

News & Views

A WELCOME STEP FORWARD!

We had very much hoped to be bringing you good news on the re-opening of our centres in this edition of our newsletter. We are not there yet... but we are moving closer day-by-day and there is plenty to be positive about!



The roll-out of the COVID vaccination programme, for example. The majority of our staff have now had their first jabs, and have dates for their second in their diaries. Some of our clients and carers have also been vaccinated and we will continue to support both groups through this process. This, along with the stringent safety measures already in place at our centres, can only help reduce the risk of infection for everyone at Headway Birmingham & Solihull as we resume normal services.

Our CEO Sue Tyler says: "It is a significant step forward, and we hope the majority of our staff and clients will take up the opportunity to be vaccinated and benefit from the protection this brings.

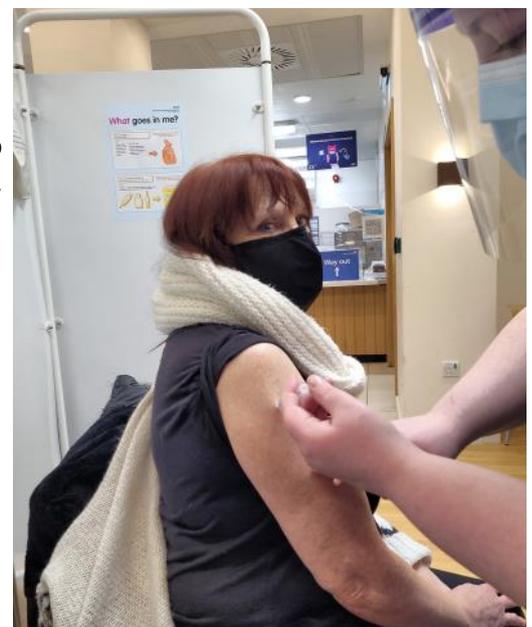
"We cannot wait to get our centres fully reopened and certainly hope that this will be the position by the time we publish our summer newsletter!"

She confirmed that Headway is continuing to offer the best support it can to clients and carers within the latest government guidelines, with Carers and Lifestyles operating near to their regular services, and ABI (Acquired Brain Injury) Services continuing to run remotely while the doors to Headway House, Leighton House and New Sutton House remain closed.

She added: "As an extra precaution, we are also asking staff to do a weekly coronavirus test, and will offer tests to clients too as they return to our centres. This will help limit potential outbreaks and offer reassurance to everyone connected to the charity."

Pictured right is our Lifestyle Worker Mags Leonard who chose to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham to have her vaccination.

She was super-impressed with the organisation and the friendliness of staff at the hospital, and said: "They made me feel really at ease and I was in and out in 30 minutes!"



Project Christmas Cheer!

The coronavirus outbreak undoubtedly made 2020 one of the most difficult years on record. However, our thoughtful staff were determined to end the year on a high note and were delighted to get the 'go ahead' from the Trustees for Project Christmas Cheer. Funds raised and other donations allowed us to send a Christmas gift bag to all our clients and food hampers to those most in need. We were so pleased to be able to help everyone to have a brighter Christmas, but also let people know we are here to support them and how much we care.



It would be an understatement to say these gifts were well-received! Everyone was delighted to get a knock on their door during December, not only to see the friendly faces of our coordinators, but to have a bag full of Christmas goodies presented to them, too.

Filling the Christmas bag hampers was a feat of logistics, as shown by our 'behind the scenes' photograph above! And delivering them was equally as challenging, but so very rewarding for all involved.

CEO Sue Tyler thanked all the staff involved for working extremely hard to make this project so successful.

Our ABI Coordinator Sarah Kelly said: "The idea to reach out in this way was inspired and facilitating it was a huge effort. But I would do it all again tomorrow to see the joy, surprise and sometimes tears of our lovely clients!"

She spoke to our client Ash Ahmed over the Christmas period and passed on his appreciation: "You are so kind to think of me and my family. I am very grateful and this has made me so happy and made a big difference to our Christmas."

This, and the many other thank you messages we received, suggest the hampers had just the impact we intended!

Some of the many appreciation messages received from clients following the Christmas hamper deliveries:

"I was taken aback by Headway's kindness."

"I loved the present and staff singing Merry Christmas to me!"

"This was such a kind gesture after the hard year we've all had."

"I was able to eat well over Christmas, and had presents, thanks to Headway."

Smiles as clients receive their Christmas surprise!



VOLUNTEERS... we hope soon to welcome back our many volunteers. We need you!



A chance to Thrive!

Thrive Birmingham runs a variety of social and therapeutic horticulture sessions in Kings Heath Park, giving people an opportunity to learn new skills they can take away and use in their own gardens. Several clients from Headway Birmingham & Solihull (*including Teena Beck and Alan Johnson, pictured right*) attended a 12-week Life Changers programme at the centre and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. *Well done, all!*



Chris's Creations!



Our client Chris Hawkins, who normally attends our New Sutton House centre, has been busy during lockdown creating a series of themed word search puzzles. These were so good that they were included with some of our activity packs sent out to other clients during December.

Thank you, Chris. They were very much enjoyed by all who received one, with many asking for further supplies!

Food Glorious Food!

We are now offering pre-recorded cook-along sessions as part of our weekly online timetable.

Our ABI Coordinator Sarah Wood, who runs the Sunday morning sessions, said: "We'd love to see more people taking part, and more people sharing photos of their cooking on our Facebook page. Cooking is a great way of keeping busy – especially as you can sit down afterwards and enjoy the results of your efforts!"

She also thanked Margaret and Brian Hawker who recently donated a brand new air fryer for use at New Sutton House. She said: "This is helping our cook-along sessions now and will be invaluable for our regular cookery sessions when our brain injury centres re-open. Thank you so much!"



Such talented artists!

During a recent doorstep visit, we challenged client Barry Carter to channel his superior art skills to create a special piece of work. And this was the result (*right*) – a template postcard featuring some of our staff, with very accurate likenesses!

With brain injury, memory and facial recognition can be affected so having the staff faces on a card helps people to make the connection to us. *Amazing work, Barry!*



Meanwhile, our client Paul Bamborough has created this fantastic piece of artwork (*left*) depicting the brain, which is now proudly displayed at our New Sutton House hub ready for clients to see when they return! This piece, and more than 50 others in his art book, have kept him busy during lockdown. *Well done Paul, keep up the great work!*

DONATIONS... Don't forget we are always in need of your donations for our charity shops ...clothes, toys, books, small furniture, bric-a-brac, furnishings etc.



Improving life after brain injury

Registered Charity No 1008798
Company Reg number 2686647

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Headway House
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Ruby Thomas, aged 4, ready for her Egg & Spoon Challenge

Co-op Cause

Our local Co-op in Rubery may have undergone a complete refurbishment recently, but we have still been able to rely on their ongoing support. They sent us a seasonal hamper as part of their 'A Little bit of Christmas Cheer' campaign which we raffled off to staff to raise £54.



And Headway Birmingham & Solihull is still one of their chosen causes for 2020/2021, and so please remember to use your Co-op Membership card as you shop to ensure we benefit from the 2p in the pound donation from all own-brand purchases.

Visit <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/48211> for more information.

Remembering Ken

We would like to extend our condolences to the family and friends of Ken Humpherson, who sadly passed away in October last year following a brain haemorrhage. Donations at his funeral and via a Just Giving page set up in his memory raised an incredible £2,000 for our local brain injury services. Thank you so much.

A donation with a difference!

Sincere thanks to Alan Bressington from our Carers Services team who kindly donated a Victorian mantel clock for us to sell to raise funds. This beautiful time-piece generated a great deal of interest and sold on eBay for £82.

We also sold a wooden chess set donated via our charity shop this way, reaching collectors likely to offer a higher price than the item might realise in the shop.

If you have any unwanted items, especially any unusual ones like these, please think of Headway before disposing of them. Thank you!



Grand Raffle Success!

We are delighted to confirm that our Grand Raffle, drawn live on Facebook just before Christmas, raised £1,669 after costs. Huge thanks to everyone who supported us with this, whether by donating prizes or buying or selling tickets. We simply couldn't do it without you!

And finally...

Our Easter Fun Run is not able to go ahead this year due to ongoing coronavirus restrictions, but we are holding an **Easter Raffle** and an **Egg & Spoon Challenge** to have some fun and replace some of the lost income. For more details, visit www.headway-bs.org.uk or email fundraising@headway-bs.org.uk.

Your support will be more appreciated than ever in these difficult times!

Many thanks to all our supporters, members and clients. We hope to see you all soon!