

Media Release

Join our fantastic volunteer team!

10 July 2023

When it comes to volunteering, local brain injury charity Headway has more to offer than most!

There are opportunities to work directly with clients at one of the charity's three brain injury hubs or at its off-site sports and well-being sessions. You could volunteer at one of their charity shops or behind the scenes, helping with some admin in the offices or with gardening or maintenance work outside. You could drive the charity minibus on an ad-hoc basis or assist at some of Headway's fundraising events. You might even be a trained counsellor willing to offer a few hours a week or a keen angler with time to spare to help at our weekly fishing sessions throughout the summer months.

Whatever your talents and interests, Headway is sure to have a volunteering role to suit you! It's rewarding work, an opportunity to make new friends and give something back to your local community, while building your personal experience and skill-set to add to your cv and improve your future job prospects, too.

Sue Tyler, CEO at Headway Birmingham & Solihull, said: "Traditionally, we've had a large pool of volunteers who have made an enormous difference to the charity, helping us achieve the high levels we aim for in all we do. However, volunteer numbers dwindled during COVID and have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, and so we are launching a volunteer recruitment drive to help attract some new faces and the additional help we need as we roll out some new services."

This volunteer drive is targeting those aged 16 or over with a few hours or a day to spare on a regular basis. Enthusiasm, patience, reliability and a sense of humour are more important than previous experience of working with brain injured people. Required skills will vary according to the individual volunteering role being applied for, with training offered as needed.

The charity particularly needs volunteers to help work with ABI (Acquired Brain Injury) clients at its Leighton House centre in Chapel Rise, Rednal. This may involve making hot drinks, chatting to clients or playing games (Hangman is a particular favourite!) during break/ lunch-times, or supporting clients during sessions with reading, writing or speech or offering physical help with craft or computer work.

Jade Foxall, ABI Co-ordinator at Headway, explained: “Volunteers make such a difference in our hubs, from students who are looking to gain experience before heading into the world of work, to others who may have retired but want to give something back. Everyone has a different reason for volunteering and different skills to offer, whether helping with our fishing group, helping clients with reading or writing or simply interacting socially with them. Whatever time and skills a volunteer is able to offer, it is always appreciated by staff and clients alike!”

Dave Finlow has volunteered at Leighton House for several years. He said: “I thought volunteering would be about giving back but it’s actually about receiving, too. I get so much from it and I learn so much from the clients, too.”

Razia Asmar (see pic) is a psychology student at Birmingham University and also volunteers at Headway Birmingham & Solihull. She describes her time volunteering for the charity as “the most rewarding experience”. It has given her opportunities to work with and speak to people with a range of disabilities, increasing her understanding and empathy with them.

She added: “Helping others has always been something I find great joy in. Making a difference in their lives, no matter how big or small it may be, is extremely fulfilling. And both the clients and staff at Headway have been nothing but welcoming. They are a joy to work with and not a day goes by where we aren’t laughing. I would 100% encourage others to volunteer at Headway, especially younger adults. You can truly come to understand how other people live their lives with a disability and realise that they are human just like the rest of us, not people we should treat differently.”

Lily Parsons also volunteers with Headway. She was with the charity as it first formed and has a daughter with a brain injury who attends the Leighton House centre.

She said; “You learn a lot from volunteering and it’s great for me, giving me structure to my week and bringing me immense satisfaction. It’s also a small payback for the help Headway gives my daughter.”

For more information on the many volunteering roles at Headway Birmingham & Solihull or to request an application pack, please email Donna Rowe on personnel@headway-bs.org.uk or call her on 0121 457 7541.

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Photos:

- 1 – Volunteer Dave Finlow** with his reasons for volunteering
- 2 – Volunteer Lily Parsons** with the many benefits of volunteering with Headway
- 3 – Volunteer Razia Asmar (R)** working with our ABI client, Ash (L)

About Headway Birmingham & Solihull

Headway Birmingham & Solihull is a registered charity helping to improve the lives of those affected by brain injury in the local area. Its aim is to promote greater understanding of all aspects of brain injury and provide information, support and services to the person with the acquired brain injury as well as their family and carers, from the hospital stage and throughout the whole brain injury journey.

The charity offers social rehab sessions from its brain injury hubs in Rednal, Moseley and Wylde Green and one-to-one support at home or out in the community for those with brain injury, plus support to the wider family through its Carer & Families Services.

It also has charities shops in Rubery and Great Barr.

For full information, visit www.headway-bs.org.uk .