



the brain injury association



improving life after brain injury

Trustee recruitment pack: Chair

A welcome from the Chief Executive

Firstly, thank you for your interest in supporting Headway – the brain injury association (charity no. 1025852), otherwise known as Headway UK.

This empowering charity has for more than 40 years been improving the lives of individuals and families affected by brain injury.

Whether it is providing a listening ear or expert guidance via our nurse-led helpline; increasing the confidence of brain injury survivors to become more independent with the safety net provided by our bespoke identity card scheme; or supporting a UK-wide network of independent local Headway charities and volunteer-led branches, the work we do changes lives.

Two years ago, I was invited to lead the charity into a new era. Having been employed by Headway UK in various roles, including Deputy Chief Executive, since 2007, the board felt I was ideally placed to lead the modernisation of the charity's operations and culture, supported by a new senior leadership team.

This exciting opportunity to evolve the charity was only made possible by the sound stewardship of a dedicated and committed board of trustees.

We've already making good progress with the recent launch of our new long-term strategy and the charity's first set of organisational values.

As we move forward in the deliverance of the strategy and implementation of a bold new reserves policy that will fund investment in new services, the board's support, challenge and input will be crucial.

Having received exceptional support from the outgoing Chair and all trustees in my Headway career to date, I thank you for your interest in this role and look forward to potentially working you as our new Chair as we continue to evolve this fabulous charity.

Luke Griggs
Chief Executive



A note from the Chair

In my previous role as Senior Judge of the England and Wales Court of Protection, I became acutely aware of the extent to which brain injury can change the lives of individuals and families in an instant.

I also witnessed the importance of individuals and families having access to high-quality, specialist support services, such as those provided by Headway UK and the network of independent local Headway charities and volunteer-led branches.

It has therefore been an enormous privilege to have served as a trustee of Headway UK for the past seven years – and even more so to have had the honour of being the charity's Chair.

As the charity enters a new phase of its development, it feels an appropriate time to hand over to a new Chair who will bring with them the energy, skills and passion to modernise the charity's governance structures and processes.

It is with great satisfaction that I am able to do this knowing that the charity is in excellent health with exciting development opportunities ahead.

Being able to contribute to the development of this charity has been a rewarding experience and I am confident it will bring you similar fulfilment.

Denzil Lush
Chair



About Headway UK

Every 90 seconds, someone in the UK is admitted to hospital with an acquired brain injury (ABI). That's approximately 350,000 people each year.



We all think 'it will never happen to me', but the reality is that a brain injury can affect anyone, at any time and can change the lives of individuals and families in an instant.

At Headway UK, we exist to help people to rebuild their lives, relearn lost skills and maximise their independence after brain injury. Equally, we support families and carers to adapt to life after brain injury.

We also campaign to reduce the occurrence of preventable brain injury, while working to increase understanding of its effects and impact among the public and professionals alike.

By working with and supporting our network partners, we are able to support survivors and families from the moment brain injury strikes.

We do this in a number of ways:



Support a network of independent local Headway charities and volunteer-led branches operating across the UK that provide rehabilitation, reablement and peer support services to survivors, families and carers in their communities.

We also facilitate weekly peer support, social and information sharing services for ABI survivors, their carers and families across 12 communities in Northern Ireland.



Our nurse-led freephone helpline provides a vital listening and signposting service to brain injury survivors, families, carers and professionals.



Our Emergency Fund helps families cope with the sudden financial implications of brain injury, for example by providing small grants to assist with travel or accommodation to visit loved ones in critical care.



The Approved Provider scheme and Solicitors Directory are trusted directories, providing survivors and their families with lists of accredited residential care providers and personal injury lawyers with expertise in brain injury.



The [Headway UK website](#) is one of the most comprehensive sources of information available about brain injury and is often the first source of support for individuals and families affected.

Additional Headway websites, such as [I'm calling about Chris](#), which is a free resource to help keep family and friends updated on a loved one's condition in the immediate aftermath of brain injury, the [Headway HealthUnlocked community forum](#), and our dedicated in memory tribute site offer more tailored support.



Award-winning booklets and factsheets which are free to download from the Headway UK website, provide comprehensive and accessible information about all aspects of brain injury, with publications aimed at survivors, family and friends, carers and professionals.



Campaigning and lobbying in the national press and various parliaments across the UK to raise awareness of brain injury among the public and politicians alike. We aim to reduce the prevalence of brain injury and push for high-quality support services to be made available to anyone and everyone affected.



Training courses to help improve understanding and awareness of brain injury among professionals working directly with those affected. We also run courses for survivors and families to help them adapt to life after brain injury.



Brain Injury Identity Cards, which help survivors to explain their support needs, whether in everyday scenarios, such as while shopping, or if they come into contact with the criminal justice system.



Our Justice Programme improves the support available to survivors who come into contact with the criminal justice system. We provide training to probation officers, the police and other related professionals to help them better understand the often hidden effects of brain injury.

Our vision

Our vision is of a society in which:

- every individual and family affected by brain injury has fair and equitable access to all the support they need to lead a positive, fulfilling life;
- understanding and awareness of brain injury is prevalent in all walks of life; and
- there exists a shared commitment to eliminate avoidable brain injury or otherwise minimise its impact.

Our mission

We will drive change across society by:

- ensuring equitable access to high-quality brain injury services, support and information;
- increasing awareness and understanding of brain injury across society; and
- campaigning to reduce occurrence and the impact of brain injury.

Our objectives

- To increase awareness and understanding of brain injury and its consequences.
- To initiate activities and campaigns which will reduce the incidence of brain injury.
- To provide information and support for people with brain injuries, their relatives, carers and concerned professional people.
- To promote improved approaches to brain injury screening, acute care, assessment, rehabilitation and community reintegration.
- To assist people with brain injuries to return to community living, including access to appropriate accommodation, social outlets and productive activity.
- To support and help to establish Headway Groups throughout the UK in furtherance of the charity's mission statement and encourage them to address the needs of all sections of the community.

Our values

Our values



Devised in 2023 by staff and trustees, these values underpin everything we do and how we act – as individuals and as a charity:

We collaborate.

We believe in the power of working together to amplify our impact, collaborating with colleagues and partners who share our mission to improve life after brain injury.



We are bold.

We are unafraid to challenge the status quo to drive innovation and improvement, enabling us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those affected by brain injury.



We care.

Compassion and empathy are at the heart of everything we do and integral to the support we provide to those affected by brain injury. This compassion extends to our staff, volunteers, supporters and partners.



We celebrate diversity.

And actively embrace inclusivity. Every individual, regardless of background or circumstance, is valued and included in our mission to improve the lives of those affected by brain injury.



We give you a voice.

We give a voice to those affected by brain injury by putting the lived experience at the heart of everything we do. We want everyone who shares our mission to improve life after brain injury to feel valued and heard.



Our new long-term strategy

On 1 August 2024, we launched a new five-year strategy focused on rebuilding lives, relearning skills, and maximising independence for brain injury survivors as well as supporting families and carers.

The strategy, which followed the most comprehensive consultation exercise conducted by the charity, has at its heart the voices and opinions of brain injury survivors, families and carers.

To view our accessible animation introducing the new strategy, click on the play button in the image below:



About our people

Headway UK has grown over the years and now employs approximately 170 staff throughout the UK. Two thirds of our colleagues work in our 28 retail shops with the remaining staff working to deliver our frontline services or support the general operations of the charity.

We also have hundreds of dedicated and passionate volunteers, we would simply not be able to achieve all that we do to improve life after brain injury.

About the role

The Chair provides leadership to the charity's board of trustees, ensuring it operates efficiently and in accordance with the charity's mission, vision, and values.

They oversee governance and support the charity's management in achieving its strategic objectives.

A key aspect of this role will be leading the board through a period of modernisation. This requires extensive experience in change management, as well as in building cohesive relationships among trustees, senior leadership, and stakeholders.

Eligibility

- You must be at least 16 years old to be a trustee of a charitable company or a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), unless the charity's governing document says you must be older. You must be at least 18 to be a trustee of any other type of charity.
- You must not act as a trustee if you are disqualified under the Charities Act, unless your disqualification has been waived by the Commission.
- Charities that want to claim UK tax reliefs and exemptions must meet the management condition in the Finance Act 2010. This requires all of the charity's managers (including trustees) to be 'fit and proper persons'.

Key responsibilities

Strategic leadership:

- Provide leadership and direction to the board of trustees, ensuring the charity remains true to its vision, mission and values.
- Facilitate and promote effective strategic planning with a focus on long-term sustainability and innovation.
- Lead the board in modernising governance practices, bringing in contemporary methods while respecting the charity's core principles.

Please also note that in line with our recruitment policy for staff, Headway UK routinely conducts criminal records checks on potential new trustees.

Governance and compliance:

- Ensure the charity is fully compliant with its legal and regulatory obligations, including the Charity Commission guidelines and relevant UK legislation.
- Oversee robust financial governance, risk management, and internal controls, working closely with the Treasurer.

- Champion a culture of accountability, transparency, and high ethical standards throughout the organisation.

Change management:

- Lead the board in reviewing, agreeing, and implementing where appropriate the recommendations from the recent independent governance review, ensuring that changes are effectively embedded to strengthen the charity's governance framework.
- Engage trustees and staff in embracing change and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.
- Facilitate the board's understanding and adoption of contemporary best practices in governance, including the use of technology, diversity and inclusion, and stakeholder engagement.

Board effectiveness:

- Lead regular evaluations of the board's effectiveness and governance processes, addressing skills gaps and succession planning.
- Ensure trustees work collaboratively, providing an environment where challenge is encouraged and all views are heard.
- Encourage trustee engagement, development, and attendance at relevant training and events.

Relationship management:

- Build and maintain a strong, effective working relationship with the CEO and senior leadership team, offering support, guidance, and constructive challenge.
- Represent the charity externally, acting as a key ambassador and advocate to stakeholders, including corporate sponsors.
- Foster positive relationships between trustees and senior management to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities, promoting an effective balance between oversight and support.

Meeting and decision-making:

- Chair board meetings efficiently, ensuring decisions are well-informed, aligned with the charity's strategic priorities, and recorded appropriately.
- Encourage inclusive participation and ensure that meetings focus on strategy and risks.
- Lead the development of meeting agendas in partnership with the CEO, ensuring focus on key governance areas and strategic objectives.

Person specification

Essential:

Leadership and strategic thinking:

- Significant experience in a leadership role, preferably as Chair or senior trustee, in a charitable or non-profit organisation.
- Track record of strategic planning and decision-making at a senior level, with the ability to balance the organisation's long-term vision with practical and immediate needs.
- Exceptional ability to communicate with clarity, passion, and empathy, motivating individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Experience of provide strategic oversight and line management to senior staff ensuring effective leadership and accountability within the organisation.

Governance expertise:

- Deep understanding of charity governance, legal duties, and the regulatory environment within the UK charity sector.
- Knowledge of modern best practices in charity governance, risk management, and financial oversight.

Experience in change management:

- Demonstrated success in leading organisations through periods of significant governance or structural change, ideally within a board or senior leadership role.

Collaboration and team building:

- Ability to build, lead, and manage a cohesive board of trustees, fostering collaboration, constructive debate, and a shared vision.
- Experience working with diverse teams, with a commitment to inclusion, equity, and diversity in governance and operations.

Relationship building and stakeholder engagement:

- Excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to act as a figurehead and ambassador for the charity.
- Proven experience in managing stakeholder relationships, including working with senior staff and external partners.

Financial literacy:

- A good understanding of financial management, charity accounts, and budgetary oversight, with the ability to interrogate financial reports and contribute to discussions on financial sustainability.

Desirable:

Sector knowledge:

- Knowledge of brain injury and its often hidden and fluctuating effects.

Digital and technological awareness:

- Awareness of the role of technology in modernising governance and the ability to introduce or encourage the adoption of relevant digital tools to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Commitment required

The board of Headway UK meets on a quarterly basis. Currently, two meetings per year (typically in June and December) are held in person in London, with two meetings conducted virtually.

The meetings are scheduled during office hours.

The AGM and sub-committees require additional time commitments.

A key recommendation from a recent external governance review was for trustees to have more frequent contact with staff and volunteers at events held throughout the year.

Regular communication with the Chief Executive on an ongoing basis will also be required.

Term of service

The charity does not currently have any maximum term of service. However, the introduction of term limits has been recommended by the external governance review. The Chair would be responsible for the potential implementation of this, following further board discussions.

Benefits

While this post is a voluntary position, trustees of Headway UK are reimbursed for all reasonable expenses, including travel, accommodation and sustenance.

In addition, a further recommendation from the governance review is for regular training of trustees to be provided to all trustees.

Current board structure

The board of Headway UK currently comprises 13 trustees; 11 are elected and two are co-opted.

Currently, trustees are elected each year at the AGM by the charity's members. These are representatives from network of autonomous local Headway charities and volunteer-led branches, with each local entity having one vote.

Each year, one third of the board is required to resign by rotation. These retiring trustees can be nominated by the board to stand again and, if no other nominations are received from the network, they can be re-elected unopposed.

Further details on the [current trustees](#) can be found on the Headway UK website.

EDI statement

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated, and we encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds and experiences, particularly in underrepresented minority groups.

Interested? Here's how to apply

If you are passionate about joining Headway UK and believe you have the skills and experience we are looking for, please apply with the following:

- An up-to-date CV
- A supporting statement of no more than two sides of A4, detailing why you would like to be considered, your relevant experience and expertise and what you think you can bring to the role.

To submit an application, register an interest or ask a question, please contact Luke Griggs, Chief Executive, at luke.griggs@headway.org.uk.

If you require any adjustments to the application process, please contact Luke using the above email address.

Closing date for applications: 17 January 2024

Interviews to be held on: To be confirmed

Please note that any travel expenses to attend interviews will be reimbursed by the charity in line with our expenses policy.