

Performance Report 2024-25



Improving life after brain injury

1. ABOUT US

We have been delivering services to brain injured people and their families/ carers now for over 35 years and during this time have evolved from having one member of staff to nearly a hundred employees and sixty plus volunteers.

Headway Birmingham & Solihull is the only organisation in our region that provides support for the whole family and for as long as they need us. Our services are aimed to be holistic and transitional, so that people can get all the different types of support they may need, at a time that best suits them. They can move to other services as their needs change and return at any time.

We are affiliated to Headway - the brain injury association but operate as an independent local charity and limited company, providing services across Birmingham & Solihull.

We have constantly battled to get brain injury recognised as a disability in its own right, as social care try to place our users in mental health, learning disability, physical disability and elderly 'labels' and they could be any, all or none of these.

We feel we are now starting to make headway with this.



- **CQC rated GOOD**
- **Working Carer Committed**
- **Working in partnerships with many local organisations**
- **A 'Real Living Wage' employer**
- **Disability Confident Employer**



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



2. GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

In October we bid a sad farewell to our longstanding Chair - David Chater (pictures right), who retired after 25 years with Headway. He has been instrumental in many changes over the years, including the purchase of our Leighton House building. David was also presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by Headway UK.

Richard Langton (our previous Company Secretary) has now taken the helm and looks forward to getting involved, helping building on what has previously been achieved.



We started 2024 with more realistic targets for placements and hours sold, having now come to the conclusion that we are unlikely to meet our pre-COVID goals. This is due to the time taken in getting referrals allocated to Social Workers, resulting in only a few starting each month, despite having the highest number of referrals ever during the year. We are also successful in 'moving people on', which consequently means we consistently finish as many placements as we start each month, making it hard to increase the numbers.

Working to these targets and with a very tight budget, we actually managed to finish the year end with a small surplus for the first time since COVID. This will very much go towards building back up our now depleted reserves.

We continued to work with Birmingham City Council on the reform of day services and by the year end had submitted our tender for the new framework. We now await news of our bid and what the future will look like.

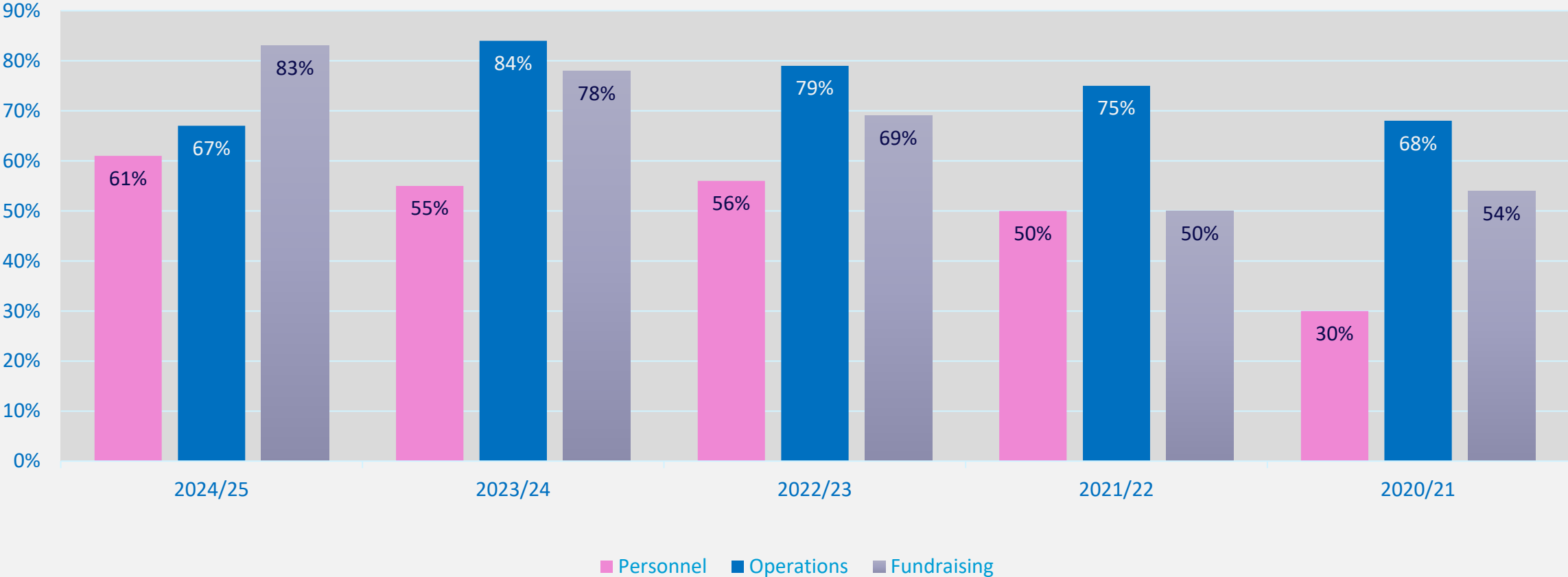


- **Good governance in line with the Charity Governance Code**
- **A strong board of Trustees with a range of skills and diversity**
- **Strong leadership and management**
- **A charity built on good ethics**
- **Working with local organisations and partners collaboratively**

TARGETS OVER 5 YEARS

5 Year Comparison

Note: A drop in achievement is not necessarily indicative of failure. It may reflect changes and trends, and can give us evidence of where targets may no longer be achievable for one reason or another, or review /update is required



KEY DATA

Headway Birmingham & Solihull has a strong reputation for delivering a wide range of services that make a real difference to people’s lives. These have been specifically designed to address the specific complex needs that people with acquired brain injury may have to deal with. We work collaboratively with others, both in the public and not for profit sectors, to ensure those in our community get the best possible range of advice and support to address these individual needs.

Total number of
Users of all our
services:

2,037

89% of all users
reported that they had made
an improvement in at least
one of their goal areas
through Headway’s support

We received
POSITIVE Feedback
from over

125
Users

115

People employed across the year

85

People volunteered across the year

37%

of all clients
accessing our services were
from a BAME background

Over £503k extra
income awarded to families

100%

success rate at Tribunal

62%
of people accessing
our services were
female

38%
were male

1,059

Facebook Followers

84 changes &
improvements made
following user
suggestions/requests

Users said that
Headway had made
a big difference

91%

3. OPERATIONS

There has been a significant amount of time spent around the area of Finance this year due to increased high debtors list and making many changes to adjust to cost of living issues.

Following a great deal of hard work, the team managed to reduce the debtors by more than half by year end.

The external auditors complimented the Finance team on improving their systems and level of debtors/creditors.

All our financial systems are now much tighter and we received positive feedback from our auditors acknowledging many improvements.

We were not successful in renting out any of our 'out of hours' spaces, but will continue to push this next year.

- ❖ A great effort from the Finance team to reduce our debtors which improved by 65%
- ❖ Updated all invoicing procedures to coincide and be easier to produce
- ❖ Many new systems introduced in the shops follow support from Headway UK Head of Retail
- ❖ The garage at LH has been spray insulated so that it can be used as a dry storage area for the shop stock
- ❖ Work started on converting a store room to a new disabled friendly toilet upstairs at Sutton House
- ❖ A sit on mower was purchased for our caretaker to help limit the physical work involved
- ❖ We have a new smoking shelter for clients at Leighton House
- ❖ The roof was repaired at Sutton House
- ❖ All staff received new Cyber training



We welcomed 7 companies for 'one-off' day corporate volunteering days over the year, involving more than 60 people working on a variety of projects.

One team came and erected a much needed lean-to area at our Rubery shop, whilst other teams included working for the day on improving our green spaces and decoration jobs.

Many thanks to these groups for providing invaluable support to Headway.

4. HEADWAY CHARITY SHOPS

Our charity shops have always given us a much-needed boost of unrestricted income towards the running of services. However, this year for the first time ever, we have not managed to make a profit at all from the shops and ended the year just about breaking even overall.

While there are other aspects that are important to us, such as getting the Headway name out in the community and providing a great provision for our clients to be able to volunteer in our shops, we cannot take the risk of the shops 'costing the charity' money to run.

It is therefore, with a sad heart, that we had to make the hard decision to close one of our two shops in Great Barr and combine them. We started work on this at the year end and plan to open the new refurbished shop in 2025.

All of our shop staff and volunteers have worked extremely hard this year, and any closure is by no means any reflection on the great work they do. We hope everyone continues to donate to our shops.

- ❖ We introduced many new systems across the year to try and improve the spending at the shops and increase footfall
- ❖ Staff created many great window displays to represent different seasons and events
- ❖ 4 brain injured clients volunteered in our shops across the year
- ❖ Gift Aid improved slightly, but looking at introducing new 'sign up' system later in the year
- ❖ We saw an increase in the number of shop volunteers this year



Volunteer: Client Max Loxley

Max, who acquired his brain injury following a tumour in 2011, now volunteers with us twice a week, providing 8 hours of much-needed support in the Rubery shop.

His main responsibilities include checking games, books, CDs and DVDs to ensure we sell items of the highest quality. He also champions Gift Aid, inviting all new donors to sign up whenever possible.

When he's not working hard to support and advocate for Headway, he's keeping staff and customers entertained with his general knowledge quizzes.

Jenni, the shop manager feels that Max benefits greatly from the social inclusion aspect of volunteering. We are a little "work" family at the shop and he's a firm favourite with the customers who always have time to chat to him but if you ask the man himself, he'll tell you that the best part of volunteering is being able to give back to Headway.

5. FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATIONS

Finding suitable trusts and attracting new funders always remains a battle, but despite this we managed to raise over £127k this year, mainly from trusts with there being a rare focus on 'core funding'. As a lot of this was unrestricted funds, this very much helped us plug our gaps and end the year without a deficit.

The Birmingham Community Lottery was launched in 2024 and we raised £901 in the first year.

As well as having two great Skydive days throughout the year, we trialed a Zip Wire event in North Wales. With the transport provided, this proved very successful with over 30 participants.

Our social media presence continued to grow throughout the year, with positive engagement through both Facebook and X (formerly twitter).

- ❖ **Lovely item on BBC Midlands Today about clients at Redpoint climbing centre**
- ❖ **11 press releases issued**
- ❖ **Extended Social Media reach to 1,509 followers on Facebook & 1045 on X (twitter)**
- ❖ **Nearly £111K unrestricted funds raised**
- ❖ **Over £16k raised for restricted projects/ items, through trusts**
- ❖ **40 Trust applications made with a great 45% success rate**
- ❖ **5 fundraising events in the year raising over £25k**
- ❖ **Over £10k raised by local businesses**
- ❖ **Our Grand Raffle raised over £2,500**
- ❖ **£2,400 raised by individual fundraisers – mainly Louise Fisher**



- **As Charity of the Year for Rothley Law – we received £12k unrestricted income; 5 volunteers; 2 talks to carers groups and a £2k donation from their partners, Rathbones**
- **We were nominated for a donation from the Cadbury Foundation.**
- **We raised the total cost of installing a new disabled WC upstairs at SH**
- **Wheel'n'Walk in year 2 raised £3,600 and provided a great opportunities for our users**
- **Looking to increase our social media presence and platforms over the next year.**

6. WORKING FOR HEADWAY

Having a Personnel Manager in post for the last year has already made a big difference. We now have a team that is developing well as a separate department, rather than being reliant on the CEO.

Already we have much improved procedures and the monitoring of training is far better, as well as attendance at training. Many new training courses have been introduced as well as refreshers and an annual programme of booked training.

Recruitment showed great improvement and by the end of year we had filled all vacancies. The amount of volunteer enquiries also massively improved and we introduced new 'taster days' which worked well.

- ❖ 90% of our staff have been employed with us for over 2 years
- ❖ We had 79% of people attend interviews -36% last year
- ❖ We filled 90% of vacancies on first attempt
- ❖ 92% of staff completed all induction training within 6 months
- ❖ 58% of staff from minority ethnic groups
- ❖ 6 new posts created in year
- ❖ 9 people progressed within the charity
- ❖ 90% attendance rate on mandatory training days
- ❖ Average staff attendance at 97%
- ❖ 66% staff got new job qualification
- ❖ 25 new volunteers – 85 in the year
- ❖ 52% of volunteers have been with us for over 2 years
- ❖ All required staff received the new Autism training



- Monthly Staff/Volunteer News re-introduced
- We became Dyslexia Champions and Age Friendly Organisation
- We were able to maintain the Real Living Wage – despite big increase and extra employer NI costs imposed
- New HR Legal Service provider taken on this year
- New Youmanage HR database platform introduced and currently migrating all data
- New Teambuilding day held at outside venue, which was attended by 72% of all staff
- 27 policy updates

MY STORY: VOLUNTEER Lisa Richards

My name is Lisa Richards and I worked for Headway nearly 12 years ago looking after the Finances and Accounts. A few years on I decided I wanted to do some voluntary work so returned one day a week to Headway in 2023.

It was wonderful to come back as some of the staff I worked with were still there and both old and new staff made me feel very welcome.

Initially I started off helping Julie, the Fundraising Manager, organising various events such as the Easter Fun Run, Christmas Raffle and Tandem Skydive. We also set up a Zip Wire day this year, which was great fun and went really well. I am passionate about my voluntary work and love being involved in raising valuable funds for such a worthy charity. In fact so much so, that I persuaded many work colleagues to jump out of a plane!!!



After 12 months volunteering, I expressed an interest in working directly with the clients and so I now also help out in the Leighton House Hub.

Without a doubt Headway is my favourite day of the week. All the staff are so friendly, kind and welcoming and I am proud to volunteer for a charity that works tirelessly to make such a difference.

The clients tell me that Headway is invaluable to them with the support they receive from amazing staff.

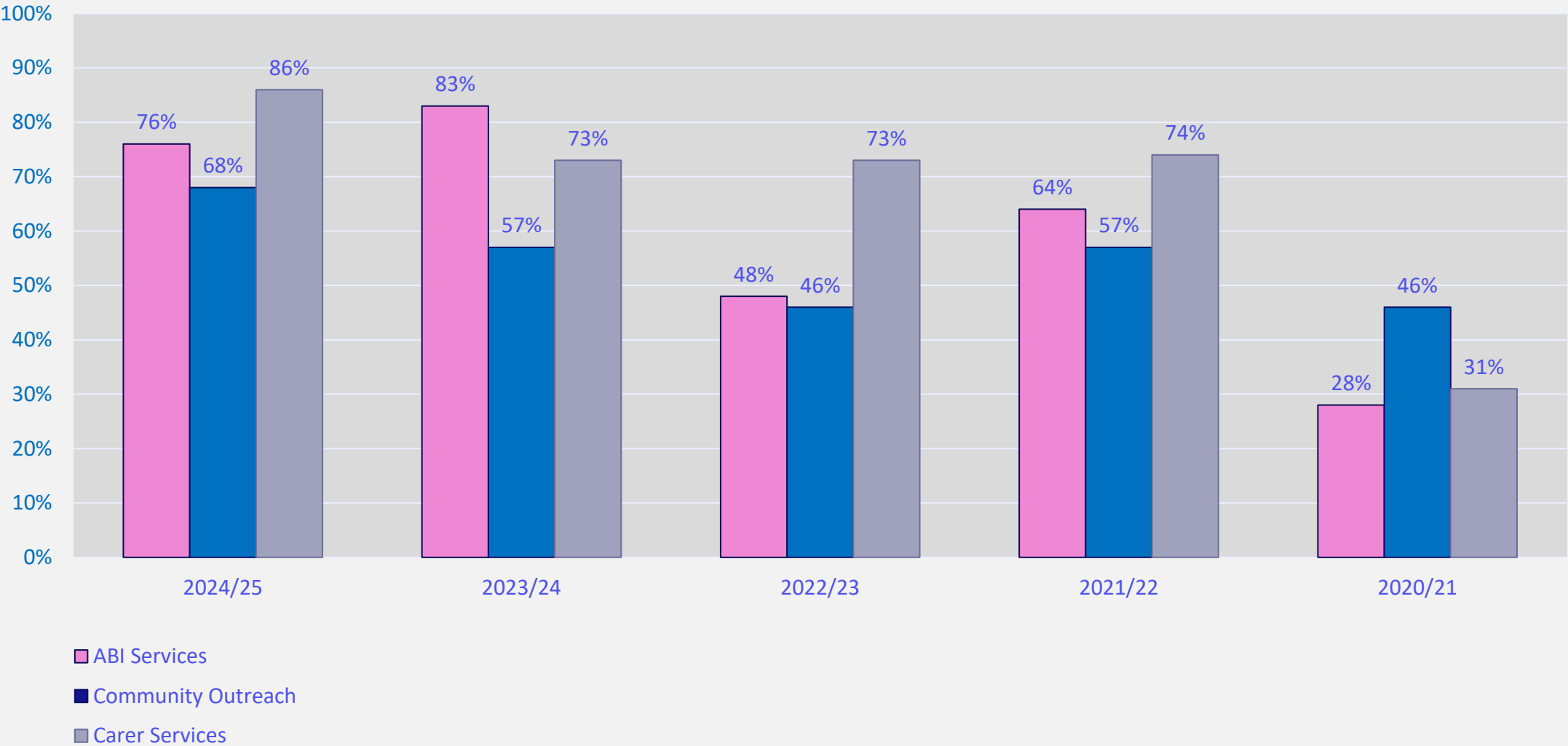
My experience at Headway is amazing and I find it incredibly rewarding when we organise an event that brings in much needed funds or see small differences such as improvement in speech.





SERVICES

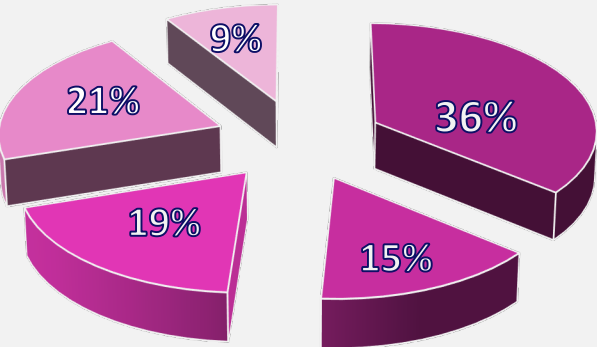
ALL SERVICES - TARGETS OVER 5 YEARS



7. DAY PROGRAMMES FOR PEOPLE WITH ABI

Males were 1.5 times more likely than females to be admitted to a UK hospital for a head injury in last 2 years

Activities
Delivered



- BI Sessions
- Education & IT
- Social & Wellbeing
- Access to Leisure
- Other

Despite new referrals taking a long time to be allocated a Social Worker, we still managed to start as many new people as we finished, thus maintaining our budget places of 280. We continued to receive a high number of new referrals across the year, but we only got 36 of these started due to how long the allocation/funding is taking and so still unable to increase the targets.

The therapies were now in their second year and although we struggled with recruitment to begin with, we now have a good team in place. We made the decision to move from placements specifically for therapies and wellbeing and set up a new model. This included introducing ‘clinics’ – one being the Therapy Clinic. This means that ALL our day service users can access the Physiotherapist or SALT as part of the service. The clinic will offer a full therapy assessment and if needed, follow up sessions. Once a treatment plan is in place this then become part of a client’s daily programme. This has proved a far better model, and we look forward to Year 3. The Wellbeing has expanded also and is now open to all programmes at every Hub.



- 192 clients used ABI services in the year – 44 new
- 19% of users finished in the service
- 359 total placements taken in year – current 292
- 114 new referrals – 32% became active
- 11% from Solihull & 14% self funding
- 43 User forums with 157 suggestions
- 42 new activity sessions across the year
- 15 different trips/outings
- 659 ABI specialist sessions delivered
- 33 vocational sessions
- 10 different sporting activities in the programmes
- 128 one-to-one key-working sessions given

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE

- 25% of placements moved on
- 59% fully achieved one of their goals
- 2% of users accessed a new outside interest
- 98% showed some improvement in the brain injury deficits
- 51 reduced their risk grading
- 21 started a new interest with HBS support
- 1 returned to work and 2 supported to volunteer
- 2 completed their travel training course
- 22% referred to other services
- 5 people transitioned across to another programme
- 32 people attended the Therapy clinics and then received sessions



- A client who took part in the Vocational programme has successfully started her own online arts and craft business with help from the staff. She had a devastating TBI and when she first attended, she was a wheelchair user who could not verbally communicate! Over the last 3 years we have supported her to go back to college, learn to drive and start her own small online business.
- Two clients have really opened up about their mental health journey, one speaking about a suicide attempt and the other about time he spent in a mental health facility. These clients have not been this open about their mental health journey before and encouraged others to talk.
- A Therapy client receiving much needed Physio, has made good progress and was able to stand for a minute unaided. As a result of this improved strength and mobility the client has secured a place at a supported living accommodation.
- A client who mobilises using a wheelchair full time is trying a new activity - Rock Climbing. He did remarkably well physically and cognitively and as a result, appeared on Midland's Today!
- A client receiving Physio has thanked HBS staff for helping him in a way the NHS have not. His wife said they wish they had extra funds to continue working with us.
- Clients visited Victoria School once a month and supported children with their reading. One client grew in confidence enough to sit and read to another client, something he hasn't done on previous visits.

MY STORY – by James Mallins

I was born in Bartley Green in Birmingham in 1973. Despite my parents divorcing I enjoyed a good upbringing and happy childhood.

Although I turned up at school my motivation was always to do sports. My love of sport continued after school and playing rugby with my father in the same team was one of my happiest moments of my life which I remember with pride.

My first job was a swimming lifeguard at Birmingham University. I then moved on to be a postman delivering letters and parcels in Northfield. I also had time working at Land Rover in Solihull.

So, what happened.....I enjoyed dance music and attending raves. It was at this point that I started using ecstasy. It was too easy, I had money and thought I was functioning really well. The truth was I was in denial, becoming isolated from my friends and family. I even missed my sister's wedding. I was an addict. I used cannabis, LSD, cocaine and even sniffed glue. My life had fallen apart and I ended up in prison for theft.

When I was released I went into rehab and lived in a youth hostel. It was whilst living in Derby I met other addicts and started using again. On the day of my initial brain injury I went into town to a shopping centre with so-called friends. The reality was that we were just addicts using one another. It was on this day that I was passed what I thought was a spliff of cannabis. This turned out to be Black Mamba, sometimes referred to as the zombie drug, and is highly dangerous. Having taken just one drag I became disorientated and fell the entire length of an escalator, receiving catastrophic injuries to my head, including internal bleeding on the brain. My mother was advised that I would be lucky if I made it through the next 48 hours.

Having survived, I spent a significant amount of time in hospitals across the East and West Midlands, finally moving to Moseley Hall Hospital for rehabilitation. All was not well, the plate in my head had to be removed because of an infection and then be replaced at a later date.

As a consequence, I now have a left sided deficit affecting both my arm and leg. I also developed epilepsy and I am now prone to seizures. Moseley Hall Hospital introduced me to Headway and that's when things started to improve. When I first arrived at Headway I had no idea what to expect. I constantly felt tired at first, lonely and anxious.

Happily, I was able to respond to the help and support provided by Headway which meant I came out of my shell. I was socialising and meeting new friends. They helped me improve my life and outlook. I still have dark days, but Headway are always there for me.

I am now able to enjoy many offsite activities such as pool, bowling, indoor rock climbing and going to the gym once a week. The onsite sessions have helped me come to terms with my injury and its impact, developing new skills and exercises to help my development. It is a great source of pleasure and pride that I am now a volunteer worker in the Headway Charity shop.

HEADWAY SAVED ME!



SOME FEEDBACK FROM OUR USERS



"My confidence has improved since starting HBS- I get amazing opportunities, and I am very thankful for the level of care respect and teaching from all of the staff. Thank you"

"Headway is the best for Brain Injury ... and long may it continue"

"I thoroughly enjoy the presence of others for their friendship and banter - it does bring a smile of laughter from the group to make light of what we are here for"

"I really enjoy my time at Headway and I have gained more confidence, if I have any problems I feel I can talk to staff. I have made a lot of friends here and we discuss a lot of things that we perhaps are not comfortable talking about to people who don't understand brain injury".

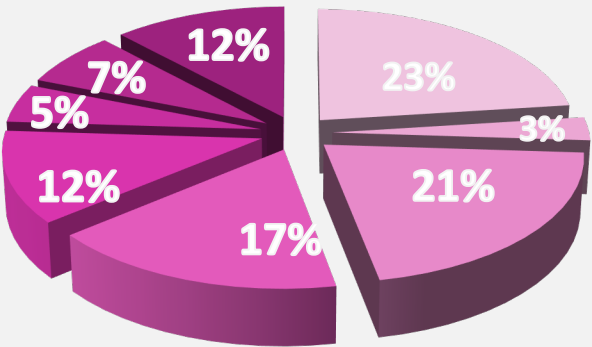
"Keep up the good work, you are my 'lifeline, my friend and my reason for getting up each day"

"Headway have been really supportive since my stroke and understand my brain injury"

8. FAMILY & CARER SERVICES

70% of carers have had to change their life goals because of brain injury

Help that families have received



- Finance/benefits
- Addictions/health/MH
- Understanding BI
- Emotional Support
- Accessing other services
- Housing issues
- Cultural/Language
- Wellbeing

The team worked hard to meet all the new targets set by the Carers Hub and had to allocate more time for Carer Assessments.

Our new partnerships continued to strengthen, e.g. Birmingham Disability Resource Centre and The Circle. We hope to develop these going forwards.

We also extended the hours of Hospital Link Work this year. This doubled our workers for the QE and also meant we are now covering all of the other hospitals across Birmingham and Solihull, with regular visits and ward walks.

The team struggled throughout the year with varying absences due to sickness and filling vacancies, but seem to more on track by the year end.



- 72 new carers on Carers Register
- 14 talks and displays in the community
- 1,421 users supported in the year
- 456 people supported at hospital stages
- 526 families received support through our helpline
- 3rd year of Henry Smith funding towards running the service has met the required targets
- Our specialist couples counselling thrived and 39 families received the service
- 19 cases put forward for HUK Emergency Fund

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE

- 19 Carer events and support groups
- 64 referrals to other HBS services
- 39 had counselling – 84 referrals
- 158 new referrals to support services
- 261 total people received 1 to 1 support across the year
- 139 cases of financial support – 1 to 1
- 31 benefit appeals 80% won
- £503k of extra income won for families
- 100% success at 9 Tribunals where we appealed benefits awarded
- 43% of claims made by Fast Track got a higher benefit awarded
- 93 families given outreach support at hospital stage
- 46 families given solicitor information
- 35 Carer Assessments with 26 having Wellbeing Vouchers
- 33 referrals to Hub Partners



- ❖ A Carer was unable to support the brain injured person due to own difficulties, but with HBS support was given housing through a housing allocation scheme to help the brain injured person become more independent.
- ❖ Despite several PIP rejections, HBS supported the client through to tribunal stage. He was then successfully awarded PIP daily living from that date and a backdated payment.
- ❖ A client left hospital with no discharge plan, so Headway stepped in to support them. Many referrals were made on their behalf. Support is now in place from GP, medication delivery organised, hospital notified of the needs they overlooked, district nurses have provided update, OT arranged and physio appointment booked. None of this would have been done without the support and actions of the Headway Worker.
- ❖ A client was successfully supported to get Headway UK Emergency funding whilst in the QE Hosp and feedback given from the family whilst at acute stage - stating that they wouldn't have known what to do, if it wasn't for the Link Worker support during the initial trauma.
- ❖ Practical and emotional was support given to carer/next of kin linking on from hospital, which helped her understand more about ABI as well as putting her in touch with solicitors, for legal assistance, power of attorney, deputyship queries and much more.

My Story - Carer Hemant Patel

Headway Birmingham & Solihull have supported me from the acute stage right through to now and are still supporting me, my wife Varsha and also my children and extended family. My wife had a bleed to the brain during her sleep and it was completely unpredicted, as she had no existing medical conditions. She was also pregnant at the time with our second child. My wife Varsha was admitted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where I met with the Headway Link Worker (HLW) who told me about Headway B&S and also the support they offer. The HLW gave me a tremendous amount of emotional support at a much-needed stage, which was a huge input to us at that time. After discharge I was allocated a Headway Family Support Worker who has been supporting us throughout our whole journey from our child being born at 27 weeks, with my wife still at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and recovering. It was the most difficult time for me, the children, my parents and also Varsha's parents. The support that I have received is priceless and I wouldn't have been able to get through any of this had it not been due to the support at Headway Birmingham & Solihull. I have accessed solicitor family information sessions, Services for All activities including my family and also information days at The Circle with Headway Birmingham & Solihull. I attend the Carer Support Groups which has been exceptionally helpful around carer support.

The other carers who attend also give me a wealth of information that I would not have had access to had I not attended. Insert from Hem's feedback email: Whenever I have had a situation with Varsha (and there have been a few) I have turned to my Headway FSW who has always reassured me and given me great advice, supporting me through so many really challenging times. Me and Varsha were talking and saying that nowadays we only hear about things when they go wrong and people don't tend to talk about what has gone right, so I wanted to send this email and personally thank you for the massive parts you have played in Varsha's recovery journey. Headway has supported us through so much from advice and guidance, mental health support and encouraging me to reach out and join in at groups and Headway days out (which I look forward to now). I would truly be lost without this especially regarding all the support with PIP forms and carers allowance etc. Having Headway in our corner has helped immensely, you will never know how much we appreciate you for everything you have done! We are truly blessed to have such people in our lives helping my family on its recovery journey and that's something I will never forget!!! Me and V have received so much support from our FSW and Headway that has made a meaningful difference to our family that we decided when things get better and the kids are a little older we would like to give back and do some voluntary work for Headway.



SOME FEEDBACK FROM OUR USERS



"The Family Funday 2024 was lovely, thanks to all the staff and volunteers for a fantastic day and thank you so much for the support you are giving us xx".

"My partner has been awarded enhanced mobility and living, he will get it back dated from March, he is over the moon, and from us both, thank you so much— we are so grateful for your help and support".

"Firstly, thank you so much for your phone call last week and the follow up email. For the first time in six months I felt slightly less alone and that was solely due to your kindness and knowledge. I am so very grateful to you."

"I feel so much better having spoken with you and your name is etched on my heart".

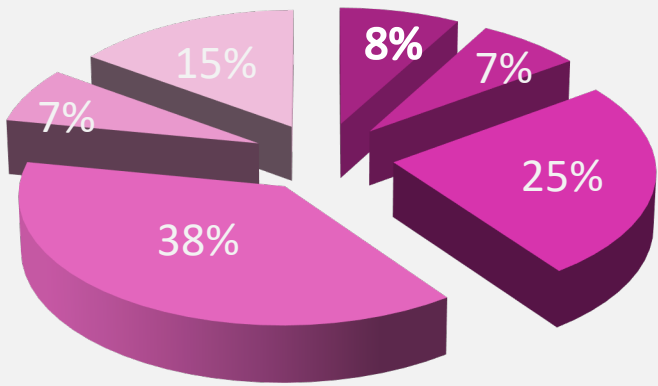
"I would not have found my way through all this if I had not had the support of Headway, thank you so much".

9. COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES

EVERY 4 MINUTES

Someone in the UK is admitted to hospital with a HEAD INJURY

Support type given



- Tasks in independent living/ home
- College/ volunteering/work
- Wellbeing/ physical activity
- Community & social activities
- Support to access appointments
- Finance support

We have continued to maintain the Community Outreach hours at around the 600 sold, throughout the year. By the year end we had filled all the positions to fully cover all hours and had some more waiting. We still have a big waiting list of referrals yet to be assessed due to time pressures and how long it takes to get them allocated to social workers.

We see many more client referrals now coming from Case Managers and self funding. Birmingham makes up about 72% of users funded.

We have had to re-instate the ‘floater’ post to cover holidays, despite this not being paid anywhere. We also saw the departure of one of our Supervisors during the year, but have appointed one of our Support Workers to the post.

The team work much better together now and have regular meetings and coaching sessions, as well as attending team building events.

We hope to move some of the hours into Day Places later in the year, as part of the new Framework.



- 20 new sources of referral and a total of 145 referrals
- 122 active clients across the year - 27 new starters
- 28 Support Workers delivering the service
- Weekly communications bulletin to all staff
- All staff attend at least 2 out of 4 quarterly meetings
- 100% of staff had a practice observations completed
- 53% of staff had spot checks
- 218 coaching session attendances
- 75% of staff maintained – turnover reduced
- 63 suggestions from users followed up
- 3 informal complaints vs 15 positive feedback
- 10 safeguarding issues raised by workers

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE

- 92% of clients with funding, got their (PA) Personal Assistant within 2 weeks
- 100% of those who requested it, were allocated a new PA
- 119 different activities across the year
- 92% of clients attended reviews
- 90% reported that they achieved a goal
- 13% asked for more hours
- 82% accessed a new social/wellbeing activity
- 58% of clients were supported to improve their financial situation/tasks
- 33% were helped to access medical appointments and support
- 4 people became members of our SFA
- 5 people supported with volunteering
- 11 had travel training
- 1 supported into paid work
- 15 multi-disciplinary team reviews



- Client A improved reasoning & strategy techniques as well as the consequences of chess moves with his PA
- Client B supported to get a huge refund on his utility bill
- Client C hadn't been to Birmingham City Centre for over 10 years when he went with his PA. He loved it!!
- Client D after having a stroke, has made massive improvements with her PA and is now able to take more care of her children as a result of Headway support
- Client E and his Case Manager are really pleased with his 2 PAs and requested more hours

My Story – Graham Leighton

Graham grew up in Olton with his younger sister, Janet. He left school at 14 and got a job at British Motor Corporation, later British Leyland, and Tata Steel, where he worked as a car mechanic in motor vehicle design. He worked with Alec Isingonis who designed the Morris Minor, and the Mini. John Cooper modified the A Series engine and fitted more powerful disc brakes to improve performance. Graham's team later looked into designing the new British Mini in 1973/4, while he was also studying.

Graham had a road traffic collision on 22 February 1976, at the age of 19. His friend was driving and hit a pot hole, causing them to crash into a tree, he was killed outright and Graham sustained a brain injury. He was in a coma for 6 months and when he awoke, received therapy at RAF Chesington Rehabilitation Unit. While at RAF Chessington, they had a Standard Vanguard engine which didn't work. It wouldn't turn over, so Graham dismantled and reassembled it correctly. The technicians were very impressed with his knowledge, and he enjoyed his time there. He then returned to his Motor Vehicle course, but struggled to achieve his previous high marks. So went to work for a couple of years at Tame Road Motors in Aston, doing body work repairs, moving on to work at Aston Packaging for 12 years until he retired in 1993. Graham continued to make progress despite the doctors saying he would never walk or talk again, but "they always give the worst case scenario".

His dad, Stafford Leighton, was instrumental in setting up Headway in the West Midlands and Leighton House is named after him. He encouraged Graham to join Solihull 18+, part of a nationwide social club, to meet people his own age. They asked him to be a host to welcome newcomers because he was good at talking to people. Graham says he is 'very loquacious'.

Graham has two sessions a week – one day he uses to help him get out and about in the community, completing his tasks to maintain independence and attend appointments etc. and on the other day he likes to socialise in the community. He loves listening to music and has a huge record collection, largely from the 50s and 60s, his favourite music era. His PA said "We listen to music, play Scrabble and do quizzes, though we don't often get past the first few questions as Graham loves to talk about each answer in detail. He can talk at length on any topic and his general knowledge is excellent. I have learnt a lot!". He also has a great sense of humour, though gets depressed and frustrated about his lack of independence, especially having to rely on his sister to help him manage his finances.

Graham is very friendly and sociable, and enjoys going out locally, where everybody knows him, as he says he is notorious, and always bumps into someone he knows when he's out and about. He is very proud of his connection to Headway and it is very important to him. He helps raise money for Headway by keeping collection boxes in two of his local pubs and saves any spare change he has.



SOME FEEDBACK FROM OUR USERS



"I am treated as an individual, my concerns are listened to, she helps deal with my issues ASAP, with passion and respect"

"The support I receive from my PA, is someone to interact with. Someone to improve my quality of life."

"Seeing someone that you can chat with and having company when your feeling low really helps following my brain injury."

"I am able to do things out and about that I would not be able to do without my PA, such as my sports and volunteering at the shop."

"It is good having someone I can communicate with and who listens to me and helps me have a much better life."

"I do not know how I would cope without Headway, it means I can have a day to myself each week, knowing my brain injured husband is going out and enjoying himself with someone who I trust to keep him safe"

10. SERVICES FOR ALL (SFA)

There were 143,446 UK hospital admissions for stroke in 2023-24. That equates to one every four minutes



Services For All is aimed at every person who is impacted by the brain injury. Whilst it is facilitated by a Headway staff member, we do not take responsibility for the people who attend. Therefore, brain injured people need to attend with family or their PAs if they need support.

SFA provides the opportunity for all our community to come together at different times of the day and weekends. It helps people to form friendships and look after their mental and physical health.

We provide a full programme to include sports, outdoor activities, events, lunch clubs, hobbies and much more, all at the request of the users. We delivered nearly 20 activities/events across last year.

We are now in our last year of Lottery funding, but plan to continue this for the long term, as we now have over 69 family members.



Membership is FREE and we offered a monthly timetable of activities that includes up to 7 activities each month and some great 'one off' events.

- **Over 850 participations across last year**
- **98 Sessions of Wellbeing to include – mental wellbeing, health, fitness, sports, online and outdoor events**

9. THANK YOU TO OUR COMMISSIONERS & FUNDERS

Birmingham City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Worcestershire City Council

Birmingham Forward Carers, Birmingham Disability Resource Centre
BVSC, Ageing Better

Higgs PLC Solicitors, CFG Law, Slater & Gordon, Express Solicitors, Thompsons Solicitors, Irwin Mitchell

The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities
The National Lottery Community Fund – Building Better Connections Fund

The Henry Smith Charity
The Everson Trust
Sport England, National Grid, Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire



The
Henry Smith
Charity



HIGGS

LLP + Slater
Gordon
Lawyers

THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS
STANDING UP FOR YOU

CFG
more than law

EXPRESS
SOLICITORS
Lawyers helping injured people



There are too many individuals, corporate sponsors, as well as Trusts who supported us during the year, to list here. But a huge 'thank you' to everyone who fundraised/donated to us during the year.

We really appreciate the support we get, as this helps us immensely to maintain and develop our core services that have no means of generating income.

We also work collaboratively with other charities and local organisations, as well as the local authorities. We thank you all for your support and guidance.

To everyone who supported us during the year



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