



Headway Essex News

Q4 – 2024

CHRISTMAS AT HEADWAY ESSEX

The image shows two overlapping event posters. The left poster is for 'Christmas Fayre' on Saturday 30 November, featuring a blue background with a snowflake pattern, a red sack of gifts, and a green circle announcing 'MEET OUR CHRISTMAS ELF AND ELSA'. The right poster is for 'Christmas Choir' on Saturday 7th December, featuring a pink background with a musical note pattern, a green circle announcing 'Chorus Icení and Kingsland Church Children's Choir', and a blue circle announcing 'REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE'. Both posters include the Headway Essex logo and charity number 1008807.

Headway Essex Presents
charity no. 1008807

Christmas Fayre

Sponsored by Blackwater Law

SANTA'S GROTTO - ONLY £2 PER CHILD

MEET OUR CHRISTMAS ELF AND ELSA

Saturday 30 November
10.30am - 2.30pm

FREE ENTRY AND FREE PARKING

The Headway Centre, Woodland Walk
Colchester, Essex, CO4 6DH • 01206 845945

- Face Painting • Bric a Brac • Raffle • Kids Clothes • Kid's Christmas Crafts
- Pre-Loved Ladies Clothes • Refreshments • Sweets • Christmas Cards
- Name and Win the Monkey and more...

Headway Essex hosts
charity no. 1008807

Christmas Choir

Sponsored by Blackwater Law

Saturday 7th December
St Botolph's Church, St Botolph's Street, Colchester
2.00pm - 5.00pm

RAFFLE

Chorus Icení and Kingsland Church Children's Choir
come together to make an afternoon of musical family entertainment.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE

Adult £12
Child £6 (under 16yrs)

Facebook: @headway.essex
Twitter: @headwayessex
Instagram: @headwayessex
www.headwayessex.org.uk

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A fond farewell from our departing Chief Executive Officer



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ABOUT HEADWAY ESSEX

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 Essex.

Registered Charity Number: 1008807

Patron: David Tennant

Company Limited by Guarantee

Registered in England and Wales

No. 2674755

A FOND FAREWELL FROM OUR DEPARTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I prepare to say farewell after 26 incredible years with Headway Essex, I find myself reflecting on the moments that have shaped our journey together. This transition brings a whirlwind of emotions—sadness at leaving, deep gratitude for our shared experiences, nostalgia for the past, and optimism for Headway's future.

Serving as Headway's Chief Executive Officer has been both an honour and a privilege. I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude and share a few reflections as I step away from this role.

When I first joined Headway Essex, I was inspired by the resilience and strength of the individuals we support—those living with brain injuries and their devoted carers. Over the years, I have witnessed countless stories of courage and determination, each journey deepening my commitment to our mission.



The progress we have made together

From our early days as a small, Colchester-based charity, we have grown into a vital organisation serving Essex. I take immense pride in our expanded services, including the opening of the South Essex Day Care Centre, which has allowed us to assist more individuals than ever before. Our community support services now encompass a helpline, support groups, training programmes, and individual casework. The progress we have made together has far exceeded my dreams from those early days.

I was thrilled to work on the BBC film "Recovery," featuring our Patron, David Tennant. Spending the day with him as he prepared for his role as a brain injury survivor was truly enjoyable. Thank you, David, for your unwavering support of Headway over the years—you have been a star!

One of my favourite achievements has been acquiring the Headway Centre in Colchester—a space that has become invaluable to many of our clients. Our day centres provide a welcoming environment for rehabilitation, where individuals can connect, share, and empower one another to reach their potential.

The challenges posed by the COVID pandemic tested us in ways we could never have anticipated. I am incredibly proud of how our team rose to the occasion, ensuring our services continued while adapting to the evolving needs of our community during such uncertain times.

Please turn over...

A FOND FAREWELL FROM OUR DEPARTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Continued



As I depart, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to our dedicated and compassionate staff. Their commitment has been the heartbeat of Headway Essex. Our outstanding care team has supported our clients with untiring dedication, while the unsung heroes in finance and governance have ensured our charity operates smoothly. Their hard work secures our financial stability, allowing us to focus on our mission. I also want to recognise our fundraising team, whose tireless efforts provide the resources needed to keep Headway Essex thriving. Thank you all for your incredible support over the years!

Throughout my time here, I have had the privilege of meeting incredible individuals—our dedicated volunteers, fundraisers, and supporters—who are integral to our mission. I am truly grateful for your support.

Together, we have made a lasting impact, and I leave Headway Essex in a strong position, both financially and operationally. With a dedicated board, management team, and committed staff, I am confident that Headway Essex is poised to reach new heights.

As I step into this next chapter of my life, I carry with me countless memories and the connections we have forged together. Thank you for being such an integral part of this journey. I look forward to seeing how Headway Essex continues to flourish and make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Wishing you all the very best.

Joanna Wright
Chief Executive, Headway Essex

NEXT STEPS INITIATIVE WITH ESSEX UNIVERSITY

On October 28th, we are launching the exciting new “Next Steps” project in collaboration with the University of Essex’s Health, Wellbeing, and Care Hub. This initiative will support a small group of individuals in navigating life after acquired brain injury (ABI), through a combination of group sessions and one-on-one activities tailored to their individual symptoms.

The eight week pilot programme, was made possible by a grant from the Colchester Catalyst Charity. It will involve a multi-disciplinary team, with Headway staff working alongside student physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and speech and language therapists. The project is aimed at adults with ABI who require additional rehabilitation but face barriers such as diagnosis, funding, or long waiting lists, and provides an alternative pathway to essential support.

Our goal is to offer critical rehabilitation when it’s needed most, while encouraging participants to seek ongoing support as they continue their journey. Sadly, many individuals living with ABI are struggling without adequate resources, and we hope this project will help reduce the number of people facing such challenges in the future.



We are delighted to be working with the University of Essex on this initiative which not only serves to help those accessing the support, but also offers healthcare students valuable hands-on experience and specialist knowledge about ABI, which they can carry into their future careers as healthcare professionals.

BRAIN INJURY AND ME



We’re thrilled to share the success of another “Brain Injury and Me” programme! These supportive learning sessions are helping individuals adjust to life after a brain injury, and the impact is truly heart-warming.

One of our clients shared:

“I found the course absolutely amazing and wonderfully helpful in restoring my self-confidence. It also helped in allowing me to function in group work. It restored my sense of identity and accepting my new self. It helped me ‘fight through the fog.’”

Kevin Maloney is a Brain Injury Advisor with Headway Essex and delivers these sessions. He sees first-hand the positive impact that they have had.

“It is always a pleasure to facilitate the Headway Essex Brain Injury & Me programme, which we have been running for many years.

And each time you learn something new from the people attending, and how they are trying to adjust to their life after brain injury.

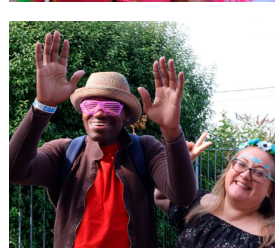
To see a group of strangers offering peer support and friendship from day one is unbelievable. Hopefully the topics of brain anatomy, fatigue, attention, memory and the emotional issues after brain injury, are correct choices to enable members of each group to learn and support each other too; as reflected in the positive feedback we receive about the programme.”

If you or someone you know could benefit from this programme, please reach out to us at 01206 845945 or email abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk

SERVICE NEWS

Latest news and updates from the Service Hubs

SOUTH & WEST ESSEX HUB



A huge THANK YOU to Tracy from Move it or Lose it and Essex Academy of Dance for bringing your energy to the day

HEADFEST

It wouldn't be summer without festivals and in August the Benfleet Hub held their annual Headfest event, bringing music, dancing and happy vibes to the centre.

We had an incredible day with VIP wristbands and sunglasses on arrival, a high energy festival theme Move it or Lose it session with Tracy Bliss, themed smoothie making and a wonderful performance by Essex Academy of Dance (including our very own Trish!!), and of course we had to finish the day with a bit of Karaoke!

Lots of fun was had by all and some fed back that they aren't able to access 'festival' events in the community since their brain injury, so it was amazing to have it brought to them at Headway Essex!

DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME

Carers, relatives and supporters of loved ones with an acquired brain injury joined us for our first Don't Forget About Me programme. This informative programme, drawing on the experience of guest speakers such as Essex Neuro Rehab, was specifically designed to empower and support carers.

During the guided sessions and through the bond the attendees built amongst themselves, they were able to talk freely about their caring roles and gain an understanding of their loved one's emotions and have the opportunity to be able to reflect on their own.

We are grateful to Essex County Council for their Unpaid Carers Community Fund grant which has funded this programme.



Our next programme will run between Friday 17th January 2025 and Friday 14th February 2025 in Colchester.

If you or someone you know could benefit from this programme, please reach out to us at 01206 845945 or email abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk



SERVICE NEWS

Latest news and updates from the Service Hubs

MID & NORTH ESSEX HUB

HEALTH & WELLBEING

In August we had the local pain management team meet our clients and perform a Tai Chi session, tailored towards health and wellbeing for people living with chronic pain conditions and other disabilities. Tai Chi is a gentle form of exercise that involves slow, deliberate movements, deep breathing, and meditation which offers numerous benefits for people with acquired brain injuries (ABI). These benefits can be physical, cognitive, and emotional, and can include an increase in balance and strength, reduced anxiety, better quality sleep and lower levels of fatigue.



SKILLS FOR LIFE

After a busy morning of skills sessions our Thursday group held a summer BBQ. On Thursday mornings half of the group attend "Skills for Life", a programme where they work on developing essential skills. This could be related to independent living, improving education or employability skills, social skills or overall personal development. The other half of the group work on social skills and games that improve upon areas of attention, concentration and communication. With our volunteer Andre supervising the barbecuing and everyone enjoying the food, music and party games, the afternoon was a well earned treat.



MEET PADDY!

Paddy is a therapy dog and has been to visit our centre in Colchester over the last few months and will be making more of a regular appearance over the autumn and winter months.

This is great news for us as people's moods can dip at this time of year and interactions with therapy dogs such as Paddy help to release endorphins which can improve mood. Therapy dogs can also boost overall health, lowering blood pressure, heart rate, and reduce stress hormone levels. Their calming presence also helps individuals feel more relaxed and grounded.



A STEP INTO VOLUNTEERING

Headway Essex relies on the generosity of volunteers to help us to deliver our services to adults with acquired brain injury and their families. Our volunteers come from many backgrounds and will all have different reasons for volunteering with us. The overarching motivation though is to give something back. In return, being a volunteer can bring a sense of purpose and connectivity which has its own rewards.

MEET CHRIS AND DIANE

Diana Hayter and Chris Sweeney are joining our team of volunteers to help at our Support Group in Colchester. They kindly talked to us about what brought them to volunteering.

Chris and Diane are both familiar with Headway Essex through attending our Support Group meetings. They talked with good humour and humility about their brain injuries and the experiences of recovery. Both have different stories with overlapping themes.

Chris and Diane joined Headway Essex following the Pandemic. Experiencing the pressures of Lockdown had made the feelings of isolation worse and being unable to freely access GP services during this time was frightening. Chris in particular went from being in a specialist brain injury rehabilitation centre, where he received regular medical checks and monitoring, to being in a situation where he was unable to see his doctor. For someone recovering from a serious brain injury this is a scary prospect.

THE FIRST STEPS

Diane remembered the first day that she went to Headway. It was raining and she was soaked through when she got to the centre but she said walking through the door felt like coming home. She described the relief and feeling of safety of being with people who just knew what she was going through.

Chris was more reluctant to go and said that having a brain injury left him feeling disenfranchised and not part of things he previously had in his life. He explained that he saw a club as going to do something he enjoyed, such as music, and he very much didn't want to join a brain injury 'club'. Fortunately he did change his mind. He felt his world opening up and found he could talk and relate to the other members.

The support group has given them not only the practical skills they need to navigate their recovery but also the ability to ask for help if it is needed. Not being able to ask for help is a big barrier to

moving forwards. Diane said 'you are taught to stand on your own two feet from childhood but standing on your own two feet can be disabling when you really need to reach out.'

ON TO VOLUNTEERING

Sam Preston who runs the support group is delighted to have Chris and Diane's input to the meetings. Recognising the confidence and skills they have rebuilt to get to this point, she has encouraged them to take this first step into volunteering.

Not only will they bring their practical skills to the group, more importantly they can offer reassurance to anyone new joining with their experience – lived experience of recovering from a brain injury and understanding how important it was to them to find a safe place and people that they can be themselves with.

What Chris and Diane will bring to the group is evident but what will the experience of volunteering bring to them? When asked what their world would have been like without the support group they immediately said 'lonely'. Volunteering for Chris will be like baby steps and he is open to seeing where it leads to. 'It is like opening a door'.



SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

If you are interested in attending one of our groups, please contact the Headway Essex team on **01206 845945 (option 1)** or email abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk
Please note there are no meetings in August.

Mid Essex Support Group (Chelmsford)

Third Tuesday of the month 10:00 – 12:00
15th October, 19 November, 17 December

North East Essex Support Group (Colchester)

First Tuesday of the month 18:00 -20:00
1st October, 5 November, 3 December

North East Essex Support Group (Clacton)

First Thursday of the month 10:00 -12:00
17th October, 21st November, December TBC

North East Essex Carers (Colchester)

Fourth Friday of the month 10:30 – 12.30
25th October, 22nd November, December TBC

North Essex Social Evenings (Colchester)

Third Monday of the month 17:00 – 19:00
21th October, 18th November, 16th December

The 3M Club 'Men Motivating Men'

Last Wednesday of the month 18:00 -20:00
30th October, 27th November, December TBC

South Essex Support Group (Benfleet)

Second Tuesday of the month 19:00 – 21:00
8th October, 12th November, 10th December

West Essex Support Group (Epping)

Fourth Tuesday of the month 10:00 – 12:00
22nd October, 26th November, December TBC

South Essex Carers Support (Benfleet)

Fourth Thursday of the month 19:00 – 21:00
24th October, 28 November, December TBC

South Essex Social Evenings (Benfleet)

First Wednesday of the month 13:00 – 15:00
2nd October, 6th November, 4 December

Essex Young Circle Support Group (Benfleet)

Fourth Wednesday of the month
17:00 – 19:00, 27th November,
Friday 20th December (please note change of day)

THANK YOU... TAYLOR ROSE



Caroline Kempster - Head of Personal Injury

We are very grateful to Taylor Rose for their generous sponsorship of the Headway Essex Support Group in Colchester and for Caroline Kempster, Head of Personal Injury who is regularly joining the group to share her knowledge and experience.

Each month our group brings together remarkable individuals who share their journeys, fears, and triumphs in a safe space of understanding and compassion.

Thank you for your generous commitment to Headway Essex



TAYLOR
ROSE

SMART
MODERN
LAW

FUNDRAISING NEWS



PAGLESHAM CLAY SHOOT

We were thrilled to be chosen as one of the chosen charities for the Paglesham Charity Clay Shoot alongside Havens Hospice and Southend Guide Dogs Association.

This 20th annual charity clay shoot, organised by the Paglesham Clay Pigeon Club and the Plough and Sail pub, raised an amazing £24,000. The day consisted of clay pigeon shooting, food, an auction, raffle and live band.

We are very grateful to the Paglesham Charity Clay Shoot for their generous donation of £7,625 and to all who donated auction lots, raffle prizes and their time who made this possible. Your kindness will help us to continue our vital service and to improve the lives of those affected by brain injury.

We would like to thank Chris James and Steve Wells for arranging an incredible Headway Essex Charity Golf Day and to all those involved and to all the golfers that came along. Over the past 6 years they have raised almost £30,000 for Headway Essex. Chris, a brain injury survivor has been a stalwart supporter of Headway Essex and we are incredibly thankful for his support and kindness.

The Golf Day this year raised £7,000 which will help us support Essex residents with brain injuries to rebuild their lives.

CHARITY GOLF DAY



2024 HEADWAY QUIZ



Thank you to everyone who made our 2024 Quiz such a success. The event was put on by our Head of Services Emma and Brain Injury Support

Worker Gavin and raised a whopping £1,216.93!

We would especially like to give a BIG shout out to Complete Event who hosted the event and helped us to organise it. Brad and his team were instrumental in the planning, ensuring the event ran smoothly, provided wonderful food and ran the bar, as well as helping to mark answer sheets and anything else needed on the night!

Thank you to all who donated prizes, but in particular to Beth Chatto's, Markshall, Go Bananas, Aqua Springs, Colchester Brewery, Dedham Vale Vineyard, The Wooden Fender, Thrive Gyms, Lexden Wood Golf Club, Saffron Wivenhoe, Evans Motors, Oven Choice and Sugarstrandz Cakes and Events.

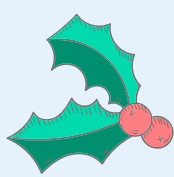
HEADWAY ESSEX CLASSIC VEHICLE SHOW

Our annual Classic Vehicle Show was a resounding success and despite amber weather warnings for rain and storms, the sun shone for the Essex Classic Vehicle Show. The park was buzzing with visitors who enjoyed the classic vehicles, music and dancing and acrobatic performances by Team Kinetix.

This family friendly event organised raised nearly £12,000 for Headway Essex.

A huge thank you to our fundraising team and our volunteers who made this day possible.





CHRISTMAS AT HEADWAY ESSEX



Friends and family make Christmas special. If you attend one of our support groups you are in for a treat. Each of our support groups is planning a Christmas Special for seasonal fun, laughter and time with friends.

Our centre in Colchester is throwing open its doors to welcome the community to its 2024 Christmas Fayre.

Come along and join the fun! There will be Christmas stalls, festive food, Santa's grotto and much more!

Saturday 30th November 10.30am – 2.30pm
FREE ENTRY and FREE PARKING

Headway Essex is hosting its first Christmas Choir event!

Bring the Merry to Christmas and join us on Saturday 7th December for the Headway Essex Christmas Choir event at St Botolph's Church. Chorus Iceni and the children from Kingsland Church Choir will be singing festive Christmas favourites.

Saturday December 7th 2024 at 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

To book tickets please visit our website

www.headwayessex.org.uk/i-want-to-help/our-events/

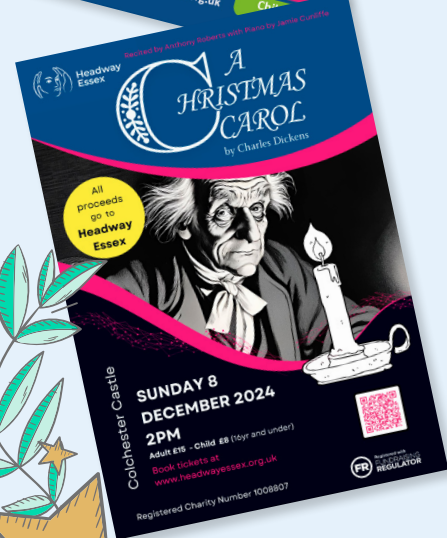
A Christmas Carol

Colchester Arts Centre Director Anthony Roberts will be performing his traditional rendition of the Dickens classic, A Christmas Carol, with musical accompaniment by Jamie Cunliffe, in the beautiful surroundings of Colchester Castle.

Sunday December 8th 2024 at 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm

To book tickets please visit our website

www.headwayessex.org.uk/i-want-to-help/our-events/



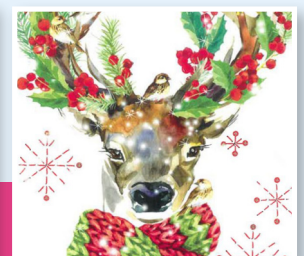
CHRISTMAS CARDS

Spread some festive cheer with a Headway Essex charity Christmas card. Explore our wonderful range of charity Christmas card designs from traditional, religious, fun and much more!

All cards are £5.00 for a pack of 10 of the same design, inclusive of postage and packing.

100% of the profit from every pack of charity Christmas cards purchased, goes to Headway Essex to support our vital work.

www.headwayessex.org.uk/christmas-cards



THANK YOU

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



CONTACT US

FUNDRAISING & MARKETING:

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
01206 845945 (option 3)

THE HEADWAY CENTRE (North):

dayservice@headwayessex.org.uk
01206 845945 (option 4)

The Headway Centre,
Woodland Walk, Colchester,
Essex, CO4 6DH

THE HEADWAY CENTRE (South):

dayservice@headwayessex.org.uk
01206 845945 (option 4)

The Benfleet Methodist Church,
High Road, South Benfleet,
SS7 5LH

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