

Headway Swindon



the brain injury association

HEADWAY SWINDON

Summer
Newsletter
2026

WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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GREETINGS FROM CHIEF OFFICER - SONIA!



As we welcome another summer at Headway Swindon, I am delighted to share this latest edition of our newsletter, celebrating the people, partnerships and achievements that continue to make our community so special.

This edition features inspiring client stories that highlight both the challenges of living with a brain injury and the life-changing difference that the right support, understanding and opportunities can make. Their courage and resilience continue to inspire us all.

We are pleased to see our Family Peer Support Programme continue to grow, providing families with a welcoming space to share experiences, gain practical advice and support one another.

Our Hero's Journey programme has also gone from strength to strength, helping participants better understand their brain injury through reflection, self-discovery and shared experiences. This summer, we have celebrated the incredible contribution of our carers and volunteers, whose dedication and compassion are at the heart of everything we do.

We are grateful for the continued support of Zurich Community Cares, whose partnership has helped fund activities, refresh our centre and create memorable experiences for our clients. Our music therapy sessions with Gill continue to bring joy, confidence and improved wellbeing, while our Zurich-funded healthy eating and exercise programme is helping clients develop healthier habits, build confidence and enjoy learning together.

Thank you to our clients, families, carers, volunteers, staff and supporters for making all of this possible. I hope you enjoy reading about the many activities and achievements featured in this edition as, together, we continue to build a stronger, more connected community for everyone affected by brain injury.

CLIENT STORY



This is Ann and here is her story:

In March 2025, at the age of 58, my life changed forever.

I spent three weeks in the John Radcliffe Hospital after suffering three blood clots on my brain. Before this happened, I loved my job working for a wire and cable company, making wiring looms for Bentley, Rolls-Royce, Land Rover, the MOD, Supacat and Jackal vehicles. I was proud of the work I did, but after my brain injury I had to give up the job I loved.

Since then, my whole life has changed. The loss of my job, my confidence, and my independence. I struggled with depression and often felt very alone. Living with a brain injury has left me with memory loss, speech difficulties, balance problems and overwhelming fatigue. These challenges affect my everyday life in ways that many people cannot see.

In March 2026, I was invited to Headway. It has been a place where I can learn to understand and accept my brain injury, while also helping to raise awareness for others living with similar challenges.

Headway has been an absolute godsend. One of the first things they gave me was a Brain Injury ID Card. That simple card has given me the confidence to go out in public again because it helps people understand the hidden effects of my injury.

Headway is the only brain injury association in Swindon, and it has become a place where I feel safe, supported and happy. I honestly don't know what I would have done without them.

Thank you to everyone at Headway who has helped me on my journey. You are amazing.



Peer Support Update



Our peer support sessions provide a supportive space for open discussion and shared experiences among family/carers.

The latest group focused on the challenges that can arise when caring for a loved one, including the emotional impact this can have and the importance of accessing appropriate support. There was also discussion around frustrations family/carers may experience when trying to navigate health and care services.

The importance of peer support was highlighted throughout, with members encouraged to share experiences, listen to one another, and recognise that they are not alone in what they are going through. The value of respite care was also discussed, with information shared for those who may wish to explore this further.

The group reflected on the pressures of caring and the importance of looking after their own wellbeing, maintaining personal interests where possible, and seeking support when needed.

Overall, the sessions are very positive, with attendees commenting on how helpful it is to talk openly with others in similar situations and that they go away feeling more supported.

Our next Peer Support Session is:

Thursday 3rd September

1.30pm - 3pm

“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

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Headway Swindon
The Headway Organisation
Registered Charity 1021036



HERO'S JOURNEY UPDATE

A transformative approach to Brain Injury Rehabilitation

As part of our ongoing Hero's Journey programme, we have continued to explore the different cognitive skills that can be affected following a brain injury. Using practical examples and visual metaphors, the sessions help participants understand how the brain processes information, why everyday tasks can sometimes feel more difficult, and how rehabilitation can support recovery.



Section 16: Building a Wall

This week, we explored how a wall is built from the bottom up to make sure it is stable and strong. This reflects the way cognitive skills are developed and how they help us interact with, and make sense of, the world around us.

We discussed how a brain injury can be compared to a demolition ball hitting the wall. Some "bricks" may be knocked out or damaged, while the "cement" holding them together may also be affected. This can weaken the overall stability and strength of a person's cognitive skills. Rehabilitation helps to identify the damaged areas and encourage new neural pathways to support lost or affected functions.



Section 17: The Treacle Monster

We discussed how many people experience a feeling of thinking through fog or treacle following a brain injury. Thoughts may not feel as fluid or easy as they once did, and everyday thinking can require more effort.

The aim is to improve flexibility and fluidity of thinking, helping individuals regain a greater sense of control and confidence in their own skills.



Section 18: I'm Eva

This session explored the way we make sense of the world and the many complex processes involved. Cognition can be understood through five key areas: information processing, memory, executive functions, visual processing and attention. Understanding these areas, and how they work together, can help individuals organise and make sense of their rehabilitation journey.





Section 19: The Foundation

We looked at attention as the foundation of cognitive skills. If attention has been affected by a brain injury, the stability of the whole cognitive structure can feel shaky. The session focused on identifying any changes in attention skills since the brain injury and understanding how these changes may affect day-to-day life.



Section 20: Attention Jigsaw

We explored how the different parts of attention fit together like a jigsaw puzzle to create a complete picture or process.

Attention is not just one skill. It includes focused attention, sustained attention, selective attention, alternating attention and divided attention. Understanding these different areas can help people recognise their own strengths and challenges.



Section 21: Canadian Logging River

This session looked at what happens when there is too much information for the brain to manage. People may feel that things are happening too quickly, experience a fuzzy head, become irritated or frustrated, or feel the need to switch off.

Understanding this experience can help individuals explain how overload feels to others and identify what support may be helpful. By managing the number of “logs”, or pieces of information, going through the system, it can become easier to reduce overload.



Section 22: The Capacity Bucket

We discussed how capacity can reduce following a brain injury. This can mean that someone feels overloaded more quickly, which may lead to frustration, anger, blaming others or giving up. Learning to recognise and manage capacity can help prevent overload and make daily tasks feel more manageable.



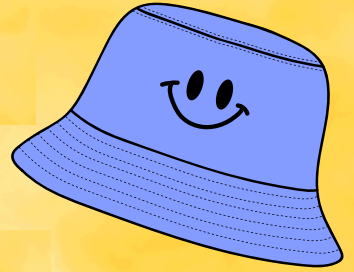
Section 23: Postal Sorting Office

We explored how making sense of information involves decoding, organising, matching and adjusting. This process relies on both attention and memory skills and is usually very quick and automatic. When information is new or complex, we often need to use deliberate processing, which is slower and requires more effort. Brain injury can reduce the ability to use automatic processing, meaning that people may need to work much harder to make sense of everyday information. This can be one reason why fatigue is so common.





HATS FOR HEADWAY DAY



On Friday 15 May, we marked Hats for Headway Day with plenty of fun, creativity and colour at our centre.

Our clients enjoyed decorating hats and adding their own personal touch, creating a wonderful range of unique designs.

From bright colours and eye-catching decorations to thoughtful finishing touches, everyone embraced the activity and had the opportunity to show off their creativity.

The day was a lovely chance for clients to come together, enjoy a relaxed activity and support the important work of Headway. We are very proud of everyone who took part and would like to say a huge well done for making the day so special.



VOLUNTEERS AND CARERS WEEK

During Volunteers Week (1st-7th June) and Carers Week (8th-14th June), we took time to recognise and celebrate the incredible contribution of our volunteers and carers, who play such an important role in supporting our clients and wider service.

Across both weeks, we shared our appreciation for the time, energy and compassion that volunteers bring to the centre, as well as the ongoing dedication of carers who provide vital day-to-day support.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who gives their time and care so generously – your support makes a real difference every day, and we simply couldn't do it without you.

If anyone is interested in volunteering with us, we would be delighted to hear from you.

☎ Call Caroline on: 01793 674820

ZURICH CHALLENGE

A Fresh New Look for Our Centre

We would like to say a huge thank you to Zurich, who kindly brought a team in to repaint our centre.

Their time, effort and generosity have given the space a wonderful fresh new look, helping to create an even more welcoming environment for everyone who uses it.

Before, during and after photos below to see the fantastic transformation.



Cooking Sessions

Over the past few months, our cooking groups have continued to be a popular and highly engaging part of the weekly programme, with clients taking part in a wide range of practical, social and creative sessions.

In the kitchen, clients have worked together to prepare a variety of meals including lentil and vegetable soup with chickpea flatbread, Thai green curry and a breakfast casserole made with eggs, cheese, spinach, potato, peppers and spring onions, as well as homemade Pizza. These sessions have provided valuable opportunities to follow recipes, develop independence, and work as part of a team.

Clients have shown great engagement in the cooking sessions, working well within groups and following instructions carefully. Many have taken pride in developing practical kitchen skills such as chopping vegetables, grating ingredients, and supporting preparation tasks.

Several clients have also provided informal leadership and support within sessions, encouraging others, assisting with tasks, and helping to create a positive and sociable group environment. Communication and teamwork have been consistently strong throughout the sessions.

Overall, the cooking group continues to support independence, confidence, teamwork and enjoyment, with clients gaining valuable life skills in a positive and supportive environment.



Singing group brings confidence, Connection and Wellbeing

Our new singing group, started by our Support Worker Irene, is already creating a warm and uplifting space for people to come together.

Clients have enjoyed singing familiar songs, joining in with small groups and taking the opportunity to perform solos. The sessions have supported confidence, communication and speech, while also encouraging clients to project their voices in a relaxed and friendly setting.

The group has brought plenty of smiles, laughter and social connection. For some, singing has helped lift their mood; for others, it has provided a chance to build confidence, express themselves and enjoy being part of a supportive group.

We are delighted to see the positive impact the sessions are having on wellbeing and look forward to many more songs to come.



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

WE ARE PLEASED TO CELEBRATE THREE CLIENTS WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE BRAIN INJURY COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY (CBT) PROGRAMME.

THE COURSE SUPPORTS PEOPLE LIVING WITH BRAIN INJURY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THEIR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS. IT EXPLORES WAYS TO RECOGNISE UNHELPFUL THINKING PATTERNS, MANAGE EMOTIONS AND DEVELOP PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR RESPONDING TO STRESS, ANXIETY, LOW MOOD AND ANGER BY BUILDING THESE SKILLS,

THE PROGRAMME CAN HELP INDIVIDUALS FEEL MORE CONFIDENT IN NAVIGATING DAY-TO-DAY CHALLENGES AND SUPPORTING THEIR OWN WELLBEING.



WELL DONE ON THIS VALUABLE ACHIEVEMENT.

Safeguarding

LEARNING, SHARING AND GROWING

Sonia has been involved in SBC's Safeguarding Partnership for some time, and in June, Caroline, our Client Lead, also became part of the partnership.

As members of the partnership, they attend training sessions, take part in discussions, and keep up to date with the latest safeguarding guidance and best practice. This provides valuable opportunities to learn alongside other professionals and share knowledge and experience.

Being involved helps strengthen our working relationships with SBC and other organisations, while also supporting our own professional development.

The knowledge and insight gained through the partnership helps us continue providing the highest standard of support to the clients and families we work with.



A wonderful Act of Kindness

We were incredibly grateful to receive a generous donation of biscuits for our clients and staff at Headway Swindon. Donations such as these help create a warm and welcoming environment, giving everyone the opportunity to enjoy a treat together during the day.

We were especially touched to learn that this thoughtful donation was made in loving memory of Toya Jefferies. It is a beautiful way to honour a loved one while bringing comfort and smiles to others.

On behalf of everyone at Headway Swindon, thank you for your generosity, kindness and support. Your thoughtfulness is truly appreciated and reminds us of the wonderful community that continues to stand behind Headway Swindon.



MUSIC THERAPY WITH GILLIAN



Our new fortnightly Music Therapy programme has quickly become something that clients look forward to.

This programme offers a wonderful opportunity for everyone to enjoy music together, explore different sounds and have a go at a variety of instruments, including musical bells, accordion, ukulele, maracas, swanny whistle and table chimes. Clients have been learning songs on the bells, taking turns to play tunes on the accordion and singing along to some much-loved favourites.

There is always plenty of creativity and fun, with clients suggesting songs, sharing ideas and even making up a brand-new song together as a group. There are lots of laughter and connection, giving everyone the chance to express themselves and enjoy something special together



SUMMER BBQ



Our Summer BBQ was a fantastic success, bringing together clients, families, carers, volunteers and supporters for a wonderful day of food, fun and community spirit.

It was especially lovely to welcome clients who don't usually attend on a Thursday, alongside their family members and carers. Seeing everyone reconnect, make new friendships and enjoy spending time together highlighted the importance of the supportive community we have at Headway Swindon.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of everyone who attended, donated and volunteered, we raised an amazing total of

 **£946.45** 

Every penny will go towards helping us continue supporting local people living with brain injuries, along with their families and carers.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the day such a memorable success. We couldn't do it without your continued support.



THANK YOU

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all our clients, their families and carers, as well the local businesses and supporters who kindly donated prizes for our Summer BBQ raffle & Tombola.

Your generosity helps Headway Swindon continue to provide support, rehabilitation and advice for people living with brain injuries and their families.

We are incredibly grateful for your kindness and for helping us make a difference.

- ASDA WEST
- ASDA HAYDON
- BARNES COACHES
- CLUE HQ
- COTSWOLD WILDLIFE PARK
- CUMBERWELL GOLF COURSE
- DAVID LLOYD
- DOUBLETREE BY HILTON
- DYSON
- FARMER GOW'S
- HIGH SCORE ARCADES
- HIGHWORTH FLOWERS
- KUBE MEDICAL
- LIDL
- LUSH
- NATIONWIDE
- PURTON HOUSE ORGANICS
- REIN AND SHEIN
- REME MUSEUM
- ROVES FARM
- SWINDON WILDCATS
- TESCO OCTOCAL WAY
- THE WILTSHIRE WICKS
- ZURICH



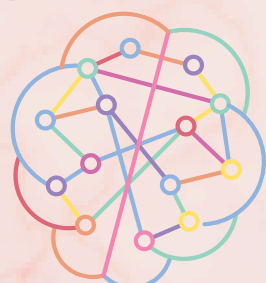
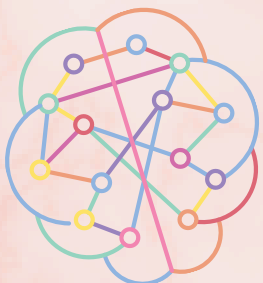
Making connections that matter

Caroline recently hosted a Zoom session with the Memory Clinic team at The Great Western Hospital, bringing together doctors, memory nurses, administrative staff, support workers and neuropsychologists.

The session provided an opportunity to introduce Headway Swindon, share information about the services we offer, and explain how we support people living with the effects of an acquired brain injury.

Building links with healthcare professionals is an important part of ensuring that people receive the right support and know where they can turn for help following a brain injury.

We would like to thank everyone who attended and look forward to continuing to work together to support our local community.



ZURICH BOWLING FUN



Our clients recently enjoyed a fantastic day out at the bowling alley, thanks to the generous support of Zurich Community Trust.

The trip was filled with laughter, friendly competition and plenty of memorable moments, giving clients the opportunity to socialise, build confidence and enjoy time together outside the centre.

Days like these are about much more than just having fun—they help reduce isolation, encourage friendships and support wellbeing in a relaxed and enjoyable environment.



A TASTE OF SUMMER

Summer Rainbow Wrap



Servings: 1

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cook time: None

Ingredients

	1 Tortilla wrap	
	2 Tablespoons Hummus	
	1/4 cucumber, sliced	
	1/2 Carrot, grated	
	A few strips of red pepper	
	A handful of lettuce or spinach	
	Grated cheese, optional	

Love cooking?

This simple summer recipe is a great way to enjoy something tasty throughout the warmer weather

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



Summer Rainbow Wrap

What to do

1.	Put the tortilla on a plate	
2.	Spread the hummus over the wrap with a spoon	
3.	Add the lettuce	
4.	Add the cucumber, carrot and pepper	
5.	Sprinkle on cheese if using	
6.	Fold in the two sides	
7.	Roll up the wrap tightly	



Headway Hint:

Use pre-washed salad leaves and ready grated cheese

BRAIN TRAINING

Headway Summer Wordsearch

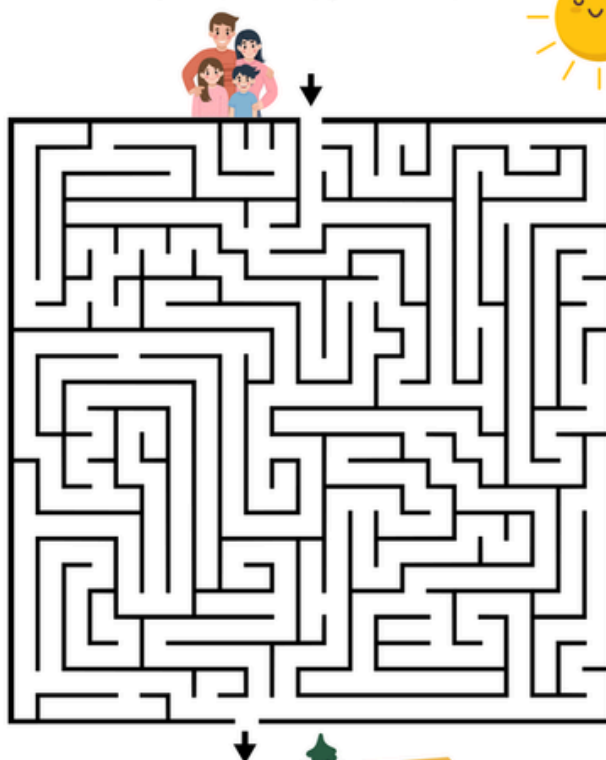
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GARDEN
SANDCASTLE
HOLIDAY
BEACH
FUN
DRESS
FLOWERS
FLIPFLOPS
SUMMER
SUNSHINE
SHORTS
BBQ
PICNIC
PARK
SEASIDE
AUGUST
RELAX
PLAY
BOAT
SWIMMING
ICE CREAM



SUMMER MAZE

Can you help the family get to the campsite?



Level 4



EXPLORE OUR 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 Bank

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/>

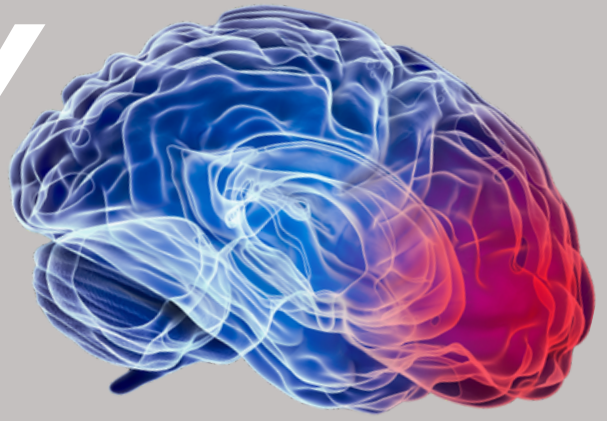


THANK
.. YOU
😊

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
-  Swindon Rotary Club

HEADWAY SWINDON



THE BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION

Contact Us



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Headway Swindon



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
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the brain injury association

Registered Charity No.1021036