

Headway Swindon



the brain injury association

HEADWAY SWINDON

Spring
Newsletter
2026

WELCOME TO OUR SPRING NEWSLETTER



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Chief Officer welcome - pg 3
- Clients Story - pg 4
- Hero's Journey - pg 5 & pg 6
- Pancake Day Fun - pg 7
- Staff Training Updates - pg 8
- Making a difference - pg 9
- Easter Activities - pg 10
- Headway Together - pg 11
- Our Healthy Creations - pg 12
- Power Hour update - pg 13
- Spring Planting - pg 14
- Charity of the Month - pg 15
- New Starter - pg 16
- Client cooking session - pg 17
- Upcoming Events- pg 18
- A Taste of Spring Recipe - pg 19
- Brain Training - pg 20
- Ways to donate - pg 21
- Thank you's - pg 22
- Contact Details - pg 23



GREETINGS FROM CHIEF OFFICER - SONIA!



As we welcome the spring season, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the positivity, creativity and progress we continue to see across Headway Swindon. Spring is a time of renewal, and that sense of fresh energy is very much alive within our community.

I am delighted to recognise the wonderful support of our partners, Zurich Community Trust, whose commitment has enabled us to further diversify our programme. Their generous support has helped us focus on health, supporting people living with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) to build confidence, knowledge and healthier routines that can make a real difference to everyday life.

We have also been proud to strengthen our relationship with Swindon Borough Council, who have chosen Headway Swindon as their preferred provider of ABI services for Swindon residents. This recognition reflects the quality, dedication and impact of the work being delivered by our team and reinforces our shared commitment to supporting people affected by brain injury within the local community.

We have seen so much progress recently, particularly through activities focused on exercise, nutrition and cooking. It has been inspiring to see people engage so positively, learning practical skills and enjoying shared experiences together. One recent highlight was a session all about eggs exploring their nutritional benefits, how to prepare them safely and healthily followed by everyone enjoying a delicious healthy egg on toast breakfast together. Moments like these may seem simple, but they represent meaningful steps towards independence and wellbeing.

This spring has seen the launch of our Family and Carer Peer Support sessions. These sessions aim to bring families together, offering a safe and supportive space to share experiences, provide advice and help guide one another through difficult and challenging moments. Supporting carers and families is vital, and we look forward to seeing these sessions grow.

We always enjoy hearing about people's progress while at Headway Swindon. Celebrating achievements big and small motivates everyone to try harder, support one another and enjoy each success together.

Thank you to our clients, families, staff, volunteers and partners for making Headway Swindon such a supportive and inspiring community. We are excited to continue this journey together over the months ahead.

Warmest regards,

CLIENT STORY



This is Vicki and here is her story:

I was staying with my sister in Carlisle and travelling back on the 28th of August 2025 after a wonderful week with my big sister. My connecting train had been cancelled, which put my stress levels through the roof. We spent the morning trying to sort out how I was going to get home, and by the time I arrived at Carlisle railway station, everything was in place.

The stress of the morning had given me a headache, so I took some paracetamol. Whilst on the train, it suddenly felt like I had been hit with a brick over the back of my head. By the time I got to Birmingham, I thought I was going to pass out from the pain. I took codeine, which didn't help. I struggled to understand basic instructions from passenger assist staff. I got back to my partner's house in Northamptonshire and took migraine tablets and ibuprofen. These didn't help either. Despite the pain being unbearable, I had to be back home on the morning of the 29th August, so I drove home very carefully.

I contacted the pharmacist about the headache, who said I needed to see the GP urgently. I saw the GP who sent me straight to Great Western Hospital, where I was triaged within eight minutes and scanned within 30. I had a subarachnoid haemorrhage (a bleed on the brain) and was transferred to the John Radcliffe Hospital by ambulance overnight. I had a craniotomy the following lunchtime and was in the hospital for 12 days.

Prior to my brain injury, I was a volunteer motorsport official in four-wheel motorsport, which I am currently unable to do. This is heartbreaking, as motorsport is a huge part of my life and where I met my partner. I am studying for a degree with the Open University and find reading very difficult; not the ideal situation when trying to study! Thankfully, there are assistive technologies that can read my textbooks and online materials to me. I get tired very easily now and take a nap most days to get through the day. I have daily pain in my surgical scar line, which can be quite debilitating but is helped with paracetamol and rest. My mobility has decreased, and I get quite frustrated with this, as I cannot do what I want to do.

Headway has helped me feel less alone, given me a chance to laugh again with the new friends I have made, and connect with others who understand. It's still early days at Headway, but I feel that every session I attend is hugely beneficial as I learn to navigate my new normal.

HERO'S JOURNEY UPDATE

A transformative approach to Brain Injury Rehabilitation

Recent sessions have focused on how brain injury affects thinking skills, self-image, and cognitive processing. Through reflection, practice, and discussion, clients are learning to adjust to their new selves and strengthen their skills for daily life.

Section 10 – Flower Power

Following a brain injury, many skills that were once automatic can return to a conscious level. This can affect how we remember information, ignore distractions, or make sense of what we hear. Rehabilitation aims to move these skills back to the automatic level through practice and repetition, helping the brain develop new neural pathways.

We explored thinking skills: sustained attention (staying focused), selective attention (focusing on what's important), and divided attention (managing multiple tasks).

Section 11 – The Compass: Learning About Yourself

Education helps individuals understand themselves and the changes after a brain injury. Process training practises skills that need improvement, strategy training identifies ways to compensate for difficulties, and functional activities training applies skills in real-life situations. During the session, clients practised sustained attention, maintaining focus on tasks to strengthen concentration and support recovery.



Section 12 – Who Am I? How Can I Adjust to My New Self?

We reflected on how our sense of self is built from life experiences and how a brain injury can suddenly shift this, making the old self-image no longer match current abilities.

A client shared: "I've had a lot of time to reflect since my stroke and I'm now trying to focus more on myself rather than always prioritising others. Sometimes I still struggle to find the right words, but I felt I concentrated well during the session."

Section 13 – The Shattered Mirror

This session explored rebuilding self-image after injury. The "mirror" may feel broken, and the task is to piece together a new reflection, recognising it may differ from the past self.

Section 14 – Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Clients reflected on challenges faced during rehabilitation, acknowledging that early stages can feel confusing and upside down. They practised sustained attention, maintaining focus on discussions and activities to support recovery.

Section 15 – Turning Cogs

This session focused on cognitive changes clients have noticed since their brain injury, and how these affect the way they make sense of the world. Sometimes this means processing information more slowly or interpreting situations differently, which can lead to mistakes or slower responses.

Some individuals may not notice these changes themselves, but others around them often do. The session encouraged reflection and discussion about strategies to manage these changes effectively in daily life.



PANCAKE DAY FUN

BACK IN FEBRUARY, OUR CLIENTS ENJOYED A TASTY TREAT AS PANCAKES WERE SERVED STRAIGHT FROM THE TROLLEY BY OUR STUDENTS. THERE WERE LOTS OF SMILES AND LAUGHTER AS EVERYONE GOT TO ENJOY THE DELICIOUS PANCAKES, AND ONE SOLE PANCAKE MAKER BEHIND THE SCENES REALLY IMPRESSED WITH THEIR FLIPPING SKILLS!

FUN FACT: THE WORLD RECORD FOR THE MOST PANCAKES FLIPPED IN ONE MINUTE IS 140 – A CHALLENGE WE MIGHT JUST TRY ONE DAY!



STAFF TRAINING UPDATES

Our staff have been busy enhancing their skills to better support our clients. Recently, they completed a First Aid at work course to refresh emergency response skills and ensure a safe environment for everyone.

In addition, staff received training from CGL (Change, Grow, Live) on addiction and alcohol, helping them understand the challenges clients may face and how to provide informed, compassionate support.



**Change
Grow
Live**



MAKING A DIFFERENCE



A big thank you to the volunteers from St. James's Place, who recently spent time with us at our Dorcan centre. Three members of the team joined us for a fun and creative day, getting involved in Easter cookie baking and decorating, arts and crafts, and making Easter bonnets, with our clients thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to spend time together, get creative, and take part in these seasonal activities.



If you'd like to volunteer with us, we'd love to hear from you!
Please call us on 01793 674820 or email
caroline@headwayswindon.org.uk

Activities

Our clients Easter artwork has been proudly put on display around the centre, brightening up the space and showcasing everyone's creativity and effort. The clients thoroughly enjoyed getting involved in the activities, from designing their artwork, baking Easter cookies, to taking part in fun Easter games, and quizzes.

Also a big thank you to Zurich Community Trust & Tesco Ocotol Way for kindly donating Easter eggs for every client to enjoy.



“Headway Together”

Our Peer Support Group has now held two sessions, giving carers and family members the chance to share experiences, reflect on their journeys, and support each other following a loved one's brain injury. The sessions have been positive, with participants appreciating the opportunity to connect and learn from one another.

The group continues to meet on the first Thursday of every month, providing an ongoing space for carers and family members to connect, reflect, and grow together.

“HEADWAY TOGETHER”

FAMILY AND CARER PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Living with someone with a brain injury can feel overwhelming, but you don't have to face it alone. At Headway Swindon our Family & Carers Peer Support Group offers a safe and welcoming space to connect with others who truly understand.



What you can expect:

- Share experiences with others who understand
- Gain practical advice for daily life
- Find emotional support in a friendly, non-judgmental space
- Build confidence, resilience, and hope for the journey ahead

Our support group meets on the 1st Thursday of every month
1.30pm – 3pm, starting the 5th March 2026

If you'd like to join our support group or have any questions,
please call us on 01793 674820 or email us at
info@headwayswindon.org.uk

Headway Swindon & District
Avocet House, The Dorcan Complex, Faraday Road,
Dorcan, Swindon, SN3 5HQ
01793 674820
info@headwayswindon.org.uk
www.headwayswindon.org.uk

Headway Swindon

the brain injury association
Registered Charity 1021036



OUR HEALTHY CREATIONS

Our clients have been getting creative in the kitchen using the Headway cookbook, trying out recipes like scrambled eggs on toast, vegan pancakes, and healthy berry smoothies.

Cooking and preparing meals is more than just fun - it helps clients:

- * Develop Independence and life skills by following recipes and managing ingredients
- * Boost brain function and concentration, as planning and preparing food engages memory and problem solving skills
- * Support physical health with nutritious ingredients that provide energy and essential nutrients
- * Encourage social interaction and confidence when cooking together and sharing meals

It has been wonderful to see clients enjoy their creations, try new foods and take pride in their healthy eating achievements

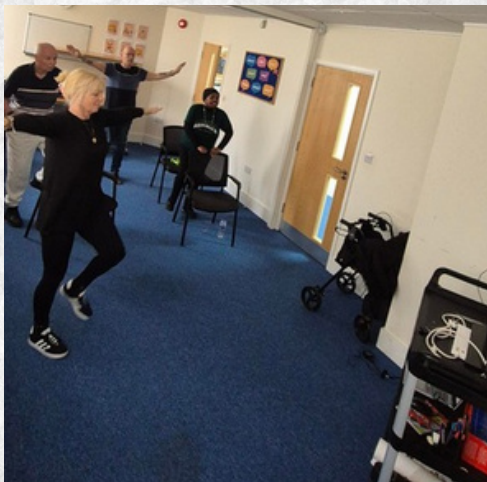


POWER HOUR UPDATE

Our clients are loving Power Hour, the exercise class led by Mandy! Each session is designed to be fun, accessible, and energising, helping clients improve strength, balance, coordination, and overall wellbeing.

The class also supports cognitive skills, as participants follow instructions, focus on movements, and stay engaged throughout the session. It's fantastic to see everyone smiling, motivated, and enjoying the social aspect of exercising together.

Power Hour has become a highlight of the week, giving clients a chance to boost both body and mind in a supportive and friendly environment.





Spring Planting



As part of our Spring Planting activities, one of our clients has been busy spending time in the garden area, getting hands-on with a variety of new plants that have recently been purchased from TWIGS. It has been wonderful to see their enthusiasm, from planting and arranging to taking pride in helping to refresh and brighten the outdoor space.

The sessions have provided a great opportunity to enjoy the fresh air and take part in something creative and rewarding.

We are looking forward to watching the garden grow and flourish over the coming weeks.



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

We're pleased to share that we've been selected as Hilton's Charity of the Month for September!

We're currently in the early planning stages, so it's very much a watch this space moment – but we're excited about what's to come.

Some of the ideas we're exploring include running a stall for the day with activities such as a cake sale, a "guess the sweets" game and a raffle.

We'd love for this to be a real team effort, so if you'd like to get involved - whether that's baking, donating raffle prizes, helping on the stall, or sharing ideas - we'd really appreciate your support.

More details will be shared soon!



Meet our New Staff Member



Hi everyone,

My name is Dannielle and I'm really excited to be joining the team at Headway as a Support Worker in April.

I've previously worked as a Rehabilitation Assistant within a Community Stroke Team for 16 years, where I supported individuals with a wide range of physical, cognitive, and communication needs. Through this role, I've developed a strong passion for person-centred care and helping people regain confidence and independence in their day-to-day lives.

Outside of work, I'm the chairperson, coach and player in a local netball team, which I really enjoy. It's a great way for me to stay active and connect with others. I also enjoy spending time with my family and children, exploring new places.

I'm really looking forward to meeting everyone and supporting the clients at Headway in any way I can. If you see me around, come and say Hi x

Cooking Session

As part of his journey, Andrew has been exploring cooking as a way to reconnect with memories and practise new skills.

Andrew shared his experience:

“I’ve really been enjoying cooking lately and have been rediscovering recipes through memory recall - trying out dishes I used to make before my brain injury. Recently at Headway, I made a lasagne with some assistance from Caroline and found the recipe easy to follow.

Instead of using white sauce, I used crème fraîche, just as I would have done before my injury. The lasagne came out well and was very tasty! I plan to try the recipe again at home, as repeating recipes helps me with memory and allows me to adapt it further - like adding extra cheese for my dinner.

I’m excited to try more recipes. Caroline and I have discussed making Eton Mess, and while I’ll need to adapt the sugar for my diabetes, Caroline has kindly offered to assist me.”





UPCOMING EVENTS



Headway Peer Support Group - 7th May 2026



ABI Week - 18th May 2026



Twigs & Creative Arts - Tuesday 19th May 2026



Volunteers Week - 1st-7th June 2026



Carers Week - 8th-14th June 2026



A TASTE OF SPRING RECIPE

Lemon Chicken & Veg Traybake



Servings: 2

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 25-30 minutes

Ingredients

	2 Chicken Breasts	
	200g Baby Potatoes (halved)	
	100g Asparagus, (woody ends removed) or green beans	
	1 Carrot (Sliced)	
	1 Tablespoon Olive Oil	
	½ lemon, juiced or sliced	
	Salt and Pepper to taste	

Love cooking?

This simple spring recipe is a great way to enjoy something tasty as the days start to warm up this April

For more step-by-step recipes, tips, and hints to make cooking easier after a brain injury, check out our Headway Brain Injury Cookbook.

Copies are available for £25



Spring Lemon Chicken and Veg Tray Bake

What to do

1.	Heat the oven to 200 C	
2.	Put the potatoes and carrots on a baking tray	
3.	Place the chicken breasts on the tray	
4.	Add the asparagus or green beans	
5.	Drizzle everything with olive oil and lemon juice	
6.	Sprinkle with salt and pepper	
7.	Bake for 25-30 minutes until the chicken is cooked	



Headway Hint:

Use pre chopped or frozen vegetables

BRAIN TRAINING



Spring Word Search

BLOSSOM
BLOOM
FLOWERS
RAIN
SHOWERS
EASTER
SPRING BREAK
GRASS
HATCH
BIRDS
SUNSHINE
SEASON
MARCH
APRIL
MAY

N	L	M	O	R	D	Y	S	M	B	M	O	O	L	B
N	I	A	R	M	E	L	E	S	E	E	A	W	O	G
U	O	Y	E	L	O	S	E	A	S	O	N	M	S	S
L	M	L	I	O	D	N	E	K	L	A	Y	R	P	H
H	C	T	A	H	I	N	G	O	L	D	B	R	K	U
U	T	P	E	H	O	O	D	I	O	O	I	F	C	L
Y	T	I	S	R	E	T	R	M	D	N	T	R	E	U
V	W	N	A	O	E	P	J	T	G	N	E	D	X	V
E	U	G	R	N	A	D	M	B	R	A	Y	A	T	E
S	L	M	E	U	B	G	R	T	A	S	O	U	P	A
R	E	F	G	L	C	E	B	T	S	I	R	G	A	S
B	A	L	Y	B	A	E	N	O	S	R	E	H	R	T
Y	A	O	I	K	D	O	O	H	R	E	H	O	H	E
U	Y	W	E	M	S	H	O	W	E	R	S	E	D	R
C	H	E	F	A	M	C	L	Y	O	G	D	R	E	S
X	L	R	O	V	Z	R	C	O	J	B	R	I	N	O
F	I	S	E	A	R	A	K	S	L	E	I	O	E	L
B	L	O	S	S	O	M	C	B	J	W	B	M	O	B

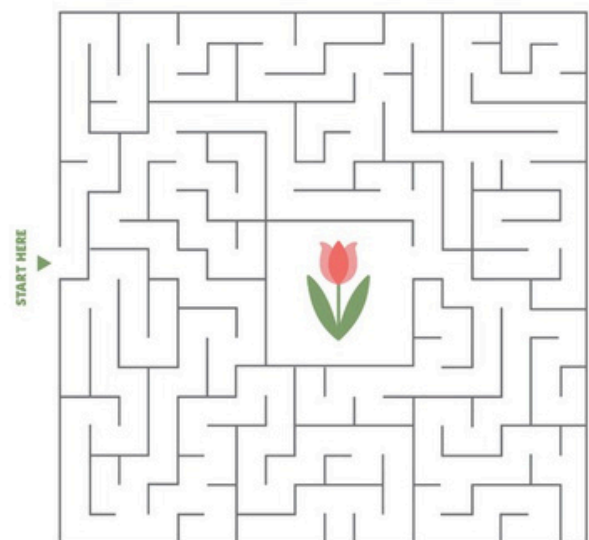
Solve the Sudoku Puzzle

8		1	4	5		7		2
			8	7				
		9	3	2	1	6		
		5	6	8	4	9	2	
					7			
	6			1			9	8
	9			6	5			1
5			9			3		

SPRING MAZE

Find your way through the maze to reach
the flower in the center.

Happy Spring!



EXPLORE OUR NEW DONATION OPTIONS

If you are interested in supporting our work, there are various ways you can make a donation:



JustGiving™

If you're taking on a challenge or holding your own event, the QR code will take you straight to our main donation page.



amazon wishlist

Check out our Amazon wish list! Every item you buy helps us reach our goals



easyfundraising

Easy Fundraiser partners with over 7,500 brands who will donate part of what you spend. It won't cost you any extra. The cost is covered by the Brand

Cheque:
You can make any donations by cheque. If you are posting your cheque please enclose your contact details (e.g. address) so that we can thank you.

Recycle Charity

Donate your used Ink Cartridges and together we can help reduce landfill and raise money at the same time!



Tickets for the lottery cost just £1 a week. Each ticket has a 1 in 50 chance to win a prize each week, with a top prize of £25,000!



Raise money when you shop online at no extra cost to you! Simply sign up for an account and start shopping to make a difference!



CAF Pay As You Earn

This is the UK's number one Payroll Giving scheme for employers.



For more information please go to:

<http://headwayswindon.org.uk/support-us/donate/>

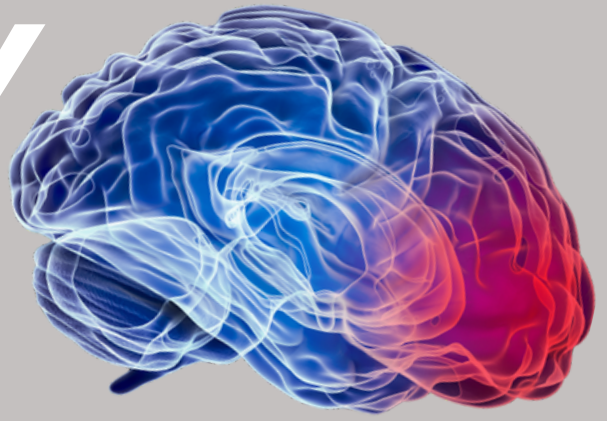


THANK
.. YOU
😊

Headway extends its gratitude to our donators for their generous contributions and unwavering support; your help means a lot to us, and we are truly thankful.

-  Chaps Tratos Cavi UK Ltd
-  John Kennedy
-  Zurich Community Trust
-  Pat Jefferies
-  Tesco Ocotal Way
-  St. James's Park
-  Wing
-  James Kennedy

HEADWAY SWINDON



THE BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION

Contact Us



01793 674820



info@headwayswindon.org.uk



www.headwayswindon.org.uk



Avocet House, The Dorcan
Complex, Faraday Road, Dorcan,
Swindon, SN3 5HQ

Headway Swindon



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



the brain injury association

Registered Charity No.1021036