



# Headway Essex News

Autumn 2020

Celebrating 35 Years of Headway Essex

# CHRISTMAS



## CHRISTMAS 35 CAMPAIGN

We're celebrating 35 years of Headway Essex with our Christmas 35 Campaign

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Chris James, a brain injury survivor, hosted his very own golf day to raise money for Headway Essex. (Page 6)



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To everyone who raises vital funds for Headway Essex. Your support makes a huge difference to the lives of those living with the effects of an acquired brain injury

## 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*



Welcome to the Headway Essex Christmas 35 Campaign, celebrating 35 years of supporting adults with acquired brain injury (ABI) and their families in Essex.

Living with an ABI is hard, but during a pandemic is even more complicated. Simple tasks such as shopping and getting prescriptions become major challenges. In addition, the loneliness and isolation is even harder for someone with a brain injury to cope with.

Our services are never more needed and during this year, we have been here supporting service users and their families throughout lockdown.

The pandemic is not over so we continue to face uncertain times ahead. It costs us nearly £500,000 a year to provide support in the community and to keep our day services running.

In the lead up to Christmas 2020, we are inviting you to celebrate with us the stories of how our amazing community of brain injury survivors have coped. And how they were supported by Headway Essex during this extraordinary year.

*“Regarding all the activities during lockdown, everyone is doing an amazing job, I am so lucky to have all of you. I so look forward to the days when I know I will be interacting with everyone for a catch up. You show so much interest in our wellbeing, my family and I cannot thank you enough for everything you’re doing.”*

**Carlita, Service User**

Over the next few weeks, we are asking our supporters to either raise or donate £35 to Headway Essex. We appreciate that times have been hard for many people this year, but if you can help, your presence will help gift Headway Essex service users, their tomorrow.

If you cannot donate, we have many examples of how you can fundraise, for example:

- Give something up during the campaign (coffee/tea/smoking, etc.) and donate the money saved.
- Ask family and friends for donations to Headway Essex in lieu of Christmas presents.
- Take on a walking/running/cycling challenge and raise sponsorship.

To show our appreciation, the first 250 people who raise £35 or more will receive a special thank you by way of a card signed by our Patron, David Tenant.

To get involved visit our Campaign Page at [www.justgiving.com/campaign/christmas35](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/christmas35)



# Service News

## Autumn Reflections – by Stella Kerins

The last couple of months have been an interesting time for all of us, getting the Headway Centre in Colchester ready to reopen was much harder than closing our doors. It was a huge team effort from the frontline staff through to our CEO and Governance Manager. Risk assessments flew about and then everything in them had to be implemented - all 20 plus pages worth!

I won't steal Angie's thunder as she will tell you all about the first days back in the Colchester Centre but I must say how wonderful it has been to finally meet some of our service users and to truly understand how much our face-to-face services are needed. We will continue to provide COVID secure activities throughout the new national lockdown period starting on Thursday 5th November.



In our South and West Essex Hub we have only been able to bring back face-to-face assessments so far due to the size of our building preventing safe social distancing. We have been thwarted in our efforts to get face-to-face support group meetings up and running by a combination of premises access and the latest Tier 2 restrictions, but that hasn't stopped Gemma and the team, they are still working hard to provide telephone support and virtual sessions.

National Poetry week started on 1st October, this was the first day that people returned to the Headway Centre in Colchester. So we decided to celebrate it a couple of weeks later. The clients (and team!) had lots of fun both reading and creating poems. Here is one that is based around people's experience of lockdown, I loved it and I hope you will enjoy it too...

*I must go down to the market again  
To buy some lovely chops.  
And all I ask is that they've not sold out again  
Or I'll have to try other shops  
I wish I could go to the pub again  
To get a pint or four  
My home brew has exploded again  
And blown off the bloody door!*

**By Roomay and the live poets society**

## Support Groups & Carers Support Groups

All Support Group meetings and Carers Support Groups are currently being held as virtual meetings using the Zoom platform. If you are interested in joining any of our meetings or activities, please email [abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk) or call 01206 845945, for more information.

## North and Mid Essex News

I am over the moon to announce that the Headway Centre, in Colchester has reopened again, with almost a full client base choosing to return to weekly activities. We are continuing to provide activities via Zoom sessions, for those that have opted not to join us at this time.

It has been very nice to see all the staff, volunteers and clients again, albeit socially distanced. The Centre has laughter again and everyone is enjoying being here.

The way we work had to change, while the pandemic continues, so things look very different. Prior to clients returning, staff had already returned to the Centre and were socially distancing in the offices. To allow enough staff on site to run the daily in-house sessions we have temporarily changed the IT suite into an office.

The clients are generally split into two rooms, with perspex dividers on each table. We are able to accommodate up to 6 clients in the small activity room and 10 in the main activity room, each day.

All clients have their own zip file which includes: pen, pencil, note pad and hand sanitiser gel. These are disinfected at the end of each session and put away until they next attend the Centre.

There is a cleaning routine throughout the day to ensure a high level of hygiene in the building. It is great to see that everyone recognises the requirements necessary and adhere to the guidance we have requested.

Whilst we have not been able to return to our usual external activities, we have adjusted them to keep it as interesting as possible. We have held sessions on:

- What did lockdown mean to you?
- Poetry
- Boccia
- Who wants to be a millionaire
- Client quizzes
- Fitness sessions

We have also been trying to brighten up our environment, with some of our clients taking the lead on this. One client recently supplied plants and planted out the pots on our patio, which is lovely to see.

**Angie O'Toole,**  
Service Manager

## South and West Essex News

Since our summer newsletter the South & West Hub have continued to run virtual sessions. Ideally, we wanted to resume face-to-face groups, but as Stella explained in her update, sadly we have not been in a position to do so.

We have still been very busy; in fact we started another Brain Injury and Me group at the end of August which is due to finish soon. This group received a record number of attendees with over 15 individuals attending on a weekly basis. I believe I can say, this group has proved to be a huge success thanks to Kevin Maloney, Brain Injury Caseworker and Rob Warren, Trustee helping to facilitate the group.

We are still holding our weekly social groups and quiz's which are still a great hit with both ABI survivors and their carers, in fact our quiz is open to all service users and carers across the county so if you haven't already joined us, why not give it a go? We have moved our carers group to once a month; this is now held on the fourth Thursday evening of every month.

When we eventually resume face-to-face groups some of our virtual sessions will remain, such as 'Brain Injury and Me', but we also aim to introduce a young ABI survivors group aimed at individuals between 18 and 40. Sadly, more and more we are seeing younger individuals referred to our service, some due to the ongoing pandemic.

The past 6 months have been difficult, not only for our service users but also for the staff, under normal circumstances we would be out visiting our clients, holding groups and building our South Essex Hub, but we won't let these troubling times hold us back, we have a vision for the future and we aim to make it happen.

**Gemma Baines,**  
Service Manager

# Fundraising

News on recent donations and fundraising

## CHRIS JAMES RAISES £4,500 WITH GOLF DAY



Brain injury survivor Chris James along with his good friend Stephen Wells organised their second successful Charity Golf Day at Bentley Golf Club on Thursday 1st October. The event raised an incredible £4,500 for Headway Essex, who supported Chris with his recovery after his brain injury in 2017.

Twenty-eight players teed off after a champagne reception and a welcome talk from Tony Emms, a trustee of Headway Essex and also a brain injury survivor. After playing 18 holes, guests stayed for dinner which included an auction and raffle. The event was supported by a number of donors and sponsors.

As an avid supporter of Headway Essex, Chris James said: “My journey is not over it’s on-going and I’m adapting to my new life. I now want to do something to help Headway Essex support people with Acquired Brain Injury in the area I live in.”

## ABI WEEK 28TH SEPT TO 4TH OCT 2020

On 28th September 2020, Headway Essex joined Action for Brain Injury (ABI) week. This is a national campaign to raise awareness of Acquired Brain Injury and give a voice to those affected.

This year the focus was memory loss, as memory problems are a very common effect of brain injury. A recent study by Headway UK – the brain injury association found that 72% of brain injury survivors feel that the people in their life don’t understand their memory problems. They also felt that their life would be improved if people had a better understanding of this complex condition.

During ABI week we asked some of our service users to explain how memory loss affects their life. Here is some of the feedback shared by service users:

*“Remembering important details of conversations – I find this so difficult”*

*“Time felt like it disappeared quickly, days would go by and I just could not remember where they had gone.”*

*“My past AND now is a complete mystery - that is why I have a diary and keep a notebook!”*

# Get Involved

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Christine Martin and Linda Runciman are two of our amazing Headway Essex volunteers who help in South Essex. In this article, Christine talks about the reasons that she and Linda got involved in volunteering and the variety of things they are involved with.

“Linda and I have been volunteering for Headway Essex for 14 years. The reason I became a volunteer is that my son and myself received so much support after he had his brain injury. He continues to receive support as and when he needs it. I wanted to give something back and hope that my experience in his recovery is helpful to others. I don’t know where we would have ended up without Headway Essex.

Linda found that there was a lack of ongoing support for her husband after being discharged from the hospital. After a year of no support, they came across Headway Essex at a hospital open day and received so much support and help. Linda says “from the support my husband and I received, I wanted to give something back and to raise the awareness of Headway Essex”.

Under normal circumstances, I help out with some office admin and also help with the Brain Injury and Me group that takes place throughout the year. Linda helps with the cooking group and the exercise group. Apart from learning so much about the brain, there is the social side. We enjoy this as much as the service users.

We also help out at the monthly support group and the social group that started just before lockdown. And we attend the monthly carers group.

We help with fundraising and promoting Headway Essex by running tombola stalls at local events and raffles at our Christmas and Easter support group meetings.

During the lockdown, there have been Zoom meetings for the social group and also the Brain Injury & Me. There have also been Zoom meetings on a 2 weekly basis for the carers group.

We love our work as volunteers and look forward to getting back to some form of normality when we can all meet up face to face.”

**Christine Martin,**  
Headway Essex Volunteer (South & West Essex)

# Brain Injury and Motivation

## Taking the First Steps Toward Getting Things Done After a Brain Injury



In August, we were very lucky to have Andrea Kusec from the MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit at Cambridge University address the Headway Essex support groups over an online Zoom session. The session was so interesting we asked Andrea if she could write an article on the subject:

### **Motivation, Such an Aggravation: Why Can it be so Tough?**

After an acquired brain injury (ABI) such as traumatic brain injury, stroke, or brain tumours, low motivation is common. As many as two-thirds of people with an ABI report having low motivation, difficulties outlining about how best to spend their time, how get started on a task, and how to finish something important to them.

Many people have a hard time with motivation – especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, people are finding it harder to feel productive. For people with an ABI there may be additional reasons why motivation is hard. Poor attention and memory can make it easy to become distracted, leading to tasks being half-finished or abandoned. The ability to finish a task can be affected by increased fatigue. Feeling down can prevent someone from having the energy to start a task, and feeling anxious that a task will go wrong can prevent someone from trying something new. The parts of the brain that are responsible for feeling reward after we complete a task are often impaired in ABI, which in turn affects motivation for future tasks.

## How do People Become Motivated?

One motivation theory, self-determination theory, states that motivation is formed of intrinsic (internal) or extrinsic (external) factors. Intrinsic motivation focuses on what drives someone to complete a task on their own, while extrinsic motivation focuses on how a person becomes motivated from sources other than the self.

All humans have a basic need for autonomy (feeling independent), competence (feeling skilled at what you do), and relatedness (connecting with other people). These three basic needs drive internal motivation. External motivation on the other hand can be affected by reward (such as pay for work), social support (such as encouragement from others), and environment (such as working in a space with sunlight).

This theory can help us make sense of why all of us feel a lack of motivation during COVID-19. We have less independence to do what we want, we are not yet skilled at coping with new health regulations and regularly reading difficult news, and it is easy to feel isolated due to necessary social distancing policies.

This can have a negative impact on motivation, which can get us stuck in our “comfort zone” and do only the bare minimum. This feels good in the short term, but in the long term we can get too comfortable and don’t challenge ourselves. Your comfort zone will get you into thinking traps such as:

- *“I have the whole day to do this, so I’ll do it later”*

- *“I’ll just watch that TV show instead, it’s more fun”*
- *“I’m not good at this anyway, so it doesn’t matter”*
- *“I feel bad now, so I’ll come back to this when I feel better”*

These thinking traps can be especially hard to overcome after an ABI. Luckily, there are lots of ways we can motivate ourselves. Trying out different strategies is best to help figure out what works best.

## You Can Do It

Low motivation can be difficult to navigate, especially after an ABI, but ultimately if there’s one tip to take away it’s to tell yourself to “just do it” – our comfort zone may take over and cause thinking traps, but if you can push yourself out of your comfort zone once, you can get out of it again. As the saying goes, the past cannot be changed, but the future is yet in your hands.

**Andrea Kusec,**

Graduate Student, MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, Cambridge University

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## To Learn More

Andrea explains some of the different strategies you can use to help motivate yourself and others in her full article which is available on our website: [headwayessex.org.uk](https://headwayessex.org.uk)

# Thank You

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To everyone who has supported our Urgent Covid-19 Appeal, we cannot explain to you how much we value your help. Thanks to your contributions, we have raised over £8,000. This money is being used to keep our services running at a time where 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.

A big thank you to The Colchester Colne Round table for donating £24,000 in support of our work. Headway Essex was one of the chosen charities of this year's Colchester Half Marathon, which unfortunately didn't go ahead because of Coronavirus. Due to the continued uncertainty there won't be an event next year but we look forward to supporting them in 2022!

Thank you to Chris James and Stephen Wells for organising a Golf Day at Bentley Golf Course and raising an incredible £4,500 for Headway Essex.

Thank you to Karen Last for donating £320 from the proceeds of handmade face masks.

## Donations in Memory

We thank the family and friends of Roger Hume for their kind donations made in his memory. Our thoughts are with you at this difficult time.

# 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](mailto:fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk) or visit our website [www.headwayessex.org.uk](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.headwayessex.org.uk/i-want-to-help)



## Contact us

### FUNDRAISING:

[fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk)  
01206 845945 (Option 5)  
6th Floor Annex, Wellington House  
90-92 Butt Road, Colchester,  
Essex, CO3 3DA

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

[abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk)  
01206 845945 (Option 1)  
6th Floor Annex, Wellington House  
90-92 Butt Road, Colchester,  
Essex, CO3 3DA

### THE HEADWAY CENTRE:

[dayservice@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:dayservice@headwayessex.org.uk)  
01206 845945 (Option 2)  
The Headway Centre, Woodland  
Walk,  
Colchester,  
Essex, CO4 6DH

**FACEBOOK:** @headway.essex **TWITTER:** @headwayessex **INSTAGRAM:** @headwayessex

[www.headwayessex.org.uk](http://www.headwayessex.org.uk)



**Headway  
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