



the brain injury association

About Headway East Northants

Introduction to Headway – the brain injury association

Headway is a national charity that helps and supports people with brain injuries, their families and carers. Headway supports people in a number of ways both nationally and locally via a network of local Groups and Branches; Headway East Northants is a local Group and an independently registered charitable company affiliated to Headway.

What is our main purpose?

Our purpose is to help people in their recovery from head injuries or brain diseases like tumours or meningitis. We aim to support brain injured people to return to as normal and independent a life as possible within the community, including a return to work where possible. Generally individuals are within the age range 18-65. This help can extend to the friends and families who care for them from the initial stages through the whole recovery process.

What happens at Headway East Northants?

At Headway East Northants we provide a day service in Irthlingborough for people with an acquired brain injury (ABI). The Headway Centre prides itself on providing a safe but challenging environment. Offering a range of activities to stimulate the brain, improve memory, concentration and coordination. Centre activities include music making, arts and crafts, gentle exercises including visits to the gym, wii sports and fitness, relaxation sessions, working with wood, computer skills, memory and board games and quizzes and an audio book group.

We have recently been awarded funding to set up an outreach service. Taking referrals from health service staff the Family Support Worker will work with families very early on possibly when their loved one is still in hospital. A volunteer Coordinator will recruit and train volunteer mentors who will work with brain injured people who perhaps do not meet the criteria to access services but would benefit from having someone who will support them within their own community. The charity is very excited about this new development.

When are we open?

The Headway Centre is open from 10am until 4pm Monday – Thursday to services users. The outreach service will be available more flexibly and may include evening and weekend working.

What is an Acquired Brain Injury?

An Acquired Brain Injury can be caused by a blow to the head (traumatic brain injury) such as a result of a road traffic collision, fall, and assault or can be caused by infections, tumour, brain haemorrhage, and stroke. You can find out more about brain injury from the leaflets or from the website: www.headway.org.uk.

What are the effects of a brain injury?

The effects of a brain injury can be devastating to both the person with the injury and their family and friends and can completely change the lives of the person with the injury and those around them. The problems may not be obvious to other people and because of this it is often referred to as a 'hidden disability'. Someone with a brain injury may have difficulties (at varying degrees) with all or some of the following:

Physical and Sensory

Persistent headaches, dizziness and loss of balance, nausea, visual disturbances (blurred vision, double vision, dislike of bright lights), being easily upset by loud noise, altered sleep patterns, fatigues

Cognitive

Difficulties with attention, concentration and problem solving; problems with long and short-term memory; taking longer to think.

Behavioural and mood changes

Being irritable or easily angered, restlessness, feeling frustrated or impatient, impulsivity and self-control problems, feeling depressed, tearful or anxious

Are there any Rules and Regulations?

As a charitable company we must comply with Company and Charity Law as well as adhering to Headway national organisational and service standards. We have a duty to provide a safe environment for all our staff, volunteers and service users and to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and properly.

How are we funded?

We receive funding from various sources. These include Northamptonshire County Council, NHS Northamptonshire and from some trust funders. We have to find the rest from our own fundraising events and efforts from individual fundraisers, such as our marathon runners and voluntary donations, thus enabling us to offer an enhanced service, wider range of activities and outings.