



Headway Essex News

Summer 2020



PRU RIDE LONDON

The first ever virtual edition of Prudential RideLondon is going ahead this year, find out how you can be a part of history

INSIDE

VIRTUAL COLOUR5K

We hosted our first virtual fundraiser. Learn how the community came together during a difficult time for charities. (Page 6)



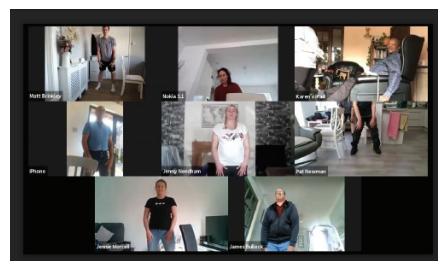
STUART'S STORY

Read the story of Stuart James, a man who went from business owner to working for the Ambulance service after having a stroke. (Page 8)



VIRTUAL SESSIONS

Headway Essex centres have been hard at work keeping our service users connected during this challenging time but how? (Page 4)



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About Headway Essex

H Headway Essex is an independent charity, which provides support to people living with acquired brain injury (ABI) and their families in Essex. We support around 500 people a year across Essex, in the community and at our day centres.

As a charity, our mission is to ensure that everyone in Essex living with an acquired brain injury can live a fulfilling life and families and carers are better able to cope within their caring roles.

Our two day centres in Colchester & Benfleet, offer

a specialist person-centred approach to rehabilitate, educate, inform and support each client with their own personal recovery journey. In the community we provide emotional and practical support to address health and social issues faced by our clients and their families, as a result of brain injury; visiting clients in hospital, in their homes, providing telephone support, and support group meetings across all localities in Essex.

Registered Charity Number: 1008807

Patron: David Tennant

Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in England and Wales No. 2674755

CEO'S MESSAGE FROM JOANNA WRIGHT

When I wrote my last message for the January Newsletter, nobody could have envisaged that the world would have changed so quickly in just two months.

We were looking forward to 2020, with so much potential for developing our service provision, only to be knocked sideways by the impact of a global pandemic.

Coronavirus has made life feel very different for everyone, but we have been determined that it will not stop us in our tracks, knowing our support is needed more than ever during this crisis.

I am so proud of how the team have rallied to respond and adapt to new ways of working throughout this period. As soon as we knew our service provision would be impacted, we started to research and plan the best way to continue to provide our care and support and we were quickly running virtual day services, virtual support groups and making regular welfare calls to support our clients. I am so grateful to all our staff who have adapted quickly to working remotely to ensure we can continue to support our clients with their health, wellbeing and development needs.



The restrictions not only impacted on how we deliver our services, but also on our income sources. Fundraising events have had to be cancelled, and this and other income streams has had a significant impact on the funding needed to run the charity. As a result, we have launched an Urgent Appeal supported by our Patron, David Tennant. If you are able to support us in any way, the link is: www.headwayessex.org.uk/i-want-to-help/urgent-appeal/

So now as restrictions start to be lifted we are looking at what the 'new normal' will be for Headway Essex. Our immediate focus will be on how we can make our premises COVID secure so that we can start to open up our day centres for activities again.

There is much to be optimistic about; amidst the crisis we have at last completed the purchase of the Headway Centre which will help ensure the future sustainability of Headway Essex.

I am also very excited to announce that we have recruited Stella Kerins as Head of Brain Injury Services, and Stella is keen to build on the strong foundations to ensure our service continues to grow and adapt to support the needs of our service users.

So the potential to grow and develop the service is very much still present, and one thing this crisis has taught us is that we have a strong and resilient team who have learnt new ways of working that will only enhance the service provision into the future.

Joanna Wright
Chief Executive, Headway Essex

URGENT APPEAL

Support Headway Essex by texting us a donation
of your choosing

TEXT '**HEADWAYESSEX**' FOLLOWED BY THE AMOUNT YOU WISH TO DONATE TO
'**70450**'

EXAMPLE: TO DONATE £5, TEXT '**HEADWAYESSEX 5**'

TEXTS COST THE AMOUNT YOU DONATE PLUS ONE STANDARD RATE MESSAGE

Service News

North and Mid Essex News

Along with our colleagues in South and West Essex, the team are supporting our service users remotely and we are all very busy with telephone support calls and virtual Zoom sessions.

We continue to run the fitness sessions remotely with Matt Brinkley, along with brain injury education, quizzes and many other activities which have been well received by clients and carers.

Whilst we continue to receive incoming referrals to the organisation, we have temporarily adopted telephone assessments rather than the usual face to face, but we hope that we will be in a position to do face to face assessments again soon.

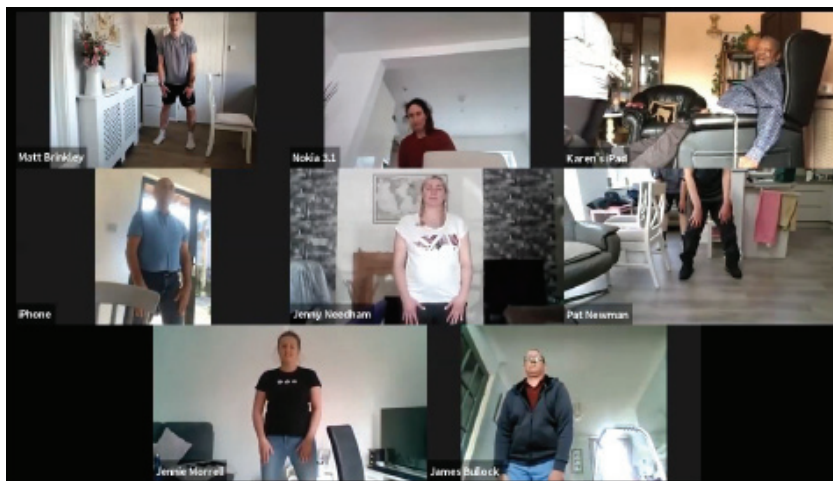
We have also been extremely busy behind the scenes at the Headway Centre. We have taken the opportunity whilst in lockdown to complete some maintenance projects, and the centre has now been redecorated both inside and out.

Although we are unsure when the Headway Centre will reopen, we are working hard to put measures in place to ensure the safety of clients, staff and volunteers once we do reopen. When we eventually reopen, things will look a little different, these include socially distance tables in the activity rooms and offices, with perspex divider screens, personal protective equipment and socially distancing signs on the floor, amongst other measures.

The gardens are being brought back to life by volunteers, and after a period of being overgrown and run down are now beginning to look healthy and welcoming.

I would like to thank all our service users, staff and volunteers for their continued support through this tough period.

Angie
Mid and North Service Manager



South and West Essex News

A lot has changed over the last 5 months, who would have thought we would be running our service remotely, via a Virtual Hub? However, as changes progressed faster than any of us could have anticipated, we have learnt that you have to embrace change, go with it and see where it takes you.

Thankfully, our Virtual Hub has proved to be a success. Along with our colleagues covering North and Mid Essex, we have been offering support remotely via telephone and Zoom. The team have always been at the end of the phone to offer words of encouragement, support and advice.

Of course this is not just down to the team, this is down to our clients attending and embracing our Virtual Hub. It has allowed people from different areas of Essex to attend groups they may not have been able to travel to in the past, and for some attending a virtual group suits their needs better. Because of this we know that a Virtual Hub has a future, and something that will remain part of our service, even when we are back at our Hub running Face to Face sessions. We see a virtual Hub as an extension of our Service, reaching individuals that otherwise may not be able to attend.

I know myself and the team feel privileged to be part of a dynamic and flexible service that has changed with the world around us, of course we are all looking forward to getting back to some sort of normality, but in the meantime we are still here supporting our clients anyway that we can.

Gemma Baines
South & West Essex Service Manager

MEET STELLA KERINS, OUR NEW HEAD OF BRAIN INJURY CARE SERVICES

I started at Headway Essex on the 16th March. Like everyone else in the country, both Headway and I were looking at the national and international situation with COVID-19.

I had a quick tour of the office and then set about learning as much as possible about our services and planning for how we could support service users in what was about to become a full blown lockdown. On Thursday of my first week we took the decision to close the centres for the safety of our service users and staff. At that point we were thinking a possible 8 week period, not the protracted time that we have had to enforce to keep people safe. On Friday, upon leaving the office, I said to Joanna Wright (CEO) that as I had just started I may struggle with having enough work to do during lockdown...how wrong I was.

Our first couple of weeks were spent supporting service users by telephone, researching and piloting virtual platforms so that we could run day centre activities, support groups and carers' groups remotely. Feedback from service users has been really uplifting and recognises the huge amount of work that the teams have put in.

My role has also involved looking at how our services run, reviewing policies, networking with colleagues across Essex in health, social care, voluntary sector and education. The aim of this is to look at how we can develop our services further to meet the needs of people with brain injury in Essex and avoid duplication with other providers.

My motto, borrowed from Michael Jordan is "Don't tell me the sky is the limit when there are footprints on the moon"

I am ambitious for the services and to meet the needs of people with acquired brain injury and their families in Essex. We currently have two models of care in operation. My goal will be to have one model of care with dual centres.

I want to further develop the skills of our amazing team, work with statutory services to fill in the gaps in service provision, develop support of the whole family and work with colleagues across the sector on research to improve the lives of those with acquired brain injury.

Stella Kerins
Head of Brain Injury Services



MESSAGE FROM MATT BRINKLEY



The Headway Essex staff, volunteers, carers and most importantly clients have been fantastic in continuing their weekly exercise & activity classes throughout lockdown. We have achieved this by meeting for virtual group sessions online using the Zoom video meeting software.

The sessions continue to be friendly, fun and focused towards improving wellbeing through exercise. I have been so pleased with the uptake and the effort from everyone participating. Well done Headway Essex!

Matt Brinkley
Brinkley Physical Therapy

Fundraising

News on recent donations and fundraising

OUR FIRST VIRTUAL EVENT IS A HUGE SUCCESS

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we had to make the unfortunate decision to cancel this year's Colour5K, but recognising the support there is out there for this popular event, we decided to take the event virtual, and thus, Headway Essex's Virtual Colour5K was born! The event took place from Wednesday 1st July – Friday 31st July, meaning supporters could enjoy a full month of fun, colour, and community spirit, all whilst supporting brain injury survivors and their families and carers across Essex.

The beauty of the Virtual Colour5K was that it was an inclusive event that anyone could join in with. We challenged our supporters to walk, run, skip or dance 5 kilometres anywhere they liked, around the home, in the garden, or outside as part of a daily exercise routine throughout the month of July. The only rule we set was that everyone should dress up in their MOST colourful attire, the more flamboyant the better, to be in with a chance of winning a prize, courtesy of Inspire Races.



We can't talk about the Virtual Colour5K without mentioning the efforts of two Headway Essex service users who took part despite their injuries and raised a phenomenal amount of funds. Wayne Chivers gained a huge following of supporters with his 'Wayne Walk' and raised an incredible £6,722 by walking to the allotment in his back garden and back again. Tim Rees raised a fantastic £1,450 and holds the record for the most raised in the shortest amount of time. We are so proud of everyone who took part, especially those who overcame their brain injuries and worked so hard to a part of the Virtual Colour5K.

2.6 CHALLENGE

In response to Covid-19, the organisers of the biggest mass-participation sports event across the country came together to challenge people to complete the 2.6 challenge in order to save the UK's charities.

Once again our supporters came out in their masses to support Headway Essex by taking part in activities based around the numbers 2.6 and 26. We witnessed numerous, and very inventive, activities including our supporters baking 26 cakes, powering through 26 sit ups, running 2.6 miles, and singing 26 songs on a virtual open mic night. Through this challenge we raised an amazing £503.

HATS FOR HEADWAY 2020... THIS TIME FROM HOME!

On the 15th May 2020, Headway Essex staff, volunteers, clients and supporters alike celebrated its annual 'Hats for Headway' campaign designed to raise awareness and support for individuals with acquired brain injuries. This year we got on our computers and celebrated from home by hosting our very first hat competition via Zoom; 19 people dug out their favourite hat or got creative and made one, raising £88 for Headway Essex. We awarded Tara, Matt, Jackie and Audrey first place as we couldn't choose between their beautiful homemade hat creations. Thank you to all who participated, we are already looking forward to next year!



Get Involved

What We Have Coming Up In Fundraising

Virtual Prudential RideLondon To Go Ahead This Year

The first ever virtual edition of Prudential RideLondon – the world's greatest festival of cycling – will take place on 15th and 16th August to celebrate cycling and raise funds to help support the UK's most vulnerable.

My Prudential RideLondon is a free fundraising challenge that gives everyone, of all ages and abilities, the opportunity to get on their bikes, scooters, skateboards, trikes, tandems, penny farthings, unicycles – in fact any form of non-motorised wheeled transport!

We're inviting you, your family and friends to choose your wheels, choose your distance and get involved with this challenge to support Headway Essex. You'll find more information, ideas and inspiration, as well as advice on staying safe and cycling responsibly on the road, at myridelondon.co.uk. If you have any questions at all regarding this event then please email our fundraising team at fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk.

Marking the date of our annual Classic Vehicle Show

We sadly have made the difficult decision to cancel this year's Headway Essex Classic Vehicle Show due to the continued risks of COVID-19. However, we will be marking the event date on the 13th September, so please bear with us and keep your eyes peeled on our social media channels to find out more in the upcoming weeks. We are determined to not let this get us down and we are already planning a bigger and better Headway Essex Classic Vehicle Show 2021!

This Year Everyone In Essex Can Enjoy Barleylands

The Fun Walk Trust, organisers of the annual charitable Fun Walk typically held at Barleylands Farm in Billericay, Essex, have announced that they will again be supporting local charities and community groups this year by hosting a virtual walk for the month of September. Everyone here at Headway Essex is delighted with this outcome as, in 2019, the Fun Walk raised £105,000 for local Charities and good causes.

A unique feature of The Fun Walk is their bonus pot, which is donated by generous local businesses and individuals. The bonus pot for 2020 contains £30,000 and will be distributed based on how much sponsorship the charity raises. We are therefore challenging our supporters to either walk 2 or 5K (or both!) across September, all whilst raising money for brain injury survivors and their families and carers. To receive your free Headway Essex T-Shirt and sponsorship form, or if you have any questions, please contact fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk.

The Vintage Hollywood Ball Raises Over £8,000!

Headway Essex's annual black tie event took place on Friday 6th March 2020, just before the lockdown, at the beautiful Stoke by Nayland Hotel, situated near Colchester, on the Essex and Suffolk border. Guests were transported back to the Golden Era of Hollywood and given the star treatment as they arrived on the red carpet by the MC for the night, Robert Needham. After being photographed by the 'paparazzi', they went on to the sparkling reception.

Following a delicious three course meal, there was a fast-paced auction, kindly conducted by Richard Kemsley, where guests bid competitively, and very generously. Auction lots included, an exquisite Waterford wine decanter, premium level corporate hospitality tickets for a Tottenham home game and a stunning oil painting of the 'Stour in Bloom' by emerging artist Olivia English, who had a brain injury in 2015.

The evening concluded with the guests letting their hair down and dancing the night away to the sounds of Frisco Monk, an amazing party band playing disco funk floor-fillers from the 70s and 80s. It was great to see everyone got into the spirit of the evening and had a wonderful time. We are very grateful to our sponsors, Investec Wealth & Investment UK, and to all our volunteers for making this event such a success.

Stuart James' Extraordinary Journey

Stuart James' life was turned upside down when he suffered a Stroke in May 2018. At the time of his stroke he was running his own business offering consultancy and mentoring for business growth in the telecoms industry, following over 25 years in senior management at Orange and O2. Stuart was 51 on the evening of May 2nd 2018 when he had a stroke, here Stuart tells his story;

"I had a small headache around the left temple. I thought I was talking to my partner and said I had a headache, I believed I was talking but my partner could not understand me, as I was having a stroke. I thought I was talking and simply went off to the ambulance, the reality was I had cut out for 20 minutes. I remember seeing the ambulance turn up and the next thing I knew; I was in hospital.

Southend Hospital

The fantastic team at Southend Hospital are known as one of the top stroke hospitals around and fortunately emergency drugs were administered within 1 hour of me suffering the stroke to save as much of my brain as possible.

In hospital, I recognised my family but I couldn't say their names or any words. Within 48 hours, the hospital had me working on speech therapy using pictures like canoe, boat, hills, people, dogs and bridge. A simple test, I knew what they were, in fact all of them but I couldn't find the words to use. I was so frustrated, scared and upset. I spent a month in the hospital, starting again like a child to learn English language. The speech therapy team worked with me for 1 hour a day, they were a brilliant team. Learning to understand words, sentences and finding the right response.

Silly things; I knew I wasn't ok because I didn't know what the words were in front of me. For example, a poster said 'Stroke' but I didn't know what that meant. I was asking for breakfast, but I couldn't use the phrase 'two slices of toast and marmalade', I could only say "Bread".

I realised, I had a lot of work to do myself, to improve my speech and processing skills and my fitness. At the hospital I used a ball in an empty car park to run and kick the ball, back and forward to improve my fitness and co-ordination. I then worked for up to 10 hours a day with Crosswords and BBC News to try and read. I downloaded the best 500 three letter words, then I progressed to four then five letter words. This helped me to string together more than 2 words at a time.

I also looked at all the text messages I sent out over 6 months prior to the Stroke and decided maybe I am trying too hard. I realised I could happily find at least 5 words that I would have texted or returned so I put this plan into place and worked up to 130 words. I tried reading it out, listening to what it sounded like, understanding and then putting it into a short phrase. I



I was asking for breakfast, but I could only say "Bread"

started with things like, every morning at 05.30 to say “Good Morning” to each Nurse as I made a coffee at the start of the day.

Trying To Return To My Old Life

At home, the speech therapy and occupational team saw me daily for the first year. I worked really hard up to 12 hours a day, but over 6 months I realised that there are thousands of words, and new words with slang, that I didn’t know. So I thought, I would go out to business exhibitions, as this was a world I had been familiar with. This was really scary, as each exhibitor was asking questions which I struggled to answer. After a while some business words started flying up and so I decided if I can’t find everything in the ‘world of words’, then let’s start with words I remember within business, this was fantastic and gave me a real positive.

I have always either run my own business or worked as a senior director and so I tried to push myself hard. Unfortunately, I was so fatigued and become frustrated about myself and family and I realised I needed help. So I started to meditate; each day I managed to fit in about 45 minutes a day. This allowed me to carry out my hardest tasks each morning and then meditate again at lunchtime to allow me to delete the cache in my brain and start again in the afternoon, but this was not sustainable, I was still pushing myself too hard and I realised my old business would have to close.

Moving On – Focussing On Ability And Not Disability

Six months after my stroke, the speech therapy team introduced me to Headway Essex. Over 18 months I worked with Headway Essex and Kevin Maloney to help me come to terms with what had happened and to “get me back”.

This involved a lot of 121 sessions talking things through with Kevin and I also took part in the Headway Essex Brain Injury Education and Vocational Group. The help, support and coping skills from Headway Essex took me on a journey to come to terms with what had happened and look at building a new future.

It was a difficult and challenging journey with tears along the way but the empathy and support from Kevin and the team was amazing. As part of the group we watched parts of David Tenant’s ‘Recovery’ and I could relate to the exact scenario of the frustration and anger you feel when you know who you were and what you could do before the injury. It really hit the nail on the head and was very moving to watch, as I knew exactly what his character was experiencing.

So I set about focussing on what I could do. I started to volunteer at The Stroke Association and became a Stroke Ambassador. It was wonderful to speak to others who shared the experience of stroke and to support them to find help. I also contacted the South Essex Community Hub (SECH) to find other companies/charities to volunteer at.

I became a volunteer with Salvation Army helping those that needed help with a CV, recruitment and finding a job. I found

my skills of being a motivator and mentor in my previous business could help people in a 121 situation, or as a group.

SECH also asked me to be a volunteer and speak to other volunteers and help match them with various charity roles. This is fantastic work and allowed me to stretch my brain again and I really enjoyed this.

Silver Linings - A New Chapter

I had to stop volunteering, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so I thought I would offer my help to replenish food shelves at ASDA. It was night work in the freezer – freezing!

After 6 weeks at ASDA, I had an opportunity within NHS Ambulance Trust as an Ambulance Care Assistant, transporting patients. I realised I could make a real difference and use my old skills to motivate and support the patients. After training I was certified and I am now proud to represent the East of England Ambulance Service. I feel I can give back to people and to the ambulance service for saving my life after my stroke.

So far 8 weeks within the field; it’s a tough job, but a fantastic job and every day I am learning new things about life, people, empathy and my old skills are coming back.

My words are still wrong, but I’m honest to others around me and the team assist. This is a new chapter to see what’s next, to help more.

The Future – Every Day Is Wonderful

I keep in touch with Kevin at Headway Essex and I get calls from the Headway Essex team to ensure we are ok and I look forward to seeing them all again when the restrictions are over.

I’m loving my new role helping others, it is fantastic to support people and money isn’t the issue. After a successful interview, on 22nd July I started in fulltime employment as an Apprentice Emergency Medical Technician. So the next chapter is to spend four weeks ‘blue light’ driving training and twelve week’s classroom training. I will then have 12-18 months’ field training as a full Emergency Medical Technician.

Life has improved in other areas too, I now have more conversations with the family which was tough the first few years after the stroke and lovely to get that back again.

I am also providing help via Facebook Groups such as: Brain Injury Suffers / Stroke Survivor UK / Brain Haemorrhage UK/ Headway / Memory Walk Volunteers/ Anxiety UK

My advice to others with acquired brain injury is. “Every Day wake up, open your eyes and see the colours, pictures, smell, listen and then touch. Then target the hardest tasks to do before you will get tired, but don’t worry if you don’t achieve everything, you can start again..... every day is wonderful”

Thank You

To everyone who donated to our Urgent Covid-19 Appeal, we cannot explain to you how much we value your help. Thanks to your contributions, we have raised £7,823. This money is being used to keep our services running at a time when our clients need us more than ever. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Thank you to our Hive members and regular donors. Whether you have been supporting us for a while or you have recently joined us, your support is greatly appreciated by all of us here at Headway Essex.

Thank you to everyone who has donated anonymously, or online through Facebook, eBay, PayPal, Just Giving and Virgin Money Giving. Although we cannot thank you individually, we are very grateful for your support.

Thank you to The Big Yellow Self Storage Company who kindly donate valuable storage space to Headway Essex.

Thank you to everyone who took part in our very first virtual event, the Virtual Colour5K! You helped to raise a staggering £13,028 which will go towards supporting brain injury survivors and their families and carers. Thank you to Attwells Solicitors for sponsoring the event, Inspire Races for partnering the event and Matt Brinkley of Inspiring Fitness for supporting the event.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our annual Headway Essex Vintage Hollywood Ball in March 2019, we raised an amazing £15,000. A special mention to our sponsor, Investec Wealth & Investment UK, to every individual and business who donated auction and raffle prizes, and to all our volunteers for making this event such a success.

Thank you to our amazing local rotary and community clubs; Rotary Club of Colchester and the Charity Classic Vehicle Club for their generous donations of £500 each.

Thank you to Complete Fitness with Jo, for hosting a charity bingo night which raised £319.

A huge thank you to local businesses, Baker Labels and Premier, who donated much needed PPE and hand sanitiser to our staff.

Thank you James and Lizzie for donating £503 from the proceeds of your beautiful handmade protective masks.

A huge thank you to ASDA Colchester Turner Rise for letting us take part in your Green Token Giving scheme and consequently gifting us £500.

A huge thank you to IGO4 for sending a team of lovely volunteers out to help make our Headway Centre garden beautiful again for our clients.

Thank you to all our volunteers for donating a total of 6908 hours of their time to us this year, you do such an amazing job and we wouldn't be the same charity without you.

Thank you to ASDA and Tesco who welcomed our volunteers to their store to raise awareness around acquired brain injuries and fundraise for Headway Essex. Thanks to you both we raised an incredible £176.36 and £411.14 respectively.

Thank you to Terry Earl who raised £83.43 by hosting a brilliant David Bowie fundraising evening.

Become a Hive Member

In Essex, every 58 minutes, someone is admitted to hospital with a brain injury. Quite often, their life and the lives of their family members will forever be affected. By making a regular donation you can make a huge difference to improve their lives.

Whatever your regular gift, it will help ensure we can be there for many years to come; taking clients and their families from a place of surviving to thriving.

By joining the Headway Essex Hive, your commitment will bring you closer to our work through updates on the impact your gift is making. We promise every penny you give will go towards continuing our work, supporting people living with acquired brain injury.

For further information about becoming a Headway Essex Hive member, please contact our fundraising team fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk or visit our website www.headwayessex.org.uk.



In Memory Donations

Celebrating a Life

We are always incredibly touched and grateful to receive donations in memory of someone special.

Fundraising in memory of someone is a touching way to remember a loved one - creating a lasting tribute by celebrating their life, whilst helping others at the same time.

We realise that everyone is different, so there are a number of ways you could choose to fundraise for Headway Essex in memory of someone dear to you:

- Make a donation in the name of your loved one
- Hold a collection at a funeral or memorial
- Take on a fundraising challenge in their memory
- Create an online tribute fund either through Virgin Money or Just Giving



We will always respect your privacy and ensure your donation is used for the greatest impact.

You can find more information about In Memory Donations on our Website, or please call our fundraising team who will handle your enquiry sensitively and help to guide you.

**You can reach the fundraising team on 01206 845945
or email fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk**

Thank You

to all our supporters, partners, commissioners, trustees, volunteers and funders. There are so many ways you get involved!

To find out how you can help raise funds, visit
www.headwayessex.org.uk/i-want-to-help



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