

Summer 2016

Headway News



The magazine of Headway - the brain injury association

#ConcussionAware

Campaign gets off to flying start

Major milestone for Headway fund

Holidaying
with a brain
injury:
TOP TIPS

Review of

ACTION FOR

BRAIN INJURY WEEK

2016

Being Nick Tilsley

Corrie actor Ben Price on
portraying brain injury



the brain injury association

IF IN DOUBT,
SIT IT OUT!

Be
concussion
aware.

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Registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales
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Headway is the leading UK-wide charity that supports people to rebuild their lives after brain injury through the provision of information and support services across the UK. To find out more, visit www.headway.org.uk or you can call the freephone helpline on 0808 800 2244 if you need support.



the brain injury association

What a week it was...

So another ABI Week has come and gone – but it certainly won't be forgotten!

The launch of the charity's new Concussion Aware campaign was a tremendous success. For too long, the focus of the debate about concussion in sport has been on the elite level, with media attention confined to high-profile head injuries that are improperly treated.

But how many concussions occur every weekend on sports fields across the UK? How many amateur players are risking their short and long-term health by not understanding or appreciating the associated dangers?

We need a cultural change when it comes to minor traumatic brain injuries. We need people to realise that even a minor blow can have a major impact. Just ask Nic O'Leary or read his experience of concussion on page 22.

With the support of leading sports organisations, and through engagement with clubs, schools and colleges across the UK, we can and will lead a cultural change in grassroots sport that will see more people take an 'if in doubt, sit it out!' approach.

The highlight of ABI Week for many of you was once again Hats for Headway Day.

We have been inundated with fabulous photos of some wonderfully wacky headgear, with more people than ever entering our competition. Our hashtag – #HatsForHeadway – even trended on Twitter for a period on the day itself, so many thanks to all who helped share the word.

A number of our high-profile supporters, including Marc Almond, James Cracknell and Alan Smith also got involved, as you can see on pages 20 and 21.

As you can imagine, this kind of support really helps to boost the charity's profile.

Celebrities often have personal reasons for choosing which charities to support.

In a lengthy interview for Headway News (see pages 12-15), actor Ben Price explains why he supports Headway, while giving an insight into the challenges of portraying brain injury in the surreal world of soaps. It's well worth a read!

Enjoy!
The Communications Team

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

Your views...

We asked on social media what you think of the current levels of state support provided to brain injury survivors. Here's what you said...

It is tragic. An area that is totally misunderstood and under-funded. Care and support is so lacking and variable.

Emma Hambleton

Staff in all areas of our hospitals need educating on the lasting effects of TBI as even in here I'm getting "You don't look like you've had a brain injury"! What am I supposed to look like please? Cos after 25 years, I still haven't figured it out.

Wendy Morrell

Care should NOT vary from authority area to authority area. It does. The social, economic, employment prejudice caused by this hidden injury should not be so prevalent.

Andrew Blair

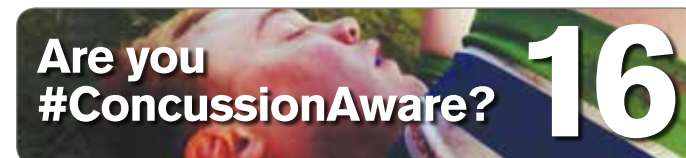
I need support but the lack of services are letting me down. It's not only about getting a job. Try putting up with the lack of understanding by employers and reasonable adjustments are hard to get!

Karen Lesley

We need a memory clinic. There is only one for elderly. We are desperate for advice but are not being advised.

Sandie Smith

...in this issue



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#HeadwayHeroes

news you may have missed...

Who's your #HeadwayHero?



James Cracknell presents the 2015 Carer of the Year award to Charlie Korving



Have you been inspired by an incredible achievement by someone living with brain injury?

Or touched by the generosity and dedication of a volunteer? Perhaps you've been moved by the inspirational selflessness of a carer? If so, now's the time to do something about it!

The nomination process for this year's Headway Annual Awards is now open. The awards celebrate the dedication and achievements of those affected by brain injury. So if there is someone special, who you believe deserves to be recognised, please complete a nomination form as a way to say a big thank you to them.

Nominate online at
www.headway.org.uk.
Closing date 29 July.

There are four categories of award:

The Alex Richardson Achiever of the Year
sponsored by Slater & Gordon Lawyers

Carer of the Year
sponsored by SweetTree Home Care Services

Volunteer of the Year
sponsored by Anthony Gold

The Stephen McAleese Outstanding Achievement Award
sponsored by No5 Chambers

Bella



....news you may have missed



Neurological conditions 'not a priority' for NHS England

A damning report by a House of Commons committee warns that neurological conditions are not considered a priority and that services are 'consistently not good enough'.

In its recommendations, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) calls on the government to make urgent changes to reduce the variation in services and outcomes.

This report follows a previous PAC inquiry in 2012 which made six recommendations aimed at improving life for brain injury

survivors and those suffering from other neurological conditions. However, this report states that the recommendations were not 'properly implemented' and have not led to any real improvements.

Meg Hillier MP, Chair of the PAC, said that this report serves as a 'wake-up call' and that the government must 'listen and learn'.

Peter McCabe, Chief Executive of Headway, said: "It is vital that the PAC recommendations are implemented as soon as possible.

"The NHS and the Department of Health cannot afford to continue to neglect some of the most vulnerable people in society."

OPG to team up with Headway

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) will once again be teaming up with Headway to deliver a conference for professional deputies.

Following the success of last year's Headway Deputy Conference, the event will once again address the complex issues surrounding the provision of support to brain injury survivors that lack capacity.

"We are aware that the number of professional deputies working to support people with brain injury is increasing," said Peter McCabe, Chief Executive of Headway.

"It is vital that we do all we can to ensure the right information and advice is given to those providing these important services, and we are thrilled to have obtained government consent for the Public Guardian, Alan Eccles, to speak at the event again."

Delegates at the conference will receive a copy of the Headway's award-winning publication *Supporting people to make decisions – applying the Mental Capacity Act*, which you can now download for free from www.headway.org.uk/information-library.

The Headway Deputy Conference, sponsored by Concerva, takes place on Thursday 13 October in Manchester.

For more information or to make a booking, contact Melanie on fundraising@headway.org.uk or **0115 924 0800**.



To keep up-to-date with all the latest news visit www.headway.org.uk **07**

Bin your bra for brain injury!

Ladies in Poynton, Cheshire, have been urged to ditch their unwanted brassieres and donate them to their local Headway shop in a bid to raise funds for brain injury survivors and their families.

The quirky local fundraising campaign has, to date, led to a whopping 80kg of deposited undergarments in the

charity shop's customised donation bin, with the shop hoping the money eventually raised will top £500.

Shop Manager Sue Perkins said: "We hope that this appeal not only helps us improve the lives of brain injury survivors but also helps generate greater awareness of brain injury in the local community."

To find your local Headway shop visit <https://shop.headway.org.uk>



Murrayfield hosts Headway conference

The home of Scottish rugby was the fitting venue for a conference bringing together representatives from Headway's 11 groups and branches in Scotland.

More than 110 delegates attended the event, entitled *Headway in Scotland – 35 years – Where We Are Now*, in recognition of the three and a half decades that the charity has had a presence in Scotland.

Keynote speeches focused on topics including Headway's forthcoming Justice Project, a personal account from Jeff Adamson of the inequalities of the Care Tax, and a fascinating insight into how head injury is portrayed in the media by BBC health correspondent Eleanor Bradford.

One of the day's highlights was an interactive cycle helmet presentation delivered to pupils from nearby Victoria Primary School to demonstrate Headway's work to educate children about the need to protect themselves while cycling.

Fittingly, and with no shortage of emotion, the event concluded with brain injury survivors Jane Khalid from

Headway Glasgow and Headway East Lothian's Charlene Wood sharing their personal experiences of how brain injury has affected their lives.

Thanks to Catherine Symington for chairing the conference, all the speakers, and Thompsons Solicitors (with a special mention for Hannah Bennett) for sponsoring the event.



Major milestone for Emergency Fund

The Headway Emergency Fund has reached a major milestone, with the total amount of money distributed topping the £200,000 mark.

The fund provides financial support to families and individuals struggling to cope with the practical implications of sudden catastrophic brain injury.

The Hughes family, from London, was one such family. They turned to the Emergency Fund for help at the end of last year after husband and father of four Michael went into cardiac arrest.

The 50 year old was rushed to hospital where doctors told wife Sarah and eldest daughter Anita that his brain had been starved of oxygen, leaving him with a serious hypoxic brain injury.

Before taking ill, Michael worked two days a week as a sales assistant at a local supermarket. As he was the family's sole wage-earner, the family's finances were hit hard.



A successful application to the fund meant that all four of the couple's children were able to visit their father in hospital.

Anita, who is studying at university said: "We were all so grateful when Headway approved our application for emergency funding because, when the sick pay was eventually cut, we didn't know what we were going to do.

"As a family we are in receipt of some benefits, but they only pay for basic needs and our funds just couldn't stretch to cover London's costly tube and bus fares to visit our father.

"The Emergency Fund team has helped my family immensely. We are so grateful that a brain injury charity like Headway exists."

Emergency Fund Co-ordinator Debbie Howitt said: "The Hughes' story is sadly not unique.

"We are pleased to have been able to assist so many families in urgent need of help, but the tragedy, of course, is that so many people are forced to turn to us for support.

A selection of thank you messages from people receiving Emergency Fund grants...

Thank you so much... this money has been a great relief for me and helps me to concentrate on helping my husband Paul to get well.

"Whether a person is forced to give up their job or simply cannot afford to visit their loved one in hospital, the Emergency Fund provides a vital lifeline to ease some of the unexpected pressure sudden acute brain injury can bring.

"We would like to say a big thank you to The Stewarts Law Foundation, which has supported the fund from the outset, and the many dedicated volunteers that have so often gone the extra mile in support of families in need."

* The names of the family members have been changed.

For further information on the Emergency Fund or to make an online application, visit:

www.headway.org.uk/supporting-you/headway-emergency-fund.

Having support from Headway has meant the world. My son is getting there, slowly but surely. Being able to hug him and tell him I love him was priceless.

I am so grateful... you have helped my family immensely with being able to spend more time with my dad.

news you may have missed...

Award-winning information now free for all!

Headway's range of award-winning booklets has now been made available to download free of charge from the charity's website.

Each year, around 10,000 hard copies of the charity's booklets are distributed, with almost 4,000 given away completely free of charge to brain injury survivors and their families via the Headway helpline.

Now though, new digital versions of the booklets have been created in a downloadable format, meaning that they can be more easily accessed for free from the Headway website as 'e-booklets'. Hyperlinks throughout the e-booklets ensure that readers can quickly refer to other suggested readings or relevant information.

"We are thrilled to be able to improve accessibility to the information contained in our booklets," said Tamsin Ahmad, Publications and Research Manager at Headway.

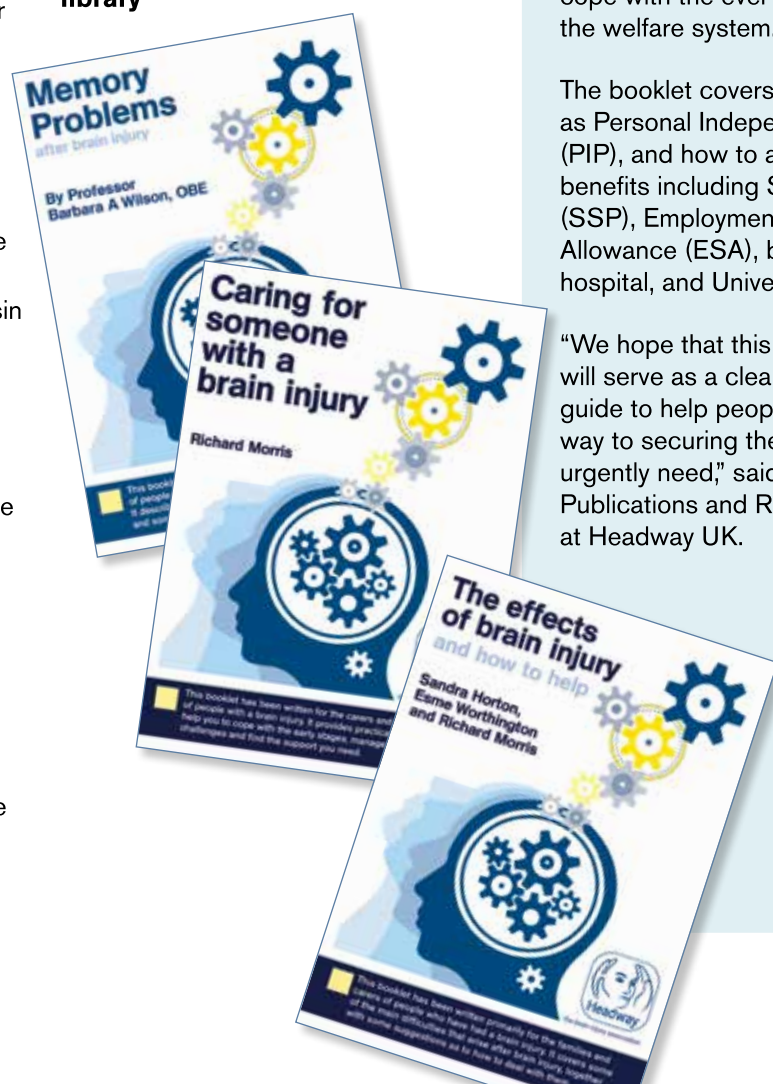
"We are proud of the high quality of these resources, with 12 of the 16 booklets receiving accolades from the British Medical Association, and we know that they are a vital source of support to many.

"Previously we offered limited free copies of relevant booklets to individuals and families that were directly affected by brain injury. This important step will now mean that we

can ensure that everyone can access as many of the booklets as they find necessary, including professionals, students, and of course brain injury survivors and their families.

"We hope that the launch of our e-booklets will mean that thousands more people will benefit from our information."

The e-booklets, covering issues such as the effects of brain injury, and practical matters including driving after brain injury, are available to download from the charity's information library at www.headway.org.uk/information-library



Benefits booklet launched

A new guide to welfare benefits has been added to Headway's publications library.

With governmental cuts and reforms putting increasing pressure upon applicants, *A guide to welfare benefits after brain injury* aims to help people affected by brain injury cope with the ever-changing face of the welfare system.

The booklet covers key issues such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and how to access core benefits including Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), benefits while in hospital, and Universal Credit.

"We hope that this bespoke booklet will serve as a clear and accessible guide to help people navigate their way to securing the benefits they may urgently need," said Tamsin Ahmad, Publications and Research Manager at Headway UK.

....news you may have missed

New post to study homelessness and brain injury

A new project to support homeless brain injury survivors has been launched in Birmingham.

The scheme is the result of a partnership between Headway Birmingham and Solihull (formerly known as Headway West Midlands) and local firm Headwise, an independent provider of specialist services to adults, children and families.

A Homelessness Caseworker, funded by Headwise but based at Headway, has been appointed to

explore links between brain injury and homelessness. In addition, they will be tasked with assessing the particular needs of the homeless brain injured person and working with them to help them move forward with their lives.

Nancy Khan, Carer Services Manager at Headway Birmingham and Solihull, said: "A severe brain injury can create huge pressure emotionally and financially on families, and sadly family breakdown and the loss of the family home is not uncommon.

"The reality is that a brain injured person, who even with the highest level of support may still be vulnerable,

will be at even greater risk if they are living on the streets.

"We are therefore very keen to be part of this research project with Headwise and will give our full support to the new Homelessness Caseworker."



Nancy Khan with new Homelessness Caseworker Lee Edwards and Dr Andrew Worthington from Headwise

Northerners get to know the lay of the LAN

More than 140 members and volunteers from Headway's groups and branches in the north of England have again proved what can be achieved after brain injury by taking part in an inclusive all-action weekend.

The sixth annual Look Ahead in the North (LAN) event, held at the Calvert Trust's centre in Kielder, provided brain injury survivors with the opportunity to try a host of activities that they

may have thought would no longer be possible, including sailing, zip wires, a daring high-ropes walk, and abseiling.

Quizzes, bands, folk singers and even a mobile petting zoo all added to the enjoyment of the weekend.

Highlighting the importance of the event, Jim Maguire from Headway North Northumberland said: "I actually spoke to people I had never met before, and for the first time in a long time, I felt comfortable in doing that.

"I felt a part of human society instead of being on the outside looking in. It was a fab weekend!"



Simon from Headway North Cumbria meets one of the Kielder locals

why I support Headway...

'Nick's storyline will end

– but brain injury is here to stay'

It's not easy portraying real life issues in soap operas. Operating in a world where miraculously speedy recoveries are the norm, actor Ben Price explains the challenges he faces playing brain injured character Nick Tilsley in Coronation Street – and why he now supports Headway.

"Nick's brain injury storyline unfolded slowly," said Ben, who's been in the soap for seven years. "At first, we didn't really know how long the story would run for, but right from the start I knew that if I wanted to do the role justice, I needed to do my research!"

That determination to know his stuff led Ben to Headway Preston and Chorley, where a day spent with service users, volunteers and staff opened his eyes to the realities of brain injury.

Such was the success of the meeting, which was filmed for an excellent feature on the Lorraine show on ITV, that Ben accepted an invitation to be a patron of the Headway group.

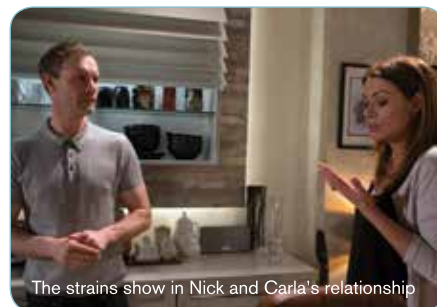
"People were so willing to talk openly with me about their lives. I was struck by the impact brain injury has on families and relationships. That really hit home, as did the sense of loss people experience."

"You lose part of yourself that isn't going to come back. You change, and people around you see you as a different person, but yet you can't quite grasp the fact that change has occurred.

"Once I'd spent time with people for whom this is a reality, not an acting job, I was even more determined to be true to the aspects of brain injury that don't just go away in time."

Corrie fans – particularly those who know and understand brain injury – will be quick to point out that Nick's

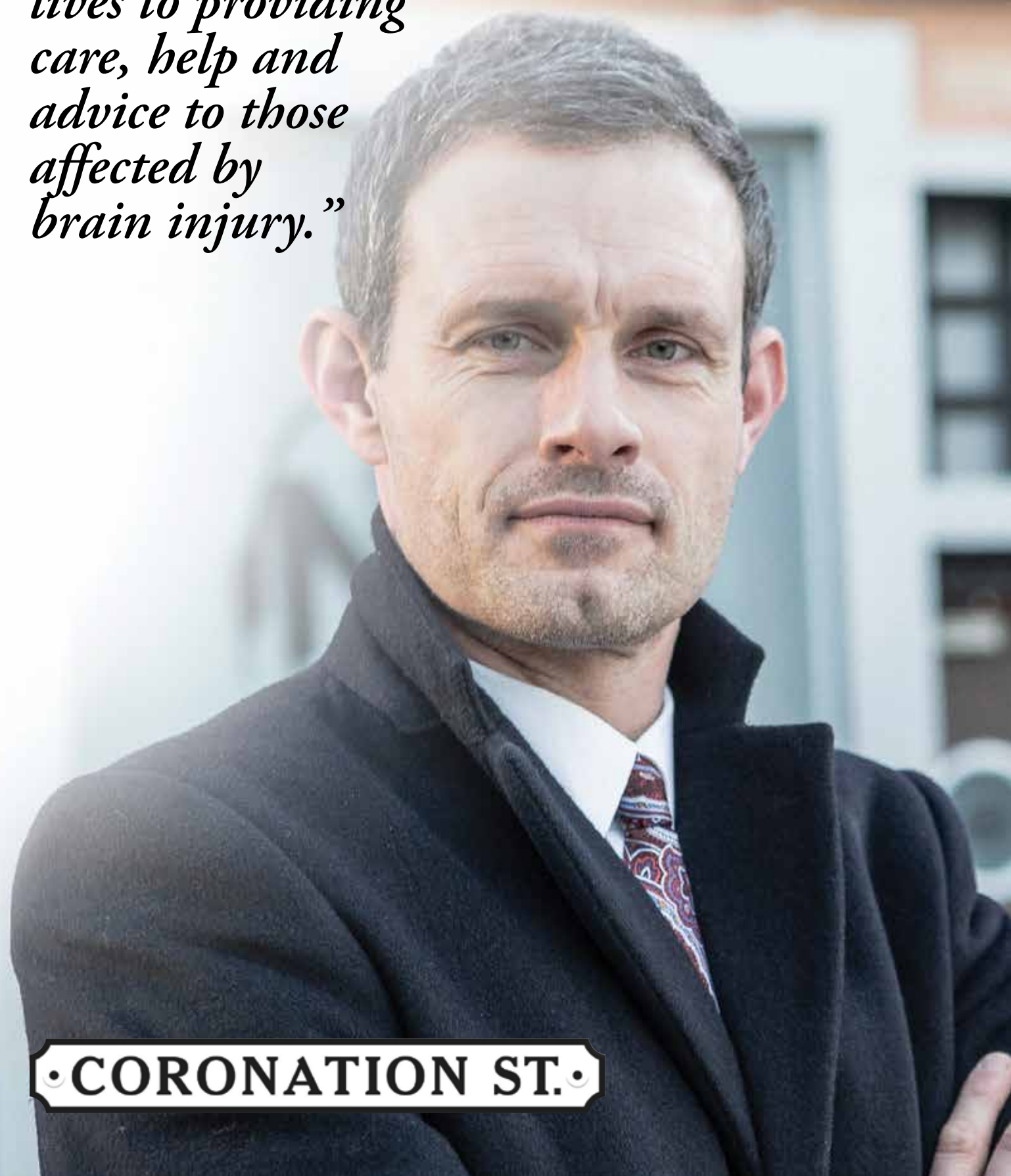
brain injury has 'fluctuated' over the past two and a half years. However, the current storyline sees Nick's difficulties in controlling his emotions, anger, and paranoia return, leading to confrontations with partner Carla.



The strains show in Nick and Carla's relationship

"Nick's about to go through a very difficult period and I can see some dark times ahead," said Ben. "Soap characters tend to develop over the years. You can pick things up and drop them over time, but I am really pleased that Nick's brain injury has been recognised as being a part of him for ever more. I'm proud of the way Coronation Street has committed to it."

"I've been blown away by the dedication of those who commit their lives to providing care, help and advice to those affected by brain injury."



• CORONATION ST. •

Ben: 'Portraying brain injury can take its toll'



Ben's time with service users and volunteers at Headway Preston & Chorley was filmed for ITV

"I have always been very selective when it comes to supporting charities, but Headway has very quickly come to mean a great deal to me."

"The programme has touched on a very real issue for a long period of time. It's opened me up to things that people have to deal with every day – unlike most soap storylines that focus on murder or betrayal!"

Having started out with a determination to portray brain injury as accurately as possible, how does Ben think he's done to date?

"Ha! That's possibly for others to answer! I can tell you that it's not been easy playing this role. Portraying brain injury day after day can take its toll and it does sometimes get me down. But I'm just an actor pretending to have a brain injury.

"Doing so has given me a sense of empathy – in a very small way – for what others are going through every day of their lives. For them, the realities of brain injury don't end when the cameras stop rolling.

"Some people directly affected by brain injury have been complimentary, thanking me for raising awareness of the realities of brain injury. Soaps have the power to do that and I'm pleased that we've been able to at least bring the issue into focus and raise awareness of the hidden aspects of brain injury.

"Hopefully, more people will now realise that a person may look and sound the same, but inside they may be struggling to cope with the hidden effects of brain injury."

"I can certainly testify that awareness of brain injury among the cast and crew is far greater now."



Tensions grow as Nick struggles to cope



Nick's storyline has led to increased awareness of brain injury among his colleagues

Proud

Given his commitment to the role, asking why he supports Headway might seem an obvious question to put to Ben, but not so according to the talented actor and director.

"I have always been very selective when it comes to supporting charities, but Headway has very quickly come to mean a great deal to me.

"I'm proud to be associated with the charity, both on a local level with Headway Preston and Chorley, and on a UK-wide basis helping to raise awareness whenever I can.

"I was honoured to be asked to get involved. I'm just an actor trying to play a brain injury survivor and, quite frankly, I was just glad I hadn't ballsed it up!

"Headway fills a very necessary gap for people with ABI. The care and support



Ben at the Headway Annual Awards

I have seen being given is very special indeed.

"I've been blown away by the dedication of those who commit their lives to providing care, help and advice to those affected by brain injury.

"Nick's storyline will eventually end, but brain injury is here to stay and so is Headway – and that's what's important."



Nick again loses control

GRASSROOTS SPORT URGED TO BE CONCUSSION AWARE

Headway's new campaign to encourage grassroots and junior sports clubs to take an 'if in doubt, sit it out!' approach to head injuries got off to a flying start when it was launched on Monday 9 May to mark the start of Action for Brain Injury Week.

"Sport plays a key role in keeping us fit and healthy," said Peter McCabe, Chief Executive at Headway. "As with everyday life, however, accidents, falls and collisions can happen.

"While most injuries are obvious, the signs of concussion can often be difficult to identify and yet at Headway, we know the damage that can be caused if people continue to play sport while concussed.

"A great deal has been achieved in the past few years to improve concussion protocols, with the emphasis being placed on professional sport to set a good example for others to follow.

"But we believe everyone who plays sport should be concussion aware – particularly those at grassroots level who are playing purely for the love of it and do not have ambulances and doctors on standby should something go wrong.

"We're delighted with the way in which the campaign has been supported so far and we hope it will help to change attitudes towards concussion within grassroots sport in the long term.

"It's also been extremely pleasing to see so many Headway groups and branches get involved with the campaign and use it as an opportunity to build relationships with local sports teams to help raise both awareness of brain injury and much-needed funds for the charities."

As part of the campaign, amateur and junior sports clubs, as well as academic institutions, are being encouraged to sign an online pledge



stating that they take an 'if in doubt, sit it out!' approach to concussion.

Clubs can also take advantage of a range of free information materials about concussion on the campaign's website at www.concussionaware.org.uk. This includes factsheets, posters, signposting to sport-specific concussion protocols, and a digital awareness stamp for club websites to demonstrate their responsible approach to head injuries. Clubs can also host our hard-hitting campaign film on their sites for added impact.

IF IN DOUBT, SIT IT OUT!



The campaign is backed by a number of national sports governing bodies, including the FA and RFU, as well as former England rugby captain Lewis Moody and sports concussion expert Dr Willie Stewart.

Former England rugby union captain Lewis Moody said:

"Concussion is something that everyone who plays sport – at whatever level or intensity – should be aware of. Don't play on regardless – you could be putting yourself in danger while also letting your teammates down."

"I urge everyone who plays sport to be concussion aware and take a no-risk approach to head injuries."

Consultant Neuropathologist and leading sports concussion expert Dr Willie Stewart said: "There is no doubting the benefits of participating in sport. There is also no doubt that head injuries in sport are best managed by

adopting an 'If in doubt, sit it out!' policy.

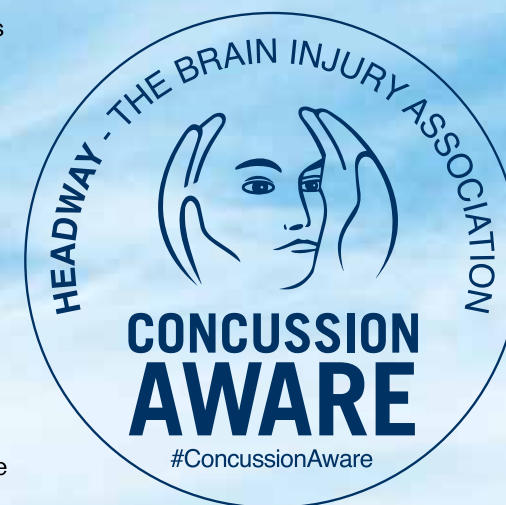
"The world of sport has made progress in recent years to address the issue of concussion, with much of the focus being on elite-level athletes. However, more needs to be done to incite a cultural change at grassroots level to ensure amateur and junior players are as well protected as professional sportspeople from the incorrect management of brain injury.

"Headway's Concussion Aware campaign is a most welcome initiative which should encourage safe engagement in sport, while at the same time protecting people by promoting a no-risk approach to head injury."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Are you a member of a local sports club? Know someone who is? We're asking all Headway supporters to help us raise awareness of this important campaign by encouraging local sports clubs to sign the pledge at www.concussionaware.org.uk and upload the digital badge to their websites.

And don't forget to keep sharing the film on social media! Remember: Watch. Share. Be #ConcussionAware.



To watch our campaign video scan this QR code or visit www.concussionaware.org.uk

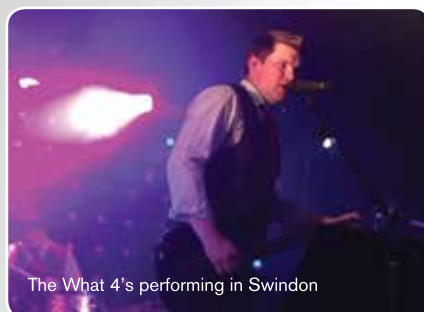


CAMPAIGNERS PUT BRAIN INJURY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The impassioned voices of Headway supporters resonated throughout all corners of the country in May as campaigners took to the streets, schools and even supermarkets of the UK to raise awareness of brain injury during Action for Brain Injury Week.

GETTING IN TUNE

Headway Swindon set the rhythm for ABI Week in the South West by hosting a live music and food gala in Calne. Guests feasted upon a hog roast supper, and enjoyed an auction and locally produced ice-cream while listening to music by Wiltshire band, The What 4's.



The What 4's performing in Swindon

"Being part of Headway Swindon is like having a second family, everyone is so friendly," said service user Mark Jennings. "The charity has helped me so much with my recovery and events such as this fundraiser enable the team to continue supporting others facing difficult uphill challenges after brain injury."

AWARENESS RAISING

In Scotland, Headway Dumfries and Galloway launched its new Safety and Prevention of Head Injuries awareness campaign with hopes of reducing the number of TBIs in the region.

Owen Fielding, Services Manager at Headway Dumfries and Galloway, said: "The aim is to make our prevention strategies visible in communities and reduce the impact of brain injury on individuals, families and local services.

"We will be working closely with Police Scotland, the National Farmers Union and other partners across the region to make this happen."



Formula One driver Allan McNish shares his experience of head injury in sport

FALLING FOR CHARITY

A team of daredevil volunteers from Headways Milton Keynes, Southampton, Norfolk and Waveney, Bedfordshire and Herefordshire took a more physical approach by completing a 10,000ft skydive to raise awareness of brain injury.

The 25-strong team of jumpers in the East of England visited the Sibson Aerodrome, in Cambridgeshire, for their challenge, while eight Headway Southampton volunteers braved the South West's Salisbury Airfield to raise £5,000 for their local group.

For members of Headway Birmingham and Solihull, fundraising meant keeping their feet firmly on the ground as they completed a seven-mile sponsored walk from the Headway hub in Rednall to King's Heath Park.

'SUBMIT TO LOVE'

Headway East London marked ABI Week by launching its new-look website while unveiling an additional web project showcasing the work of artists who have survived a brain injury.

The project, called Submit to Love Studios, features the work of nearly 40 self-taught artists and members of the group.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Several Headway groups took the opportunity provided by ABI Week to host open days at their hubs to showcase the vital work they do.

Headway Blackpool was particularly keen to throw open its doors and welcome local families to a re-launch event, which was organised to celebrate the branch being awarded group status.

"We now support around 90 local people and their families and would love for more people to come along," said Samantha Sweeney, Secretary of Headway Blackpool.



Public service: Headway SELNWK volunteers take on Tesco

"Our services range from exercise classes run by trained physiotherapists to arts and crafts workshops, relaxation classes and even Wii bowling tournaments."

Committed volunteers at Headway South East London North West Kent conversely went out and about into the local community to raise awareness, handing out leaflets and manning an information stand at a local Tesco supermarket.

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION!

Meanwhile in Yorkshire, Headway Rotherham visited local primary schools to deliver assemblies on the importance of wearing a cycle helmet.

Pupils at Monkwood Primary Academy and Sandhill Primary School were invited to get involved by sporting their quirkiest caps for Hats for Headway Day, collectively raising almost £300 for the charity.

"We certainly had a busy week," said Sadie Bratt, who delivered the assemblies on behalf of Headway Rotherham.

"Our team also enjoyed hosting a raffle and bucket collection at Co-op supermarket in Swinton, raising more money to support our work."



Headway Birmingham and Solihull's charity dog walk

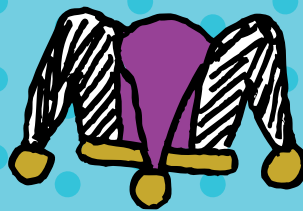
**ACTION FOR
BRAIN INJURY WEEK
2016**

RECORD

NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS

DON THEIR

#HATSFORHEADWAY



Wow! That's all we can say about this year's Hats for Headway Day, which proved to be the biggest and best to date. Thousands of you took part across the country to raise awareness and funds for Headway, with more than 700 photos of you all wearing your wacky headgear posted to social media.

The quirky fundraiser saw a record number of schools, businesses and Headway supporters come together to cap off ABI Week by showing off their hat creations and getting snap-happy for the cause on Friday 13 May.

The day's #HatsforHeadway tag even trended in the top 25 'most used' hashtags on Twitter, showing just how far the campaign has come since the charity launched the fundraiser almost eight years ago.

20-year-old Erin Park, a pupil at Pathways in The Henley College, in Oxfordshire, won this year's UK-wide competition for 'best hat' with her colourful Mohawk headgear, earning a prize of £150 vouchers to spend online at Hayes Garden World.



The prize will go towards developing the college's garden areas in the Pathways department, which supports children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

Meanwhile, North West ABI Network neurological services stole the 'best group photo' title after transforming their office into a summery beach scene, securing a full-page advertisement in the next edition of Headway News!



Henley College pupil Erin Park shakes her tail feathers



Work's a beach for staff at the North West ABI Network

Here are just some of your fun creations (bonus points for anyone who can spot the famous faces!)



Even the office dog at B Ashtons Legal firm celebrated ABI Week by donning his silliest hat for Headway!



Bretherton LLP Solicitors show they are #ConcussionAware by creating sports-themed helmets



Former Arsenal striker Alan Smith (centre) with Sky's Tom Macleod and Johnson Beharry VC.



Hugh James Solicitors took 'wacky' to a whole new (septa) level with their homage to Comedian Groucho Marx



Da-dum... Birmingham City University student Gillian Rudd shows real fin-esse



Headway Southampton members get creative



Softcell singer Marc Almond proudly dons his #HatsforHeadway



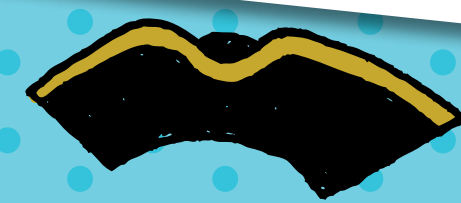
Service users at Headway Perth and Kinross turnout for the cause



Headway VP James Cracknell gets in on the fun!



You can check out more eccentric entries by searching #HatsforHeadway on Twitter or visiting our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/headwayuk



My Story...

I WAS BEING THE TOUGH GUY

Nic O'Leary was just 16 years old when he suffered a blow to the head while playing rugby. Determined to play on – and unaware that he was concussed – the teenager stayed on the pitch.

Tragically, he then received a second knock to the head which exacerbated the injury.

Seeing his son lying on the ground, Nic's father Don rushed onto the pitch but, by the time he had helped his son to the car, Nic was unconscious and had stopped breathing.



Nic and mum Linda

Nic, who was living with his parents in Bognor Regis at the time of the incident, played for the Welsh Exiles rugby team and harboured hopes of pursuing rugby as a full-time career.

"The day of my injury had been a hard slog at school and I even considered not going to training," Nic recalled.

"I was committed to my dream of playing rugby professionally and so I took the three-hour journey from my parents' house in Bognor Regis to the Welsh Exiles training ground at Old Deer Park, in London, for the final training session before our first proper match.

"I took a knock to my temple as another player collided with me. I can't remember clearly what happened, just that I had to get up and keep playing

on even though the head injury had left me very wobbly on my feet.

"I was being the tough guy."

A short time later, Nic received a further blow to the head during a tackle and collapsed for a second time. This time, however, he did not get up.

"It wasn't even an important game," said Nic. "I should not have been allowed to continue with the training session after the first hit. Players often think they are letting the team down by being sidelined after an injury – but it's actually the opposite.

"By caring for your body and brain following a concussion you are more likely to recover quicker and participate in future matches than if you play on and end up in hospital with a life-changing brain injury."

Nic spent three days in a coma at West Middlesex Hospital before finally beginning to show signs of improvement as he slowly regained consciousness.

"When I first tried to get out of bed I couldn't walk," said Nic. "The doctors discharged me from hospital just days after regaining consciousness and my mum became my primary source of support. I don't know how far I would have come without her helping me relearn everything from scratch.

"As a family we received no follow-up care or support, and it fell to my mum



To watch the video scan this QR code or visit www.concussionaware.org.uk



to teach me how to walk again by holding onto her shoulders and walking short distances."

Nic took time off from school until he was well enough to return and sit his GCSEs. When he started his first year of AS levels however, he struggled to concentrate and would often become quickly agitated.

"I was always good at school and understood the importance of education," Nic continued.

"Following my brain injury, I really struggled to complete work and there was a notable change in my behaviour. I had difficulty controlling my emotions and would often end up in fights and in trouble with the police as I could not suppress my anger."

"My injury meant I couldn't even turn to rugby, which had previously been my hobby and emotional outlet."

For almost seven years, the effects of Nic's concussion were misdiagnosed as mental health issues. He was placed on a series of anti-depressants and even spent time in psychiatric units until he was finally referred to a neurological specialist who diagnosed

him with severe frontal lobe damage.

"During my many years of misdiagnosis, I became seriously depressed and even suicidal at times," he explained.

"I couldn't work for a long time and people often thought I was lazy. I felt so alone. I wish I'd known about the support Headway offers during my struggles in the early stages of recovery following my brain injury."

#ConcussionAware

Despite his injury, Nic still retains a passion for rugby but believes more needs to be done to protect players from sustaining injuries like his.

"Before my head injury I would eat, sleep and breathe rugby. I love the sport and don't want people to be discouraged from playing," he said.

"When 17-stone men run at each other, you know when you enter the pitch there will be a couple of bruises. But players are getting bigger. It is important to establish effective regulations and procedures to identify and treat concussion effectively while breaking down the 'macho' stigma of playing on when you are hurt.

"Clubs at every level have a duty of care to protect their players and take a responsible attitude to ensuring concussions do not go unnoticed and that injured players are supported.

"We need to highlight the issue of head injury not just for professional teams that have club doctors, but for grassroots players who should be made aware of the correct ways to recognise and treat concussion.

"Concussion rules have come a long way since my injury, but there is still a way to go to ensuring no player with a head injury slips through the net.

"I am finding courage from the knowledge that sharing my experiences may help others to manage the effects of their own sports-related brain injuries and even prevent future players from facing what I have been through.

"Life after brain injury can be a very isolating place and I have good days and bad days. Knowing there is somewhere like Headway where people understand the complexity of head injury is an important stepping stone to learning that things can get better."

IF IN DOUBT, SIT IT OUT!

Holiday TOP TIPS

Ready for boarding?

Spending two weeks exploring foreign lands or lounging by the pool may sound idyllic, but for some brain injury survivors going on holiday can present numerous challenges.

For this special feature on holidays and travel after a brain injury, we've asked members of our online communities for some of their top tips for travelling after brain injury.



Planning your ideal holiday

Choosing the perfect break can sometimes feel overwhelming – after all, the world is a very big place and there's lots to see!

Start by thinking about the places you'd like to visit and the type of holiday you prefer. Then think about the way your brain injury affects you on a day-to-day basis. This should help you to focus on a few options.

It's important that you or someone who knows you well does plenty of research before you book. For example, is a certain resort going to be too loud or busy for you? Is the local terrain going to be too hilly if you have mobility issues?

If you have complex needs, there are a number of companies that provide accessible, supported holidays in the UK and some countries in Europe. You can research them online to ensure they are members of ABTA, while review sites can also be useful.

"My husband and I find bus tours fit in great with his disabilities; good value for

money and we meet lots of new friends."

(Irene Hannah Arnold)

"I always get my holiday insurance through Headway otherwise it is ridiculously expensive."

(Melissa Parker)

"Do plenty of research before you go. My mobility is a problem since my traumatic brain injury so I need flat terrain that's not too hilly."

(Kay Thompson)

Before you go

One of the most important things you need to do before setting off is to buy travel insurance. This will ensure that your costs are covered if anything goes wrong on holiday – from losing your luggage to needing expensive treatment or emergency evacuation back to the UK in the event of a medical issue.

It's always sensible to get quotes from a number of companies as prices can vary, and you should always give full details of your circumstances.

You can find out more about travel insurance and get a list of companies that provide cover for people with

pre-existing conditions on our Holidays and Travel factsheet, which you can download from our website.

"I have check lists for holidays, compiled personally for me. They have been laminated and I tick things as I pack or do things, such as set timer lights."

(Strawberrycream)

"Give a copy of all your trip details to a family member or friend including flight numbers, times, dates, medication you're on etc."

Make sure you have filled in your emergency contact details inside your passport."

(peaches2)

"I was worried about all the 'what if' situations. Best thing I got beforehand was an ID wristband containing details about my condition. It helps make me feel a little more confident about going out and about."

(moo196)

Travelling

While the idea of visiting far-flung exotic locations may be appealing, travelling long distances can be exhausting for anyone. Be cautious and honest with yourself: would a long flight and possible jetlag be something you could cope with or would it take most of the holiday to recover from the journey?

"Take as many breaks as you need and enjoy the journey. It's part of the holiday too."

(randomphantoms)

"Don't be afraid to ask for airport assistance. It takes away a lot of the stress for you and your travelling companions – especially in busy airports abroad."

(Gordon Campbell)

"LOVE my good earplugs and dark eye mask so I can sleep almost anywhere, as well as my relaxation CD on iPod and phone."

(moo196)



When you're there

The temptation is always to try to cram too much into your holiday, but this can often leave you more in need of a rest than you were before you left!

Plan your holiday in advance. Think about what you'd like to see or do, and make sure you pace yourself with plenty of rest in between activities or trips.

"Listen to your body while away. If increased activity and

stimuli have exhausted you – sleep. Don't over-plan whole days but plan for half days and see how you feel as you go."

(RecoveringH)

"Once on holiday, new stuff is tiring so we try to have clear days for crashing as I just run out of go. Try not to do too much."

(RogerCMerriman)

"I make sure I've had/have enough of the right drugs with

me...and prescriptions in case customs anywhere want to know what they all are."

(moo196)

Download Headway's free factsheet on holidays and travel from the website, where you'll also find more top tips.

Or for further support, call the helpline on **0808 800 22 44**

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Anne Cahill

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#HeadwayHeroes

SHE KNOWS US SO WELL...



Headway's Alastair White with music legend Barbara Dickson



One of Scotland's most successful female singers of all time has given her backing to a new initiative recently launched by Fife Headway.

Dunfermline-born singer Barbara Dickson OBE, who had a string of hits including *I know him so well*, joined brain injury survivors, carers and supporters of the charity at a special event to unveil a new directory of local brain injury services.

The directory, which has been produced with support from Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, provides information and key local contacts for families, carers, clinicians and other professionals in need of guidance or specialist advice about brain injury.

The launch saw guests treated to a series of talks with a special performance by a Scottish piper.

"It is a pleasure to come back to Kirkcaldy and meet the people involved with Headway's valuable work," said Barbara Dickson, who has now been named a patron of Fife Headway.

"I once had an employee who sustained a serious head injury. My first-hand experience of seeing how challenging such injuries can be for a person and their family has really opened my eyes to what brain injury really means.

"It is good to be involved with the Headway movement here in Scotland and wish Fife Headway the very best for the future."

Thanks and tributes were also paid to Fife Headway's stalwart member, Barbara Linton, who officially stood down as Chair after 21 years of devoted service.

"I intend to continue supporting Fife Headway as it is a charity that is so close to my heart," said Barbara Linton, who first turned to the local group for support in 1995, eight years after her late husband Bob sustained a traumatic brain injury in a motorcycling accident.

"Fife Headway was our lifeline at a very difficult time. It is fantastic to see high-profile figures such as Barbara Dickson coming along to promote the new directory and highlight the vital frontline services we provide for local people in need of support following a brain injury."



Barbara accepts a bunch of flowers from bagpipe player Karen Boyle

Who's your #HeadwayHero? Tell us on [f](https://www.facebook.com/fifeheadway) or [t](https://twitter.com/fifeheadway) 27

Summer 2016

#HeadwayHeroes

• CORONATION ST. •

CORRIE STAR

opens new charity shop in Cheadle

Coronation Street actor Ben Price attracted crowds of supporters as he opened a new Headway shop in Cheadle.

The actor, who plays the character of brain injury survivor Nick Tilsley in the popular ITV soap, said: "Headway has been extremely helpful to me and I'm proud to be associated with the charity."

"Brain injury can be an isolating and incredibly lonely place, but Headway offers a direct and ongoing lifeline to families affected by brain injury. It ensures people have somewhere to turn for information and advice immediately after being discharged from hospital."



Ben with Shop Manager Denise Marsh



Ben cuts the ribbon with brain injury survivor Paul Cassidy

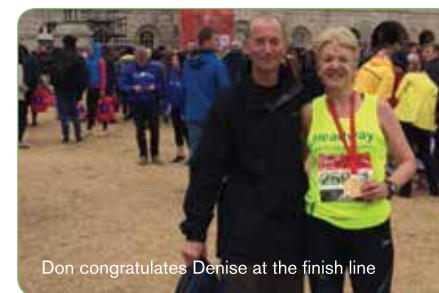
Carol Tennet, Head of Retail at Headway, said: "Ben has become a key supporter of the charity. We feel honoured that he generously agreed to help raise the profile of brain injury further by coming along to opening ceremony of our new venture."

"We are also very grateful to everyone who has made it possible for us to open this latest shop, from local people who have donated stock to Donna Mattfield at Knights Solicitors firm who provided free legal support with the lease."

#HeadwayHeroes

SPURRED ON *by Headway vest*

A devoted wife who helped her husband battle back from a brain injury through their shared love of running has completed this year's London Marathon for Headway.



Don congratulates Denise at the finish line

Denise Johnson, from Bradford, joined 40,000 other runners to pound the streets of London for the 26-mile race in April. Among them were dozens of Headway heroes, including the charity's Vice President James Cracknell – who were running to raise money for the UK-wide charity or their local group or branch.

In July 2013, Denise's husband Don sustained a near-fatal brain haemorrhage while working abroad as Vice President of an insurance company in Saudi Arabia.

After hours of trying to contact her husband from their home in Bradford, Denise eventually called the emergency services who found Don alone in his hotel bathroom, covered in blood. It is thought that Don suffered a

brain haemorrhage while in the shower, causing him to fall and hit his head on the sink.

Denise flew out to Saudi Arabia immediately to find that her husband was in a coma. When Don began to regain consciousness three days after the incident, he was disorientated and distressed with a life-changing brain injury.

Although running is a passion the couple have always shared, the hobby gained new significance when running together became a key part of Don's rehabilitation.

"Every time I put on my Headway vest it spurs me on and I run with my heart," said Denise, who completed the race in just over three hours, raising £1,000 for Headway Bradford.

"We started running together as part of Don's rehabilitation, which thankfully gave us both something real to focus on. I am so proud of Don for having the courage to fight back and re-learn how to run and even drive again after brain injury."

"The continued support provided by Headway Bradford, coupled with reassurance provided by the Headway UK information resources, means so much to me and I can never do enough to celebrate the fabulous recovery Don has made."

Headway Chief Executive Peter McCabe kicked off the

marathon festivities on the evening before the race 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 pasta party was great fun and quite moving too," said Denise. "We met some really amazing people on the night who told such sad stories about their experiences of brain injury."

"When I started to struggle on the day, I thought of all the people who, like Don, battle with the effects of head injuries every day. Their stories made me determined to finish."

**Inspired to get your running shoes out of the closet?
Visit www.headway.org.uk/get-involved**



Who's your #HeadwayHero? Tell us on [f](#) or [t](#) **29**

#HeadwayHeroes

GOLDEN BOY ROB *wins award*

A former army captain who sustained a brain injury while serving on active service in Afghanistan has struck gold in more ways than one!

Rob Crome-Hawke, who is Chair of the recently launched Headway Forces Support Group in North Yorkshire, is celebrating winning two gold medals in the Invictus Games. The incredible triumph comes just weeks after he was honoured with a national accolade at the Soldiering On 2016 Awards ceremony in London.

Rob claimed top spot in the men's recumbent bike time trial and men's recumbent bike race events at the prestigious games for injured service personnel, which this year was held in Orlando, Florida.

Talented Rob also went on to claim a silver medal in the volleyball event.

Rob, 32, had been completing his second tour of Afghanistan in 2012 when the vehicle in which he was

travelling drove over an explosive device. In addition to suffering spinal injuries that cause chronic back pain, he sustained a traumatic brain injury that left him with memory, concentration, and persistent balance problems.

Despite his daily challenges after brain injury, Rob went on to set up Headway Forces Support Group to help other veterans similarly affected and their families.

In April, Rob's determination to help others was recognised when he was presented with the Working Together

Award at the 2016 Soldiering On Awards ceremony in London.

"I am honoured to be recognised in the Soldiering On Awards," said Rob.

"I could not have achieved all I have since my injuries, including the establishment of Headway Forces Support Group, without the amazing support from my family, and Headway UK."

"I hope we can help and support many more veterans and their families affected by brain injury."

A true #HeadwayHero – well done Rob!



A proud Rob poses with daughter Pippa and Invictus Games Patron Prince Harry
(Getty Images for Invictus Games Foundation)

Brain Injury Claims

Tim Beasley leads a team of personal injury specialists who advise on all types of brain injury claims.

His legal team specialises in road traffic collisions and work accidents where life changing injuries result from brain injury, spinal cord injury and amputation. They have been involved in a number of multi-million pound settlements. Tim also acts as a Court of Protection appointed Deputy where clients are unable to make decisions about their finances and property because they lack mental capacity.

Tim has considerable experience in claims arising from accidents abroad where issues of jurisdiction arise. Members of his team are proficient in several languages and in some cases are either Registered European Lawyers or dual qualified as solicitors in England and Wales as well as other jurisdictions.

For an initial discussion about how our legal team can help you, please telephone Tim Beasley on **0121 200 8215** or email tbeasley@levenes.co.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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