

News & Views

'Locked down' but by no means 'knocked down'!!

The summer edition of our quarterly newsletter comes to you at the most unusual period in our charity's history. Our three brain injury centres are currently closed and our regular brain injury services have been suspended, all in response to the outbreak of coronavirus, which has affected millions of people worldwide.

While we had no option but to close our doors, we have remained very much 'open for business', and despite the need to furlough many of our staff, we were quick to introduce some new Remote Services to support our clients and families through these difficult times.

These include regular welfare calls to check how each client is coping, doorstep visits to drop off any medicines or food shopping plus a chance for a face-to-face chat, albeit behind a mask and a distance of two metres. We have also created activity booklets on a similar theme to the regular sessions we hold at our brain injury centres, and started using our social media pages as a platform to connect to clients, carers and the wider community with a series of activities and updates. We have also embraced technology and offered a range of online 'live' sessions for the first time. This has been a learning curve for us all, staff and clients alike, but we know from the feedback we are having, that our efforts are very much appreciated, and importantly, achieving our objectives of keeping everyone connected and feeling less isolated during these times of crisis.

We will continue to provide these Remote Services until our normal services can be resumed safely. In the meantime, we would like to share with you this lovely comment made by Lina during a doorstep visit.

"People out there don't realise what special and wonderful people you are, putting yourselves at risk to make sure we are okay. You care about us, you are family to us. I cannot wait to come back – I just want to give you a huge hug!"



A Message from our CEO, Sue Tyler



I hope that you have all managed to keep 'you and yours' safe and well during this dreadful time. This is a situation that none of us could ever have predicted and I can only say how proud I am of how everyone has pulled together to cope during this pandemic.

I am extremely grateful for those who continued working, who have grafted harder than ever before and often putting themselves 'out there' at risk. They have had to go above and beyond to support our clients and set up our fantastic new services. Many others working have supported the fight to keep the company running, so we can come out the other side and continue the work of the charity in the near future.

Also well done to all our staff on furlough, volunteers and clients who have been stuck at home.

Whether working or not, the virus has had a huge impact on everyone in terms of social isolation and mental health. As we start to make our way forwards, please ensure that you get any support you need. We are always here to help.

We are now busy making plans for the next phase, and looking forward to the day we can open our doors again. While we don't know what the future holds for our charity, we can be sure of one thing – that we will continue to support those who need us, no matter how we do it. Please try not to worry, just look forward to better times to come when we can all be reunited.

'Working in different ways, but caring just the same'

Activity Packs, Welfare Calls, Doorstep Visits & more!



Richard visits Deb and Rob at home

As well as sending out new activity packs to help keep clients occupied at home, our staff have been telephoning them regularly and calling by at their homes to deliver food and medication where required, and have a catch-up to check on their welfare. These face-to-face (yet socially distanced!) visits have been really well-received and seem to be making a massive difference in helping avoid the feeling of isolation as the weeks roll on.

Live Sessions

Everywhere you turn at the moment, people are talking about Zoom meetings etc, and this new technology has been invaluable to us during lockdown. We're offering live exercise classes, quizzes and some of our regular sessions this way, and it is fantastic to see more clients joining in week by week, helping them stay connected with us and just as importantly, with each other as well. We have given a high priority to IT as part of our rehab programmes in recent years, and this has certainly proved its worth of late.



Jade hosts a live session for clients



Birthdays go digital!!

As anyone at Headway Birmingham & Solihull will tell you, we do birthdays well! Normally not a client birthday goes by without a card and a chorus of 'Happy Birthday to you' resonating around our centres. And our coordinator Ian wasn't going to let a global pandemic interrupt this best Headway tradition! He has therefore been recording an individual message for every client celebrating their birthday during lockdown and sharing it on our Facebook page, much to the delight of us all! One of the 'high notes' of the situation, you'll agree! Well done, Ian.

Connecting our families/carers during Coronavirus

Here in the Carer Services team, we have been lucky enough for the majority of staff to continue working, albeit from home. Naturally we have had to change the way we work, with the majority of our contact being over the phone, but we have found we are still able to give clients much needed advice and emotional support. For some of our most vulnerable service users, we have been able to help them by delivering shopping or having a supportive chat whilst observing social distancing.

We've also embraced modern technology and started running Carers Meetings at 12 midday every Monday. This is easier than you might think, so if you've never used Zoom before, but you'd welcome the chance to see a friendly face and chat with other carers to hear how they've been coping with lockdown, please email nancy.khan@headway-bs.org.uk and we can help you get set up to join us.



A lighter moment in these difficult times, with our Carers Pat & Eddy looking ready for a bank robbery!



New Counselling Services

We were disappointed to have to suspend our counselling service just before lockdown, but we now have one counsellor who can offer counselling via Skype and another who can offer telephone counselling. If you are on the waiting list for counselling, and would be interested in trying either of these new options, please contact nancy.khan@headway-bs.org.uk or ring 07925 034 889 for information.

A good news story

The focus on our Facebook page has helped increase the number of followers we have, with some posts proving particularly popular.

One such story featured our client James (pictured right) holding one of our new Activity Packs he had been given during a doorstep visit. Look closer and you will see he is holding this in his left hand. Nothing unusual, you may think! However, this signifies a massive step forward for James who had no use in this hand at all until a recent operation to have his plate refitted. Brilliant news for sure!



VOLUNTEERS... if you have at least half a day to spare, please get in touch. We need you, whatever your skills! You can make a difference in so many ways!



'Time spent in lockdown'

Liam, for example, (pictured right, with possibly the most amusing mask we have seen so far!), has had support in his home with completing an application form and has also enjoyed a socially distanced walk out in the fresh air, both with the assistance of Aman, his Lifestyles Worker.



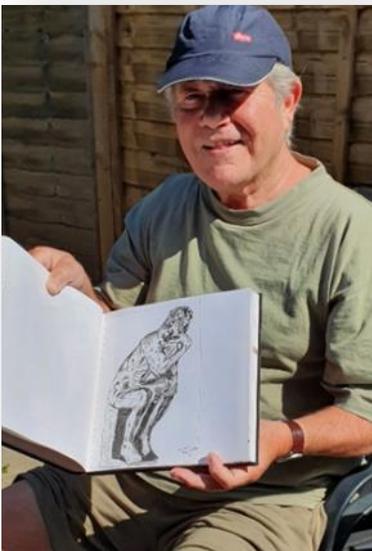
It is equally pleasing to see how much our clients are appreciating our new Remote Services. Here are just a few made on our Facebook page:

"You are doing a fantastic job." – Jane Williams

"Missing you all. Can't wait to get back." – Tina Beck

"It makes all the difference when you are isolated. I too miss all at Headway." – John France

It seems some of our clients have been honing their creative skills while isolating at home. This is some of the artwork and photography shared with us to date – some truly amazing talent!



Paul pictured left with a sketch he showed to staff during a doorstep visit

Right: One of Mark's many wildlife photographs, snapped in his garden



Sharni's hand-drawn green-eyed character

Sprucing up our centres!

The doors to our brain injury hubs may be closed but it's still business as usual for our treasured handyman, Paul. He has taken the opportunity to paint inside while there are fewer people around, and is working as hard as ever to keep our garden spaces looking lovely – not an easy task when everything is growing so quickly! If you are already a Headway volunteer with a few hours to spare and would like to help us with some gardening work, please get in touch.

Call 0121 457 7541 or email personnel1@headway-bs.org.uk.



A chance to de-clutter!

While none of us are enjoying the loss of freedom associated with the government's #StayAtHome policy during the coronavirus outbreak, many of us are seeing it as an opportunity for a good old clear out.

And in line with the saying "One man's trash is another man's treasure", we would ask you to think of us as you de-clutter your homes, sheds and garages!



Our charity shops are a key source of income towards our brain injury services, and so like our centres, we will be re-opening them as soon as it is safe to do so. We would therefore be grateful if you would save your unwanted clothes, books, accessories, games, toys etc for us so that our shelves are as well-stocked as they were pre-lockdown. We also particularly require items of furniture, tools, gardening equipment etc for our Headway Homes shop. Your donations can be dropped off at any one of our three centres now (Headway House, Leighton House or New Sutton House - but please not outside our shops while they are closed). Alternatively, we can arrange collection, following social distance guidelines of course! Please email operationsadmin@headway-bs.org.uk or call 0121 457 7541 to arrange.

DONATIONSPlease do not leave any donations outside of our shops.



Improving life after brain injury

Registered Charity No 1008798
Company Reg number 2686647

Leighton House
20 Chapel Rise,
Birmingham Great Park,
Rednal,
Birmingham B45 9SN

Headway House
Moseley Hall Hospital,
Alcester Road,
Birmingham B13 8JL

New Sutton House
380-384 Birmingham
Road,
Wylde Green,
Sutton Coldfield B72 1YH

Website:

www.headway-bs.org.uk
enquiries@headway-bs.org.uk

Contact telephone:
0121 457 7541

**Headway Charity
Shops:**

Headway Fashion
69 Thornbridge Avenue,
Headway Homes
71 Thornbridge Avenue,
Great Barr,
Birmingham B42 2PW
tel: 0121 357 1296

Headway Fashion
183 New Road,
Rubery,



Our annual Easter Fun Run was not able to go ahead in April as planned due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The medals however were already in production, and so we are planning to hold the Late, Late Easter Fun Run later in the autumn if we possibly can! We will publish details of this as soon as we can fix a new date. In the meantime, thank you to everyone for their patience and understanding, especially our sponsor Frenkel Topping.



Bill enjoys a fishing session

From despair to delight

We've come to the conclusion that a crisis brings out the best and the worst in people. We were devastated when thieves broke in to a locked store at our Leighton House brain injury centre at the start of May and stole all of our fishing gear, including a precious rod belonging to one of our clients, plus some archery equipment and other sports kit. They also caused irreparable damage to a door.

We simply do not have the funds to replace this equipment right now – and in fact we only had it originally thanks largely to a grant from The Angling Trust a couple of years ago. We therefore decided to launch a fundraising appeal to help replace it. The online appeal – called SOS Save Our Sports – has so far raised over £900 and we have also been promised funding towards our sports programme from one local council. The Angling Trust shared the story of the theft with the wider fishing community, resulting in us receiving multiple messages from anglers offering to donate their spare fishing equipment so our clients can get back fishing at the earliest opportunity. We really appreciate this kindness.

The appeal is still live and so if you would like to make a small donation to help replace stolen equipment and keep our sports running in the future, please visit:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/saveoursports>

Masons donation

Freemasonry is known as one of the world's oldest charitable organisations, and we would like to acknowledge just how generous our local group has been to us over the years. We have just received another donation of £500 from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire, while earlier in the year we received a donation of £2,600 from Moseley Masons, raised through a series of fundraising events, including a Ladies' Evening and a Valentine's Ball.



Our client Craig accepts the cheque

Nigel Astley from the local lodge visited our Leighton House brain injury centre to hand over the cheque in person. He was interested to chat with clients and staff and learn more about the range of services we provide. He also inspired us all with his story about his own son who has made remarkable progress since his brain injury. A sincere thank you, from all of us!

Saving Charities



Save the UK's Charities

The coronavirus outbreak has resulted in a massive loss of income for charities across the UK, especially as many key fundraising events, like the Virgin London Marathon (and on a slightly smaller scale, our own Easter Fun Run!) have been indefinitely postponed or cancelled. We were therefore very keen to join in The 2.6 Challenge, a national fundraising idea based on the numbers 2.6 or 26 (as in the number of miles in a full marathon). It was a chance to challenge yourself and raise a few pounds for Headway Birmingham & Solihull at the same time and wow, did we see some impressive challenges!!!

We had our Lifestyles Worker Bev Cooper complete a home-based duathlon, our Communications & Fundraising Manager Julie Wedgbury complete the equivalent of a marathon dressed in a monkey costume, and John & Hilary Porter complete a 26-mile bike ride. Together they raised just over £1,000 and while this was fantastic, it was well and truly surpassed by our client Martin and his 2.6 Challenge!

Martin, with the support of his family (aka Team Kinning - pictured right), set himself the challenge of walking 2.6 times around his local cricket pitch, a big ask for someone who has had to re-learn how to walk following his brain injury. And like so much in life, it was the support he had during his challenge that helped him through – with his youngest daughter Alice in charge of clapping, his oldest daughter Sophie responsible for cheering and his wife Rachel organising the chair for the occasional rest-up!

We are delighted to report that Martin not only completed his 2.6 Challenge, he also raised an amazing £2,500 including Gift Aid too. Congratulations & thank you!



Thank you to everyone who supported our charity pub quiz and raffle at The Oak Tree pub in Rednal in March, including the pub itself for letting us use their function room without charge. A total of £370 was raised during the evening, and a good time was had by all! We plan to hold another quiz as soon as it's safe to do so, and so keep an eye on our Facebook page for the date of this and future Headway Birmingham & Solihull events.