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News from Headway,
NPP Neuro Group, Nestor,
and Child Brain Injury Trust

Surviving Brain Injury

PLUS...
The Movement Centre
Easter Egg Competition

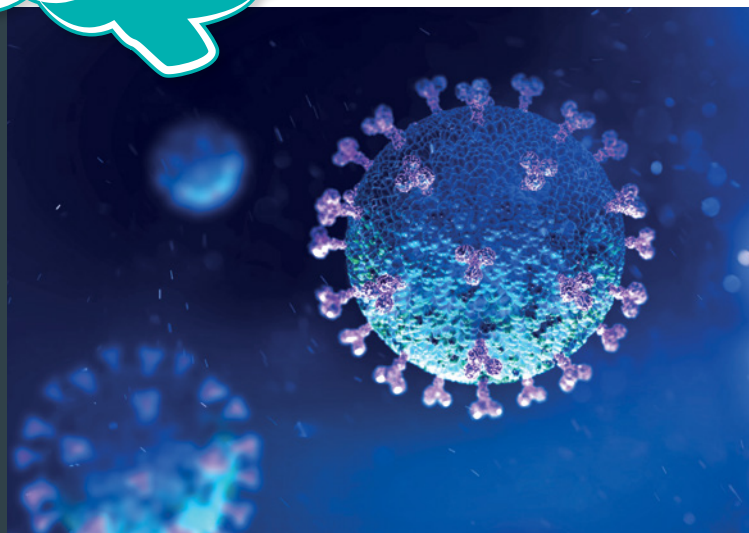
COVID-19

This newsletter is published during an unprecedented time in our history. Many of you reading it will be experienced in supporting, treating or caring for vulnerable individuals with complex needs but almost certainly not in these very difficult circumstances.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a major impact on the way we live our daily lives and we all have to adapt quickly to the dramatic change imposed upon us. Many of us are worrying about our livelihoods and the health and wellbeing of ourselves and our loved ones.

Our NHS has been stretched and under resourced for many years and now those working on the front line are facing the biggest challenge imaginable. We can all do our bit to help our NHS by following the government advice by staying at home and helping to save lives.

Despite postponing our up and coming brain injury networking forums, we want to continue to share information, advice and support and therefore encourage guest articles for inclusion within the next edition of our brain injury newsletter. Please submit your content (approximately 500 words) to sophie.davies@lblaw.co.uk by 29 May 2020.



AUTUMN 2019 BRAIN INJURY NETWORKING FORUMS

We were delighted to invite a number of fantastic guest speakers along to our last Shrewsbury and Hereford Brain Injury Networking Forums, which took place in autumn 2019.



Kelda Wood, Founder of Climbing Out, and Dr Selina Holmes, Lead Clinical Psychologist at the Shropshire Community NHS Trust Neuro Rehabilitation Team, both spoke at our Shrewsbury Forum and Karl Welborn, Director and Consultant Occupational Therapist of NPP Neuro Group, and Beth Hudson of Yeleni Therapy and Support spoke at our Hereford forum.

Continued on...

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**“ Prompt to respond. Information and advice was easy to understand.
Excellent service all round.**

MB Shrewsbury

TWO HIGHLY EXPERIENCED LAWYERS ADDED TO NATIONAL DIRECTORY



Two highly experienced lawyers have been added to a national directory aimed at helping people find specialist solicitors to deal with brain injury cases.

Congratulations go to our Partners; Dawn Humphries in the Personal Injury team and Lucy Small in our Clinical Negligence team, who have been accredited as Headway-approved Solicitors.

Lucy and Dawn are now listed in the charity Headway's Head Injury Solicitors Directory and take their place alongside a third member of the firm, Neil Lorimer, who already appears in the guide.

Headway is a national charity working to improve life after brain injury by providing vital support and information services. The directory enables brain injury victims to find specialist solicitors in their area, who have experience in handling brain injury cases.

Each solicitor featured in the directory has agreed to work within the Headway Personal Injury Lawyers Code of Conduct.

Neil Lorimer, head of the personal injury team at Lanyon Bowdler, said: *"We are delighted that Lucy and Dawn are now Headway-approved solicitors, which is a great endorsement of their professionalism and expertise."*

"Lucy and Dawn work with clients in Herefordshire and North Wales, so we can now list our Hereford and Conwy offices, alongside our Shrewsbury head office, within the national Headway-approved directory."

"Lanyon Bowdler has an excellent record in successfully acting for clients living with the effects of a brain injury, which may have been sustained during birth or acquired as a result of an accident. The inclusion of three leaders in their field in the Headway directory means more people will have access to our services through the guide."

"It's a sad fact but around 350,000 people are admitted to hospital with an acquired brain injury each year – that's an incredible one every 90 seconds. It's vitally important that these people get the help, advice and support they need in coming to terms with life after sustaining this type of injury."

"Headway is doing a wonderful job in raising awareness and trying to ensure people have access to that kind of support. Lanyon Bowdler is a huge supporter of Headway and the work it is involved in and in addition to acting for clients with brain injury, we also work to raise the profile by hosting regular brain injury forums."

For more information about the Headway directory, visit the website at <https://www.headway.org.uk/supporting-you/in-your-area/head-injury-solicitors-directory/>.

For further information about Lanyon Bowdler's brain injury networking forums or to subscribe to our mailing list, contact info@lblaw.co.uk.

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Kelda Wood, a former GB para canoe athlete and first para rower to solo row the Atlantic, has since said: *"It is very likely that people are going to need more support than ever, so please keep Climbing Out on your radar and signpost / refer anyone you think would benefit from taking part."*

"Climbing out runs five day outdoor activity programmes aimed at rebuilding confidence and self-esteem in people, who've been through a life changing injury, illness or trauma. The programmes give participants the opportunity to take part in fun and challenging activities whilst meeting others who've been through shared experiences. All the activities are adapted to meet people's needs and capabilities so everything is achievable whilst stretching people's boundaries too"



**“A clear and simple process with professional and helpful advisers and staff.
Very pleased with the outcome.**

AH Telford

TAKING BACK CONTROL FOR THE MIND



Just a few weeks ago we were living a very different life, a life that we can often take for granted. The freedom to do what we like, when we like and with whom we like. Then the nation was gripped with a pandemic that has paused our normal daily activities, the very activities that provide us with a sense of purpose, identity, and meaning. It is these things that we do, day to day, week to week, that can define who we are and how we feel.

As I wrote this opening paragraph, I started to feel like I know this story very well, then I realised this, in many ways, is comparable to the clients I have worked with for 18 years.

These individuals have experienced a life changing accident or illness that has reduced their capacity to engage in these meaningful and purposeful activities, the fundamental activities that defined them.

At this moment we can easily feel a loss of control, and for many, this can have a significant impact on their physical and psychological well-being. However, there are strategies that can help to take back some control and therefore improve our overall well-being and psychological status.

Strategy Tips

When you wake up in the morning, spend 20 minutes doing the following:

1. Write down all the things you are grateful of.
2. Write down all the things you 'can do'.
3. Write down all the things you can control.

This may take some time to develop, but as the days go by, it will help you to feel in control at a time when it can easily feel like we are losing control over our own lives.

Although things are tough currently, try to stay positive and appreciate the little things that can provide this sense of meaning, purpose and identity, therefore improving overall well-being and mental health. It is often Occupational Therapists that work with clients and incorporate subtle rehabilitation strategies as part of their rehabilitation plans, that evolve to transferable skills and thus major changes.

Taking advantage of this time

This may be a time to practice something you have always wanted to do or focus on something that often gets neglected due to other commitments like:

- Learning to play a musical instrument.
- Trying a new recipe.
- Familiarising yourself with a new piece of social media.
- Learning a new language.



The team here at NPP Occupational Therapy are staying positive and practicing the above strategies we have shared. We are currently continuing to work with our clients where possible and justified, strictly adhering to all government guidelines and internal policies. We work closely with our MDT colleagues at NPP, case management companies and solicitor firms to ensure we deliver an effective and efficient service during this global crisis.

We urge everybody to consider how some of the strategies and tips we have shared may help you or your families. We are all in this together and we will all come through this together, having a new appreciation for the life we once took for granted, the feelings of our clients following their accidents and activities we get the privilege to engage in.

Stay Healthy, Stay Safe, Stay Occupied.



Article by:

Karl Welborn

Director and Consultant Occupational Therapist

www.nppneurogroup.com

“The staff are kind and professional. Lanyon Bowdler exceeded my previous experience and restored my confidence in solicitors. Thank you to Neil and his team.

EB Hereford

WELFARE BENEFITS



For those unfortunate enough to suffer a brain injury, as well as their families, getting the correct benefits is vital to meeting any additional costs.

Although the welfare system may seem daunting, it can provide support in relation to care and income, and families should consider applying as soon as possible.

If your head injury means you are unable to work in the long or short term then you may be entitled to the following benefits:

- Statutory Sick Pay is available for up to 28 weeks for those that are still employed but unable to work.
- New style Employment and Support Allowance is available for those who are unable to work through illness or disability and have paid enough National Insurance.
- Income-related Employment & Support Allowance is only available for claimants who get the severe disability premium, or are entitled to it, or received it in the last month.
- Disability Living Allowance is a benefit for children who have additional care requirements or mobility issues.
- Attendance Allowance is available for those of state pension age who have care needs.
- Personal Independence Payment is available for claimants of working age who have care needs or mobility problems.
- Carer's Allowance is available to anyone who has substantial caring responsibilities for a person with a disability and satisfies the eligibility criteria.
- Universal Credit has replaced some means-tested benefits including Employment & Support Allowance.

The amounts payable are dependent upon circumstances and additional elements are available in UC for disabilities, dependents, carers and housing. Additional disability premiums are available in ESA.

These are just an example of what may be available to you. Depending on your circumstances there may be extra help for mortgage relief, local authority care and certain NHS services.

There may also be an additional entitlement to Pension Credit for claimants of pension age.

Information on all of these benefits is available on the government website, www.gov.uk.

Changes due to the Coronavirus

The current pandemic has meant changes have been made to the benefits system in order to speed up benefit processing and limiting contact.

These changes include:

- Advance payments are available when a new UC claim is made without the need to attend a jobcentre.
- Waiting days for ESA have been suspended. Benefit will now be available from day one whilst the current crisis lasts.
- The standard rate of UC and Tax Credits will be increased by £20 pw for one year from 6th April.
- Benefit reviews and reassessments have been put on hold for 3 months.

Face-to-face assessments suspended for 3 months.

- No requirement to attend a jobcentre for 3 months. Benefits will be paid automatically.
- SSP is now available from day one.
- The Minimum Income Floor for self-employed has been relaxed in UC.
- Local Housing Allowance rates are being increased for Housing Benefit and UC claimants.



Article by:

Phil Runciman

Welfare Benefit Advisor

Nestor Financial Services Limited

Nestor offer a comprehensive welfare benefit service including a review of benefit entitlement, help with application form completion and appeals.

“Very professional and approachable, you really cared and wanted the best possible outcome for our son. The personal touch makes you head and shoulders above the rest. Thank you!”

Mr & Mrs A Cheshire

CORONAVIRUS AND BRAIN INJURY: HEADWAY ARE HERE FOR YOU



the brain injury association

The health, social and economic impact of coronavirus, or COVID-19, cannot be understated.

At Headway, we understand that the ever-changing environment, in which social change is happening at an unprecedented pace, is causing significant concern to individuals and families affected by brain injury.

We know that routine can be very important to some people living with the long-term effects of brain injury, with social isolation often exacerbating its behavioural, emotional and psychological effects.

Social isolation can also put great strain on families, particularly if they are poorly and required to self-quarantine for 14 days.

We're here for you and will continue to provide as much support as we can during this incredibly challenging time.

How we can help

Our helpline will remain open to anyone who requires support or information about brain injury. The team cannot answer medical questions about the virus and won't be able to offer advice on any symptoms related to it, but they can offer reassurance and a friendly voice.

Contact the helpline by calling 0808 800 2244 or emailing helpline@headway.org.uk

We also have a dedicated resource page on our website at: <https://www.headway.org.uk/supporting-you/coronavirus/>

The charity's online forum, HealthUnlocked, is a community for anyone affected by brain injury. It provides you with a chance to connect and share with people who understand brain injury and its effects in a friendly, safe and mutually supportive environment.

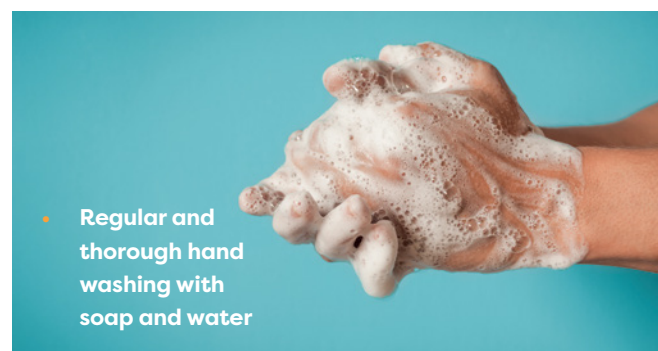
Headway groups and branches have had to suspend many of their face-to-face services in accordance with the government's advice – but they are determined to do all they can to find alternative ways to support those who rely on their help.

If you are currently being supported by a local Headway group or branch, you should be able to contact them via the usual telephone or email addresses, although please be aware that not all phone lines will be manned as premises and offices are required to close.

Staying safe

Some groups have a greater chance of severe illness as a result of coronavirus, which affects lungs and airways. These groups include those over the age of 70, people who are pregnant, and those with certain underlying health conditions. We urge everyone to strictly follow the government's guidance, including:

- Reduce social interactions as much as possible, following the advice given on the gov.uk website. This includes guidance on living with a vulnerable person, advice for formal carers, and advice for informal carers.



- Regular and thorough hand washing with soap and water
- Cough and sneeze into tissues – and then immediately dispose of them.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Immediately self-isolate, along with all members of your household, if you present any symptoms such as a new continuous cough or a high temperature above 37.8C.
- Use the NHS 111 online service if you are unsure of what you should do. People are being advised to not phone 111 or visit their GP.
- Look after your wellbeing and mental health. The charity Mind has some useful guidance on its website.
- Access up-to-date guidance on the following websites: www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

Please be assured that throughout this period of uncertainty and challenge, we will do everything we can to offer support. You are not alone.

“My family and I felt supported and cared for during a very distressing time.”
CB Hereford

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MIND



As we enter lockdown much is being said about how we can maintain our physical health. Less is said about our psychological health. The question is, how do we maintain our mood and spirits when so much of what we usually do is forbidden? This can be particularly difficult if a person has a disability or a health condition that has already reduced their options. What can we do to help ourselves?

Many psychologists, myself included, see euthymic mood as something that has to be actively maintained, much like physical fitness. There are certain tricks and skills for doing this. Mood is supported by good activity levels. I tell my patients that every day they might try to do something physical, something satisfying and something fun. It is surprising how many people forget at least one of these three.

The physical can be almost anything that raises our metabolic rate: we are currently allowed a daily walk, run or bike ride, and any of these can be useful. We can also exercise at home: some companies have made a fortune selling internet-linked exercise bikes but we do not need to get one of these. Since lockdown, there has been a rush of online collaborative exercise, another positive development.

Satisfaction comes from achieving something. This can be anything from making a matchstick model of the Titanic to mowing the lawn to cooking a meal. Everyone needs achievement and meaning in their life.

Fun sounds easy, but how many of us have forgotten to have it? Fun can be listening to music, playing a computer game, watching some comedy, or reading a good book. It can also be less conventional: as more items are delivered there will be more bubblewrap in this

world, and simply popping it can be a highly pleasurable experience. Few of us can afford a day without fun. A week of to-do lists can be balanced by just a little time achieving nothing but enjoying ourselves.



In these interesting times I would add one more ingredient to the recipe: connectedness. Human beings are social animals and we function better and feel better when we are connected to others. I am writing this on the first Saturday night of lockdown and all the usual things that people do: pubs, restaurants, bars and the like, have all closed. We must find new ways to connect. My writing group, the majority of whose members are over 70, has started an online forum that will allow us to connect remotely. All the video conference apps are suddenly being downloaded. We can use this time to get back in contact with all those people who were fun in the past.

In short, lockdown may be with us for a while, but you can get through it and turn it to your advantage. Take care of your psychological health and stay connected.



Article by:

Tim Hull

Consultant Clinical Neuropsychologist
Director, NPP Psychology

Our People, Your Team

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“Kind and caring. Making us feel at ease.”
Mrs L Shrewsbury

DECORATE AN EGG FOR EASTER TO HELP CHARITY



Children stuck at home during the coronavirus lockdown are being given the chance to decorate an egg for Easter to help a Shropshire-based charity.

The Movement Centre in Oswestry has launched a competition for children to decorate an Easter egg, with prizes of Cadbury's chocolate online gift vouchers up for grabs.

It just costs £2.50 to take part, with all proceeds going to The Movement Centre charity, which helps children with movement disabilities to reach their full potential.

To enter, people can post pictures of their eggs on The Movement Centre's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/TMCOswestry where they can also make the £2.50 donation to take part.



The winner will be announced on Good Friday, so people don't have long to enter.

Shropshire law firm Lanyon Bowdler, a long-time supporter of the charity, is sponsoring the Easter activities, and encouraged people to get involved.

Kay Kelly, head of clinical negligence and brain injury specialist at Lanyon Bowdler, said: *"These are incredibly challenging times for everyone, and charities are being hit particularly hard."*

"The Movement Centre provides an unrivalled service for families with children who have a range of movement disabilities and complex needs, often arising from brain injuries and other neurological conditions. Thanks to the dedicated team at The Movement Centre, we have seen children who might not otherwise be able to walk, take their first steps and have life-changing therapy to help them live more fulfilling lives, which is so inspiring."

"We have supported The Movement Centre for a long time and are very happy to be sponsoring these Easter activities to help them raise vital funds."

"I would encourage everyone to have a go at the Easter egg decorating competition – I know families are having a hard time keeping the children entertained during this lockdown, so why not have some fun and help raise money for a worthy cause at the same time?"

Victoria Handbury-Madin, Chief Executive of The Movement Centre, said the charity had to close to the public during the coronavirus pandemic, which had been very difficult for everyone involved.

She said: *"This is the first time in 24 years that we have had to close our doors and temporarily stop all of our clinical services, which has been extremely hard for us."*

"In 2019 we lost all NHS support for our therapy, due to cuts, so we need the support of companies like Lanyon Bowdler now more than ever. We are extremely grateful for their continued support of our work."

"The charity provides a specialist therapy called Targeted Training. We are the only provider of this therapy, which enables children to gain independence, to develop the skills to gain head control, to sit unaided or to take their first steps."

"This is often life-changing for them and their families."

"We really need the support of local people and businesses now more than ever, and sponsoring activities like this is a brilliant example of how organisations can make a valuable contribution."

"Every penny raised will help us to weather this storm so we can continue to provide our life-changing therapy."

For more information about how to support The Movement Centre, email info@themovementcentre.co.uk



“Was most impressed by the whole Lanyon Bowdler team.”
Mrs C Malvern

COPING WITH COVID-19 WHEN YOU HAVE A SON OR DAUGHTER WITH AN ABI



We can appreciate at this time there are lots of questions around how COVID-19 impacts young people with an acquired brain injury.

This must be a difficult time for everyone and with information about the virus changing every day, it raises more questions and concerns which we completely appreciate and understand.

As an organisation it would not be appropriate for us to comment on how COVID-19 may affect specific individuals with brain injury. We would therefore recommend that advice is sought from your GP or consultant. We would urge everyone to follow the advice and guidance given by NHS England and appropriate health bodies as they have the most up to date information regarding COVID-19.

We do have lots of resources that can be accessed and downloaded around supporting children and young people with an acquired brain injury and have developed a helpful e-learning session that will help you manage during these difficult times.

You can view this session by simply [clicking here](#), the session should open up automatically. If it does not open properly please try again, the online systems are very busy at the moment!

We have also developed a new fact sheet for parents which you can view by [clicking here](#).

The Coronavirus situation is constantly changing, we will endeavour to keep everyone informed via our website and social channels.



Please also take a moment to look at our new [Virtual Support Service](#) that families can access going forward, we want to ensure we continue to support families when they need us most.

Article by:

Lisa Turan

CEO, Child Brain Injury Trust

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