Headway
the brain injury association

Case management

after brain injury

After a brain injury, it might be necessary to appoint a case manager to help with making practical arrangements and managing the co-ordination of care.

This publication has been written to explain what a case manager is, how case managers can be accessed and how they can support brain injury survivors.

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Introduction

After a brain injury, it might be necessary to appoint a case manager to help with making practical arrangements and managing the co-ordination of care. This publication has been written to explain what a case manager is, how case managers can be accessed and how they can support brain injury survivors.

What is a case manager?

A case manager is responsible for overseeing, co-ordinating and managing the overall care and/ or rehabilitation of their client. Case managers working with brain injury survivors should have specialist knowledge of brain injury, as well as knowledge of health and social care, rehabilitation and other professional support.

Case managers can come from a variety of professional backgrounds, such as social work, occupational therapy, physiotherapy or nursing.

There are case managers working in statutory services (NHS or social care), medico-legal settings and independent practice. However, most brain injury case managers are privately funded so may only be accessible through private referrals and interim compensation payments.

Different clinical bodies might use different names for case managers, for instance, integrated commissioning boards (ICBs) might call case managers ‘neuro navigators’.

What do case managers do?

A brain injury is a life-changing event, and a case manager can help brain injury survivors to adjust to their new situation and to navigate various services and options available. Examples of this might include:

- Providing information about brain injury and local services;
- Assisting brain injury survivors with applying for financial support, funding or welfare benefits;
- Organising relevant care and support services;
- Identifying appropriate rehabilitation services;
- Supporting and educating family members;
- Identifying solutions to practical challenges such as property adaptations, vehicle and equipment needs;
- Accompanying the brain injury survivor to specific medical appointments as required.

Brain injury case managers will work closely with the brain injury survivor and their family to find out what is important to the survivor now and what might be important to them in the future. Using their specialist knowledge of brain injury and local services, they will work with the survivor to address areas of difficulty, and where possible they will try to support the survivor with returning to meaningful activities that they had before the injury.

Tailored care plans or treatment programmes are prepared for each brain injury survivor, which are designed to meet the survivor's specific health, social and emotional needs. These care plans are continually reviewed so that the case manager can continue to provide support as life changes.

Brain injury case managers can use their specialist knowledge to make clinical recommendations for potential treatment, therapy, equipment or support. They can act as a central point of communication for the multiple professionals who may be involved in a brain injury survivor's care.

A brain injury case manager can work with their client at any time during their lifetime, potentially for up to many years.

How is case management funded?

Most brain injury case managers are privately funded.

If a compensation claim is being pursued, the costs of the case manager should be included in the claim. Case managers are health and social care professionals, and as such, are not a direct part of the litigation process. They have a professional duty of care to their client (the injured person) regardless of who funds their input.

In some instances, private case management may be funded by a local authority or the NHS to meet specific client needs, although this is not particularly common.

A case manager usually has an hourly rate and charges for time they spend visiting you, writing reports, telephone conversations and for dealing with other people on your behalf, or if they are organising things for you. Each case manager should provide you with details of their terms and conditions and hourly rates, for professional and travel time.

Choosing a case manager

Check professional registration and membership

There are many case management companies to choose a case manager from, but it is important to select someone who has experience in supporting clients with acquired brain injury. They should also have the appropriate professional registration, such as registration with the Institute of Registered Case Managers (IRCM), the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC), Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) or Social Work England (SWE). Case managers who direct care packages must also be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) or Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

Case managers may also be members of or registered with bodies relevant to their professional background, such as the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy if they are a physiotherapist by background, or the

Royal College of Occupational Therapy if they are an occupational therapist by background.

It is also useful to check that they belong to a case management membership body such as BABICM (British Association of Brain Injury and Complex Case Management), Case Management Society UK (CMS UK) or Vocational Rehabili-tation Association (VRA).

Searching online

You can search for a case manager in your area online. Many case management companies will have search functions so that you can select a case manager in your local area with a specific area of expertise, such as brain injury.

You can also use BABICM's online directory, which specifically features case managers with experience in supporting clients with brain injury. This is available at www.babicm.org/practitioners/.

Questions to ask

As well as checking the case manager's credentials, it is important to select a case manager who can satisfactorily answer any questions you have so that you can be sure they are the right case manager for you.

Some suggested questions are as follows:

- What experience and qualifications do you have in working with people with a brain injury?
- How often will you be able to visit me in person?
- How can you reassure me that you're providing me with the best service?
- What is your availability for calls and email contact?
- What arrangements are in place when you are away on holiday?
- Do you or the company you work for have relevant insurance?

- How long does the case management process go on for, and is it periodically reviewed?

Making a complaint against a case manager

The majority of people will have a good experience of being supported by a case manager. However, there are instances where a brain injury survivor or their family may be dissatisfied with the case manager's care, and it may be necessary to make a complaint.

It is always helpful to begin with a local resolution. This means talking to the case manager about the nature of your complaint and seeing if things can be resolved with an open and honest discussion.

If a local resolution does not help or is not possible, you might need to make a formal complaint. The process of raising a complaint against a case manager will depend on the type of case manager you are working with. You should keep a written record of all key dates and details of the nature of your complaint as this should help with the process.

If your complaint is against an NHS case manager, you will need to raise a complaint through the local Integrated Care Board (ICB) that is responsible for the brain injury survivor's care. A list of Integrated Care Boards with contact details is available at www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/find-your-local-integrated-care-board/. ICB websites should list details of their complaints process.

If your complaint is against a social care case manager, you will need to raise a complaint with the Local Social Care and Government Ombudsman. More information about the complaints process is available at www.lgo.org.uk.

If your complaint is against a case manager from a case management company, follow the company's complaints process, which should be available on their website.

You can make a complaint on behalf of a brain injury survivor who does not have capacity to make a complaint themselves. If the brain injury survivor does have capacity to make a complaint, you can still complain on their behalf but you should include their consent to complain in your complaint letter.

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We hope that this has been a helpful resource. Please consider sharing your feedback with us by scanning the QR code or by visiting our publication feedback survey https://uk.surveymonkey.com/r/hwpublications.

This information was last reviewed in 2023.

We're here to listen.

If you need support, or have a question about brain injury, contact our free nurse-led helpline:

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