

**IMPROVING LIFE AFTER BRAIN INJURY**



**HEADWAY  
ESSEX  
NEWS**



Headway  
Essex

**SPRING 2025**

Registered charity 1008807



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

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## ABOUT HEADWAY ESSEX

Headway Essex is an independent charity, which provides support to people living with acquired brain injury (ABI) and their families in Essex. We support around 600 people a year across Essex, in the community and at our day centres.

As a charity, our mission is to ensure that everyone in Essex living with an acquired brain injury can live a fulfilling life and families and carers are better able to cope within their caring roles.

Our two day centres in Colchester and Benfleet, offer a specialist person-centred approach to rehabilitate, educate, inform and support each client with their own personal recovery journey.

In the community we provide emotional and practical support to address health and social issues faced by our clients and their families, as a result of brain injury; visiting clients in hospital, in their homes, providing telephone support, and support group meetings across Essex.

Registered Charity Number:  
1008807

Patron: David Tennant

Company Limited by Guarantee  
Registered in England and Wales  
No. 2674755

## FAREWELL TO JO AND LOOKING FORWARDS TO OUR NEXT CHAPTER

Welcome to our first Headway Essex News of 2025. We hope your year has started well.

January is a great time for reflecting on the year that has gone and also for looking ahead to what is to come. Having said a fond farewell to our CEO Jo Wright at the end of 2024, we find ourselves beginning a new chapter in 2025 as we enter our 40th anniversary year.

During her time as CEO Jo's ambitions for Headway saw us acquiring the Headway Centre in Colchester, the opening of a second centre in South East Essex and making us a resilient and thriving organisation serving across Essex.



For our 40th anniversary we will be celebrating our remarkable journey and looking forward to our next 40 years with great excitement. Watch this space !

Thank you to everyone that supported Headway Essex during 2024. It is only with the generosity of kind people like yourselves that we are able to continue to provide help to the people in our community living with a brain injury.

**SUNDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2025**

**The Headway Essex Classic Vehicle Show returns to Colchester Castle Park for 2025.**

If you would like to exhibit your car in the show follow our socials for updates or email [fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk)

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE!**



## LOOKING BACK OVER 2024

2024 was an eventful year! Here are some of our highlights in pictures.



**Without you we couldn't do what we do!**

We have thoroughly enjoyed our time this year in the company of our service users and we thank you all for the humour, bravery and dedication that you have shared with us.

For all of you that have given your time and expertise, taken part in a challenge, given in memory or donated in support of Headway Essex we would like to send you a heartfelt thank you.

## SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

Our support group meetings give adults with an acquired brain injury, their carers and loved ones, the chance to meet others who have a brain injury, to share experiences and to hear from experts in brain injury care and rehabilitation.

### Mid Essex Support Group (Chelmsford)

Third Tuesday of the month 10:00 – 12:00

### South Essex Support Group (Benfleet)

Second Tuesday of the month 19:00 – 21:00

### NE Essex Support Group (Colchester)

First Tuesday of the month 18:00 - 20:00

### West Essex Support Group (Epping)

Fourth Tuesday of the month 10:00 – 12:00

### NE Essex Support Group (Clacton)

Third Thursday of the month 10:00 - 12:00

### South Essex Carers Support (Benfleet)

Fourth Thursday of the month 19:00 – 21:00

### NE Essex Social Evenings (Colchester)

Third Monday of the month 17:00 – 19:00

### South Essex Social Group (Benfleet)

First Friday of the month 13:30 – 15:30

### The 3M Club 'Men Motivating Men'

Last Wednesday of the month 18:00 - 20:00

### Essex Young Circle Support Group (Benfleet)

Fourth Wednesday of the month  
Alternate months 17:00 – 19:00 or 12:00 – 14:00



TAYLOR  
ROSE

SMART  
MODERN  
LAW

### Virtual Quiz (Via Zoom)

Third Wednesday of the month 15:30 - 16:30

We would like to say a big thank you to  
Taylor Rose Law who generously  
sponsor our support group in Colchester

If you are interested in attending one of our  
groups, please contact us on 01206 845945  
or email [abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk)

## HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR YOUR BRAIN INJURY IDENTITY CARD?



The effects of a brain injury are complex and can affect people in an often unseen way.

Carrying an official Headway Brain Injury Identity Card can provide you with the confidence to know that if you need help, your needs can be easily identified, whether in social situations, or if you come into contact with police officers or other emergency services.

Find out more and apply for a card today

[www.headway.org.uk/supporting-you/brain-injury-identity-card/](http://www.headway.org.uk/supporting-you/brain-injury-identity-card/)

## Headway Awards

Everyone who volunteers their time to Headway Essex is a star in our eyes and we were beyond proud when Dave Stannard, who has volunteered for us for two decades, was nominated for a national award.

Dave's dedication to Headway Essex led to him becoming one of just three finalists for Headway UK's Volunteer of the Year Award. The accolade, sponsored by law firm Anthony Gold, was presented by Headway UK at its glittering awards ceremony on December 5 at the JW Marriott Grosvenor House in Mayfair where Dave was recognised for his nomination.

Dave started volunteering with Headway Essex after his wife, Denise had a stroke in 1996. Denise attended the Headway Essex day centre and support groups from 1998, and at the same time, Dave joined as a volunteer. Despite being a full-time carer for Denise, Dave has volunteered for Headway Essex ever since and this year marks 23 years.



*"Dave is one of the loveliest, kindest, funniest, most amazing people I have ever met in my life. I know that he volunteers for the love of volunteering and in memory of his wife, Denise. He is so deserving of this nomination."*



Following her stroke, Denise depended heavily on Dave for support, before she sadly passed away in February 2021. However, Dave has continued to volunteer at least twice a week, helping to support the service users and staff of the centre and is well loved by all.

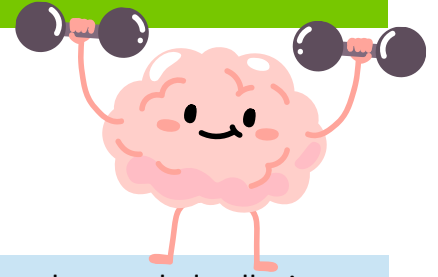
Dave said of the nomination: *"I am absolutely delighted. Headway Essex means the world to me."*

*"I've seen what this charity does for people from both sides. Denise absolutely thrived going there, and I love to work with people who join the group, to help them and to see them improve over time. I just love that side of it. I am so passionate about Headway."*

Emma McCullagh, Head of Services at Headway Essex said: *"Even through his grief of losing his wife, Dave has continued to volunteer for the past three years."*

When not volunteering, Dave also gives up his free time to attend fundraising events with his family, promote Headway Essex and be on hand to help out with anything needed. This includes driving the minibus, attending events with service users, running a bowling league and facilitating a men's-only support group.

## BOOST YOUR ENDORPHINS AND GET MOTIVATED!



Whether it's completing a New Years resolution, getting out of the house more or carrying on with your re-enablement goals we can all need a little encouragement to get motivated during the winter.

Endorphins are one of the happy hormones our bodies produce that can help alleviate pain, lower stress, improve mood, and enhance your sense of well-being. We can increase our endorphins by taking part in fun activities, eating chocolate, getting out in the sunlight, playing with pets or hugging our loved ones.

### Think ACTION before EMOTION

When we're lacking in motivation or feeling low it can be hard to get started. Then we feel bad that we aren't doing something and feel worse and less motivated. It's a vicious cycle!

Motivation can be hard to find when we are in this cycle so we need to try and break it.

### BRING ON THE ENDORPHINS!

Action before emotion means doing the activity even though we don't feel like it.

How many times have you not wanted to go somewhere and once you are out been so pleased that you had?

Keep that feeling in mind and once you make a start you will be pleased that you did and then your motivation comes back.

Remember to...

Keep it fun

Talk it through

Spend time with others

Link new habits to old ones

Start off with a manageable size task

Use a planner and measure your progress

## DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME SESSIONS RETURN FOR 2025!

Thanks to generous funding from Essex County Council we have been able to build on our 2024 series of workshops for unpaid carers of adults with acquired brain injury. The workshops provide tools and strategies to promote independence for the cared for, alleviate the burden on the carer, help the carer manage stress, avoid burnout, and maintain their own well-being.

Workshops run annually in Colchester and Benfleet, one day a week over 5-weeks.



Learn more here  
<https://www.headwayessex.org.uk/about-us/news/blog/>

For more information contact  
[abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk)  
Telephone 01206 845945

## TAKING OUR NEXT STEPS



We have been working on a pilot scheme with the University of Essex's Health, Wellbeing, and Care Hub called Next Steps, which offers eight weekly tailored sessions of rehabilitation and guidance to people with an acquired brain injury (ABI). Thanks to funding from Colchester Catalyst we have been able to help people who otherwise wouldn't be able to access this level of support because of barriers such as diagnosis, funding or long waiting lists.

The project has so far been a great success and the second phase has started and we are excited to see what this new phase brings.

When asked if they would recommend this course to others we were told;

"This has genuinely been life-changing for me and I hope it will be rolled out from here and do the same for others."

"100%.  
The efficacy and positive consequences for so many people could impact on society further too."

When asked:

I feel more informed about my brain injury - **100%** strongly agreed

The group sessions have helped me feel less isolated - **100%** strongly agreed

The one-on-one activities have provided personalised support and guidance - **100%** strongly agreed

My confidence has improved since attending this course - **80%** agreed

I have gained practical strategies for daily life and recovery - **93%** agreed

Learn more here: [www.headwayessex.org.uk/about-us/news/blog/](http://www.headwayessex.org.uk/about-us/news/blog/)

## PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Did you know .....

- In the UK a stroke strikes every five minutes
- around 100,000 people have a stroke each year.
- and last year 42% of the clients we supported with their brain injury was as a result of stroke.

Headway Essex will be here to support you and your loved ones if this happens to you.

However we would rather help you now. That is why Headway Essex is offering work places free health checks, including blood pressure, height, weight, and BMI calculations and to share how we support the people in the community living with a brain injury.

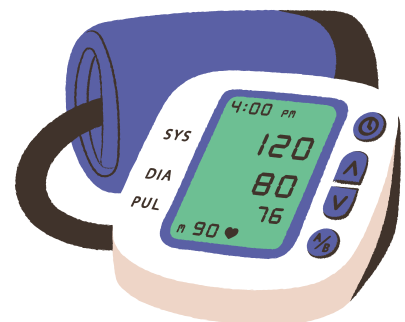
Take control of your health—know your numbers and make informed decisions for a healthier you.

Book a visit today and let our team help you stay on top of your health with quick, easy, and confidential checks.

**Interested in free health checks for your staff?**

**Get in touch with us!**

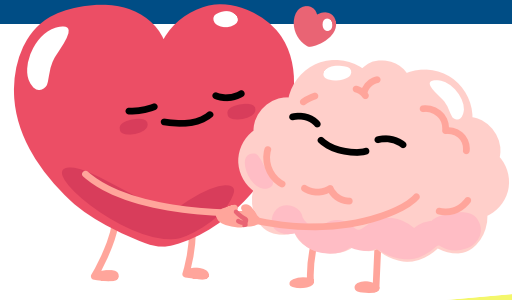
**KNOW YOUR NUMBERS**





## REDUCE YOUR RISK OF STROKE

Thursday 30th January is Stroke Prevention Day and the focus of the campaign this year is high blood pressure, the biggest single risk factor for stroke. High blood pressure plays a part in about half of all strokes.



The good news is there is a lot we can do to reduce our risks!

### Lifestyle changes

You can help to reduce your risk by making some healthy lifestyle changes:

- Stop smoking
- Be more active
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- Eat a healthy diet
- Stay a healthy weight



### Regular check-ups

If you are over 40 regular check-ups can pick up any problems. Your GP can check for the following conditions and give you advice to treat them:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeats)

### Take prescribed medications

If you have a medical condition that could increase the risk of stroke it is important to make sure you take the medication you are prescribed. If you are worried about the side effects of your medication talk to your pharmacy or GP to see if they can help.



Never stop your medication without checking with your GP first.

## SUPPORT GROUPS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Adjusting to life after brain injury can be very challenging and frustrating and for young adults, living with an acquired brain injury can be particularly isolating. Factors such as dealing with peer pressure to fit in, striving for independence, making important decisions about the future around education and work and getting people to listen to you can be hard.

*“When you are with people who have been through the same you can relax and be who you are.”*

**Our support group in Benfleet for younger people is aimed at young adults (18 to 40) who have an acquired brain injury.**

The group share successes, frustrations and challenges and develop insight into the effects of their injury and the impact it has on their life.

The group meet monthly, alternating between a day time and an evening session to suit people’s working hours and fatigue levels.



*“When you are with friends you just want to fit in. You can’t be bothered to explain things are different, so you have to work hard to appear as if nothing has changed.”*

Call us on 01206 845945 or email [abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk) for details



**REMEMBER US  
IN YOUR WILL**  
help our work live on

A gift in a will, however large or small, will enable us to make a lasting difference to even more families by supporting those affected by acquired brain injury in the years to come.

## PASS ON SOMETHING WONDERFUL

Leaving a donation to charity in your will is making a future gift that has a lasting benefit, one that reflects your values and supports the issues you care about in your lifetime.

Gifts don't have to be big, nor do you need to be exceptionally wealthy. With all the pressures on personal and family budgets, you can still make a life changing gift which costs you nothing now.

More information is available on our website.

[www.headwayessex.org.uk/i-want-to-help/make-a-donation/a-gift-in-your-will/](http://www.headwayessex.org.uk/i-want-to-help/make-a-donation/a-gift-in-your-will/)

We know that when you are making your will, quite rightly, your family and friends come first. But we hope, once you have taken care of your loved ones, that you might consider leaving a gift in your will to Headway Essex.

### It's easier than you think.

Call our friendly Fundraising team who can help further 01206 845945



# TAKE IT ON!

SKY DIVE 2025

SNOWDON BY NIGHT

WING WALK

ROYAL PARKS HALF

## Are you up for a challenge?

Check out our exciting calendar of activities. We have the perfect fundraising challenge for you.

**Take a challenge and make a huge difference to Headway Essex**

12 July 2025

Summer 2025

April to October 2025

12 October 2025

Call 01206 845945

email [fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk)

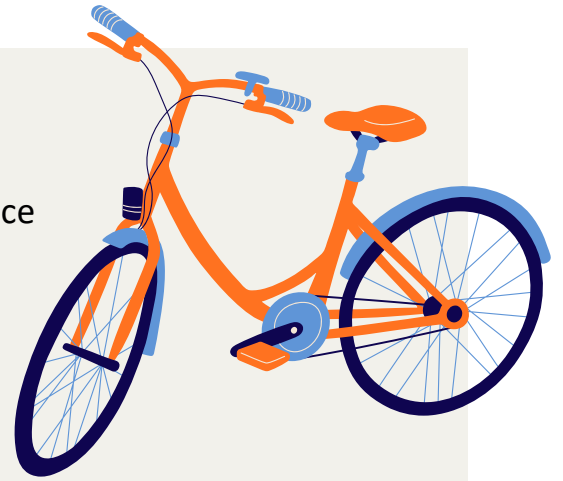
or visit [www.headwayessex.org.uk](http://www.headwayessex.org.uk) and select 'Events'

We are reaching out to schools to consider inviting us to speak to their students about bike safety. Our mission is to educate children on the importance of being safe on their bikes and scooters.

**WE WOULD LOVE TO COME AND TALK TO SCHOOLS FOR A SAFER, HEALTHIER, AND MORE AWARE GENERATION OF CYCLISTS.**

By equipping our children with these essential safety tips, we can help ensure their journeys are as safe as possible. Let's work together to create a safer community for our young cyclists!

**Interested in having us visit your school? Reach out to us to schedule a session.**



## FOLLOW OUR STORY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We have lively social media accounts with regular updates and photos of our activities and events.



Facebook: @headway.essex



Instagram: @headwayessex



LinkedIn: headway-essex

[www.headwayessex.org.uk](http://www.headwayessex.org.uk)

## CONTACT US

### FUNDRAISING & MARKETING:

[fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@headwayessex.org.uk)  
01206 845945 (option 5)

6th Floor Annex, Wellington House,  
90-92 Butt Road, Colchester, Essex,  
CO3 3DA

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

[abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:abisupport@headwayessex.org.uk)  
01206 845945 (option 3)

### THE HEADWAY CENTRE

[dayservice@headwayessex.org.uk](mailto:dayservice@headwayessex.org.uk)  
01206 845945 (option 4)

#### (North Essex)

The Headway Centre,  
Woodland Walk, Colchester, CO4 6DH

#### (South Essex)

The Benfleet Methodist Church,  
High Road, South Benfleet, SS7 5LH

Proudly supporting the community for forty years

