



# News & Views

## Another milestone anniversary!

Our recent newsletters have featured our CEO Sue Tyler completing 30-years' service with Headway Birmingham & Solihull and our Head of Services, Becky Whenham, completing 20-years. While these were notable achievements worthy of celebration, the latest long-service milestone is something else again!

**Richard Brooks, Office Assistant at our Leighton House brain injury hub, also completed 20-years working for Headway in February. While this alone is fantastic, it is made more remarkable by the fact that Richard started his association with Headway as a client with a brain injury.**

*Richard's story is an inspirational one.*

Before his brain injury, Richard was a lorry driver. One night, as he headed home at the end of his shift, the vehicle he was driving hit black ice and was in collision with an artic truck parked at the side of the road. Richard had to be cut free from his cab by emergency services and was rushed by ambulance to a hospital in Leeds. Amazingly, he had no broken bones but he had sustained a severe head injury during the crash. After a week, he was transferred to a Birmingham hospital nearer to home where he stayed for many months. Despite intensive treatment, the injury to his brain left Richard with significant long-term memory problems, and he could not remember anything about his life before his brain injury.



It was at this time he was referred to Headway and started attending rehabilitation sessions at our Headway House centre in Moseley. He made excellent progress, and was able to take on a volunteering role with Headway moving on to a paid position in 2002, making the transition from client to staff member. An incredible 20-years later, he is still with Headway, a valued member of the team and much-admired by all those who know him.

Richard says: "Without Headway, Sue Tyler in particular and Lilly Parsons in the early days, I wouldn't have got this far. They have supported me so much."

Memories of his early life pre brain injury have never returned, and Richard only knows what his sister tells him of his former life. In addition to his brain injury, he has also experienced kidney failure and so depends on dialysis three times a week. Despite this, he manages to hold down his job at Headway and describes himself as a "lucky man". He has a daughter, Charlene, and three beautiful grandchildren he sees on a regular basis, and regardless of the issues he faces, he is always smiling.

Becky Whenham, Head of Services at Headway, says: "Richard really is an inspiration to us all. He has risen above his brain injury and his other health issues to start a new chapter of his life that revolve around work and family. He knows his Headway friends are here for him when he needs a little extra support and he is an example of how to live a good life after brain injury."

*A huge congratulations to Richard for achieving his 20-year milestone working for Headway!*

## Counselling

We are currently offering a counselling service for both those with brain injury and/or their carers.

These are run as a block of six sessions and include telephone counselling on Monday mornings, sessions with a trainee counsellor at Leighton House on Tuesday afternoons and Wednesday mornings, and with a counsellor at Sutton House, also on Wednesday mornings. All of our counsellors have completed our specialised Introduction to Brain Injury Training.

Nancy Khan, who manages our Carer Services team, says; "This is proving a very popular service and we do have a waiting list. We ask that people only join the list if they are willing and able to attend for six weeks in a row as counsellors are unable to reschedule once the sessions have been booked in."



*Trainee Counsellor Miriam Durgut*

## Student placements

We are pleased to welcome Venus Marshall and Raegan Stephen, two Social Work students from Birmingham City University.

They started a 10-week placement with us in January, working alongside our Carer Services team to offer family support and learn more about the impact of brain injury on the wider family.

They will both complete our Introduction to Brain Injury training course while they are with us, and will be helping with Carers Group activities, working directly with clients and providing cover for our Enquiry Line.



## Couch to 5k & beyond!



We are so impressed with the achievements of our Leighton House client, Angela Thompson. She was involved in a road traffic collision in 2000, which left her with a serious brain injury. She started attending Headway in 2013, and in recent times, has been enjoying some off-site sessions at the gym. Encouraged with her improving fitness levels, she was persuaded to take on the Couch to 5k challenge, which she completed in Shirley Park.

She is, quite rightly, feeling very proud of herself, and has been inspired to sign up for her next running adventure – the Headway Easter Fun Run in Cofton Park in April.

*Go, Angela!*



## Invaluable support

A little support from our Lifestyles team can really make a difference, as these pictures show.

Our client, Teresa, needed some help sorting out some much-needed repairs to her shed, while John simply needed some encouragement to go out and enjoy himself.



*Teresa's shed was in a state of disrepair*



*Afterwards - a delighted Teresa!*



*Can't beat a cuppa & some company!*

**VOLUNTEERS...we need new volunteers across a variety of areas. Please call us!**

## Just Bowl!



Just Bowl is a new scheme offered through the Bowls Development Alliance to encourage older people and those with mobility issues to get more active.

We were fortunate to receive some staff training and the loan of the equipment to get started with Just Bowl at the end of last year, and it has quickly established itself as a popular element of our sports programme. The Just Bowl mat can be unrolled and set up in an instant, and fits neatly into the space we have available in The Woodlands.



## Out in the community again!



After such a long period not being able to get together let alone go anywhere, we have been making the most of the new freedom as COVID restrictions ease. Clients (and staff!) thoroughly enjoyed a trip to RAF Cosford in Shropshire in February while Adam, pictured right, was fascinated with the many animals and birds he encountered during a group visit to Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park in Edgbaston.

**Grand effort!** We're pleased to report that our Grand Raffle raised £1,748 towards our local brain injury services, our highest total yet.

Thank you to everyone who supported us with this, with special thanks to Irwin Mitchell for generously donating a £100 Amazon voucher which really helped boost ticket sales!

**DONATIONS...** Don't forget we are always in need of your donations for our charity shops ...clothes, toys, books, furniture, bric-a-brac, soft furnishings etc!



## Valued volunteer retires

Kathleen Fraser, pictured centre, recently retired following an amazing 27-years of volunteering with Headway as an Office Assistant at our Headway House brain injury centre in Moseley. Sue Tyler and Helen Bourke joined her at a surprise party to mark her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in January, and took the opportunity to present her with a gift and certificate to mark her long service.

*Thank you, Kath, and best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement from everyone at Headway!*



## Lift installation nearing completion

Work to install a lift at our Sutton House brain injury hub in Wylde Green is progressing well. Contractors have completed the heavy building work to cut through between floors (left) and create the lift pit, and the lift itself is due to be delivered and installed by the end of March.



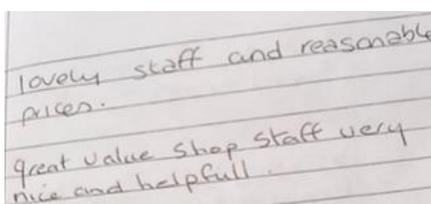
Our Head of Operations, Denise Taylor, says: "We are doing all that we can to minimise disruption during this time, and would like to thank everyone for their patience and understanding while the work is ongoing."

Sutton House clients have been offered alternative activities whilst the centre is temporarily closed during these vital works, attending our other hubs or enjoying some community activities. Remote sessions via Zoom have also been offered to ensure clients receive the support they need while away.

## Such a popular shop!

Going by the many positive entries written by customers in the Comments Book at our Rubery charity shop, we seem to have found a winning combination, with a new team of staff, lower prices and plenty of fresh stock!

We recommend a visit if you haven't called in recently!



*Just some of the feedback from customers!*

## Amazing year of fundraising!



We would like to say an enormous THANK YOU to the Gorilla Coffee Café in Kings Heath for choosing Headway Birmingham & Solihull as their charity for 2021.

Through its Tour de Gorilla cycling event and match-funding from Legal & General, Gorilla Coffee Café raised a whopping £3,183.04 towards our local brain injury services! This really is an amazing sum and will make a real difference to the charity as we emerge from the challenges of COVID.

Thank you again to Bruno, James, Rob and all involved!



After a two-year absence due to COVID, our annual Easter Fun Run is back!

It will take place on Sunday 10 April, and as in previous years, it will be a 5k route looping through beautiful Cofton Park. It is ideal for runners of any ability to walk, jog or run and all finishers receive a chocolate Easter egg plus a quality Easter-themed medal, thanks to sponsorship once again from our friends at Frenkel Topping.

We recommend signing up quickly at [www.headway-bs.org.uk/events](http://www.headway-bs.org.uk/events) to be sure of your place in this family-friendly event!



Registered Charity No 1008798  
Company Reg number 2686647

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## Our Easter Fun Run is back!

*Many thanks to all our supporters, members and clients!*