brain injury survivors come together at her Long Acres caravan park, in Heacham, to generate vital funds for Headway Norfolk and Waveney.

And the donations could not have come at a better time. With the support of Norfolk County Council, Headway Norfolk and Waveney recently launched a new rehabilitation facility in Kings Lynn to provide a much-needed hub for the charity's brain injury services in the west of the county.

Funds raised by Liz and her husband Mike for the local group will go towards running the centre's new activity sessions such as yoga, craft sessions and many more!

"I have been involved with Headway Norfolk and Waveney since 1986," said Liz. "The charity has greatly supported me in the past and now I am supporting them. We need more people to know about and be more aware of brain injury and the serious effects it can have."

Laura Jones, Director of Client Services, said: "In these challenging economic times this donation will make a real difference to us, and we are very grateful for all the time, effort and support that has been given by Liz and her supporters."

The local group has also benefitted from a second generous donation of £1,000 from the Masons Ephraimite

Lodge club, in Hunstanton, whose members completed a series of fundraising events to raise awareness of the cause.

● To watch a specialist talk delivered by brain injury survivor James Piercy at the Headway Norfolk and Waveney's launch ceremony for the new service, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXl2ciuashc>



Angela Page from Headway Norfolk and Waveney receives cheques from supporters Mike and Liz Plumb, Jenny and Peter Copeman and John Burgess

Blast from the past

Inquisitive members of Headway Cambridgeshire will soon be journeying back to 19th century England as part of an innovative history project funded by a generous community grant.

Headway Cambridgeshire's *Making Headway* initiative has received almost £60,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable the local group to delve into the hidden histories of past brain injury survivors and bygone care practices to reveal how far our society has come.

Thanks to the grant scheme, which supports educational community projects, *Making Headway* was launched on 22 October at the Museum of Cambridge as part of a fringe event for the Cambridge Festival of Ideas.

The heritage project aims to investigate the evolving way in which people affected by brain injury have been treated since the mid-19th century by making the stories of past survivors in Cambridgeshire heard, seen and understood.

Headway Cambridgeshire members, volunteers and staff have already started work on researching and collecting testimonies for the initiative, which will feature the production of a short film and a travelling exhibition of the charity's findings.

Service users have already discovered that Headway Cambridgeshire's Ida Darwin site, in Fulbourn, was named



after a pioneering local activist who changed the face of social care in Britain by campaigning for the rights and individual needs of people with mental health problems.

"The most exciting thing about *Making Headway* is that it will give a voice to people who have remained voiceless over the years and, to a large extent, still are," said Austin Willett, Chief Executive of Headway Cambridgeshire.

"It is through hearing the stories of individuals with brain injuries and looking into the context of their care that we will see both how far we have come, and how far we still have to go, to ensuring everyone affected by brain injury receives the best treatment



possible."

A warm wel

Headway Hartlepool has become the latest branch to join the charity's network.

At a launch ceremony held at West Hartlepool's Rugby Club in October, Headway Network Support Manager, Alastair White, addressed a room packed with medical experts, brain injury survivors, carers and a range of community and corporate supporters.

Guest speakers included Dr. Don Brechin, Director of Psychology at James Cook Hospital, who delivered a talk called *Re-training My Brain*, while there was also an opportunity for local individuals to share their personal experiences of brain injury. Delegates were also treated to a DVD screening of *Aftermath of Brain Injury* by

Austin Willett, Chief Executive of Headway Cambridgeshire

come to Headway Hartlepool

Clinical Neuro-psychologist
Dr Ken Barrett.

Stroke survivor Jonathan Purnell and carer Sue Harrison were among to take to the podium and share their stories of brain injury to highlight the value and need for local Headway services.

Dad-of-two Jonathan, 50, was just 24 when he suffered a blow to the back of the head during a game of rugby in Sedgfield, which caused a brain haemorrhage that left him with a severe brain injury.

“When I sustained my head injury in 1990 it felt like the dark ages of follow-up care,” said Jonathan.

“I was discharged from hospital but found few community services fit for caring for someone in



Stroke survivor Jonathan Purnell with his wife Mary

recovery following a brain injury. I wanted to live independently but needed a support service that would help me to achieve this goal. Today, I live at the Headland, in Hartlepool, with my wife Mary and two children, but it has taken me thirteen years to get to this stage – far too long.

“The opening of a new Headway branch in Hartlepool marks an important step towards offering greater support throughout the recovery process to improve the lives of local people who are going through similar life-changing experiences because of brain injury.”

Making a difference

Committed volunteers at Headway South Cumbria have been recognised for their hard work and devotion to supporting local people affected by brain injury at an annual awards ceremony.

On Thursday 22 October, Glenys Marriot, Chairman at Headway South Cumbria, and the local group’s Secretary Helen Shaw were delighted to receive the award, ‘Celebrating Volunteers: Making a Difference’, on behalf of their dedicated team of volunteers.

Headway South Cumbria also ran an information stand at the annual ceremony, which was hosted by law firm, Potter Rees Dolan, and organised by Cumbria CVS, a local membership organisation that helps charities to celebrate and develop their services.

“We were surprised and thrilled on behalf of our volunteers to be given an award for the group’s contribution to the county,” said Glenys.

“It was also great that Helen and I were given the fantastic opportunity of talking about the

incredible work Headway staff and volunteers do for people affected by brain injury as we were presented with the award by Cumbria CVS.”



Glenys Marriot (right) and Helen Shaw proudly show the group’s trophy and certificate

Royal seal of approval for Headway Devon

Headway Devon's new home in Exeter has received the royal seal of approval following a visit by Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex.

During her visit, The Countess of Wessex was treated to a tour of the group's Exeter-based XCentre, a sympathetic conversion of the city's old wool-drying shed that was purchased by the local group following a two-year fundraising appeal.

Her Royal Highness took time to speak with members affected by brain injury and even participated in a range of rehabilitation



The Countess of Wessex meets members of Headway Devon



HRH The Countess of Wessex accepts a posy from long-standing Headway Devon client, Marilyn Dingle-Shevlin

activities offered by Headway Devon.

In addition to trying her hand at exercises developed to improve thinking skills like memory and concentration, The Countess of Wessex tasted a traditional Devon cream tea with scones baked specially by service users.

The Countess was also shown a spinning activity where clients learn how to spin alpaca wool into yarn. The activity epitomises the important role that the XCentre played in the city's wool-trade in the 18th century and Headway's focus on art and craft activities as rehabilitation tools after brain injury.

After witnessing some of the activities, Her Royal Highness

unveiled a plaque to mark the visit and was presented with a posy by Marilyn Dingle-Shevlin, a long-standing client and supporter of Headway Devon.

Following the visit, Headway Devon Chief Executive Anne Mattock said: "To have The Countess of Wessex visit the centre was a great validation of the important work that we do in the local community.

"Our clients thoroughly enjoyed meeting HRH, who showed a real interest in their stories and experiences, taking the time to speak with each person individually. It was a very positive experience for us all and we were touched by her understanding and compassion."

Fearless fundraisers fall 10,000ft for charity

The spirited son of a Darlington man who sustained a serious brain injury in 2011 has taken to the skies to raise funds for the charity that helped rebuild his father's life.

Gareth Russell-Hughes, 24 and from Darlington, is one of four fundraisers who plummeted 10,000ft at 120mph from a plane at Teesside Airport to raise money and awareness of Headway Darlington and District.

The skydives took place on 25 October and saw survivors of brain injury, carers, solicitors and other Headway supporters fall for the cause as part of a local brain injury awareness campaign.

First to sign up for the challenge was Gareth, whose father and Headway Darlington and District member Alwyn Hughes sustained a severe brain injury in 2011. It left him with ongoing physical and cognitive difficulties that still challenge him today.

"My first-hand understanding of how brain injury can devastate the lives of entire families makes skydiving to raise awareness of Headway incredibly important to me," said Gareth.

"The charity has many plans to expand their services to improve the lives of more local people affected by brain injury. When I found myself worrying about the skydive, I reminded myself how isolating brain

injury can be for whole families and I gained courage from wanting to do something that will help make a difference during those difficult times."

Before the challenge, Gareth even strapped a camera to his helmet to capture his journey to the ground on film.

Alwyn's wife Nicola, who is now Chair of Headway Darlington and District, said: "I am so proud that Gareth has not only taken on this challenge to raise funds

for Headway and support his father, but that he took to the skies with a team of people who are all devoted to alerting people to what help is available after brain injury."

The team's collective target is £4,500, with all proceeds going towards expanding Headway Darlington and District's support services and funding a weekend rehabilitation trip for survivors of brain injury and their carers at The Calvert Trust activity centre, in Keswick.



Flying without wings: Gareth Russell-Hughes takes to the skies with his instructor

Piers got Talents

Journalist-turned-TV presenter Piers Morgan went from critic to performer as he joined forces with Australian cricketer Shane Warne for a friendly match in Sussex – all in support of Headway!

Piers, a former judge on popular TV show *Britain's Got Talent*, proved himself a talented cricketer as he took to the pitch for the annual match between the Morgan family and Newick Cricket Club to raise funds for Headway Hurstwood Park.

Piers has played for Newick – where his parents live – since 1978 and has hosted the event since 2000.

Michele Fleming, Chief Executive at Headway Hurstwood Park, said: “While the rainy English summer unfortunately prevented big crowds from turning out to the event, money was raised for our charity and we are happy to announce Headway Hurstwood



Piers Morgan with Michele Fleming, Chief Executive of Headway Hurstwood Park and Australian cricketer Shane Warne

Park will be Newick Cricket Club's chosen charity again next year.

“We are incredibly grateful to Piers, Shane and everyone else for giving their time to play or watch.”

‘Back on track’

Headway Hurstwood Park also celebrated the success of the group's third conference, co-organised by ASB Aspire law firm, which was held at the AMEX sports stadium in Brighton.

The conference, named *Brain Injury: Back on Track*, was opened by special guest Dawn Astle, daughter of former West Bromwich Albion and England Striker Jeff Astle, who died in 2002 of brain injury caused by repeatedly heading heavy footballs during his career.

Dawn welcomed more than 175 delegates and sponsors to the event by delivering her own personal account of how her father's brain injury impacted not only upon him but upon her entire family. This year, Jeff's family launched the Jeff Astle Foundation to call for an independent investigation into the link between football and brain injury.

Delegates were then treated to a range of talks, including testimonials and a lecture on long-term disability delivered by Professor Richard Wise, from Imperial College London. Assistive Technology Consultant Simon Churchill concluded the proceedings by exploring how technologies ranging



Dawn Astle, daughter of former West Bromwich Albion and England Striker Jeff Astle, opening the event

from communication aids to computer access can help individuals regain independence following brain injury.

“Our return to the AMEX was particularly appropriate given the specific sports-related context within the conference programme,” said Michele Fleming.

“Planning and organising an event on this scale is no mean feat and feedback from the event has been very positive. Thanks go to the highly efficient events team at ASB Law firm and our event sponsors Frenkel Topping, Sussex Healthcare, Independent Living Solutions Ltd., Brain Injury Group, and The Children's Trust.”

Done in time for tee

A golfer has gone a *fairway* to thanking Headway Worcestershire for helping him rebuild his life after he sustained a traumatic brain injury.

Professional golf coach Leo Tarrant, who had to relearn how to speak and move after a fall at home left him with a life-changing brain injury, raised almost £2,000 for Headway Worcestershire at a local golf day he organised in partnership with Ravenmeadow Golf Centre, in Worcester.

The event saw an impressive 82 participants take to the pitch for the cause, with donations flooding in from charity supporters and 40 players who could not attend the event.

When Leo fell outside of his home and sustained a life-threatening head injury three years ago, the professional golfer was left in a coma for eight months with doctors warning that, should he ever regain consciousness, he may face a lifetime of permanent disability.

With the ongoing support from Headway Worcestershire, Leo is finally back in action, though his brain injury has left him with long-term memory problems, along with an impaired sense of smell and other hidden effects.

Proceeds from the fundraiser will be split between Headway Worcestershire and the Professional Golf Association to honour the role both organisations

have played in helping Leo on his road to recovery.

"These two charities will always have a special place in my heart," said Leo.

"I am overwhelmed by the support we have received from local people in Worcester. The atmosphere was great and everyone had a good time. Many of the players are my friends who recognise what great work Headway Worcestershire has done for me and many others.

"Our thanks go to everyone who played, donated money or raffle

prizes, and the many local businesses that supported our efforts to raise awareness of a very important cause."

Julia Protesaru, Fundraising Manager at Headway Worcestershire, said: "Leo's recovery story is an inspiration to all of us. We are forever grateful to him for dedicating so much of his time to helping us and The PGA.

"It is important for people to understand the effects of brain injury and how it can affect anybody at any stage in their life and that we are here for them."



Eye on the ball: Leo Tarrant is back in the game with support of Headway Worcestershire

Dance in December

Fun-seeking supporters of Headway East London are in for a treat this winter as the local group has teamed up with the capital's Southbank Centre for a charity dance marathon.

The event, which will take place on Sunday 13 December at the

Southbank Centre's iconic Clore Ballroom as part of the venue's Winter Festival, marks the final flourish to Headway East London's *Dance in December* fundraising campaign.

The month-long project was set up by the local group to

encourage members, volunteers and charity supporters to get moving and donating to help local families affected by brain injury.

As part of the campaign, local businesses, schools, and the general public were invited to submit a photo or video of their best dance move, along with a £5 donation to the charity.

The initiative's concluding 'dance marathon' in the heart of London will feature a host of DJs, dance troops and musicians, with themed events taking performers on a journey through the eras from 1930s to present day. Prizes, complimentary massages, and refreshments will also be available to attendees.

"Following the highly positive response to our *Dance in December* campaign, we are absolutely delighted to be staging our dance marathon at the Southbank Centre," said Miriam Lantsbury, Chief Executive of Headway East London.

"The centre is an iconic venue dedicated to showcasing a diverse range of arts and cultural events. This will be our fourth marathon and hopefully the best yet. Whether people can come along for eight hours or a shorter period, we welcome anyone who would like to get involved in some way."

- To request your fundraising pack for the Dance Marathon or for more information about Dance in December, please visit www.headwayeastlondon.org



Headway East London supporters Dance in December

Cutting edge fundraising



Charity fundraiser Philippa Bushell made the hair-raising decision to lop off her locks to raise funds for Headway Rotherham at the group's annual BBQ event, raising a staggering £3,084 for the local group. Well done, Philippa!



December 2015

Friday 11th

**Annual Awards Lunch,
The Dorchester, London ***

March 2016

Saturday 5th – Sunday 13th

Sahara Trek *

April 2016

Sunday 10th

Greater Manchester Marathon *

Wednesday 20th – Saturday 24th

London to Paris Cycle Ride *

Sunday 24th

Virgin Money London Marathon *

May 2016

Monday 9th – Sunday 15th

Action for Brain Injury Week

Friday 13th May

Hats for Headway Day

Date to be confirmed

**Joint Brain and Spinal Injury
Conference, in partnership with
the Spinal Injuries Association ***

June 2016

Thursday 2nd – Sunday 5th

**Extreme London to Paris
Cycle Ride ***

July 2016

Friday 1st – Sunday 3rd

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

- * For further details of events, contact the fundraising team on 0115 924 0800.
- ** For further details, contact Sam Clarke on 0115 947 1908.

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.

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 SC039992). 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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