

# Our Plan for the Next Five Years 2022 – 27







# Hello, we're Headway East London.

## We're here to support those in our city affected by brain injury.

Each year in the capital, tens of thousands of people are admitted to hospital with a brain injury. This might be the result of an illness like meningitis, or stroke, or head trauma.

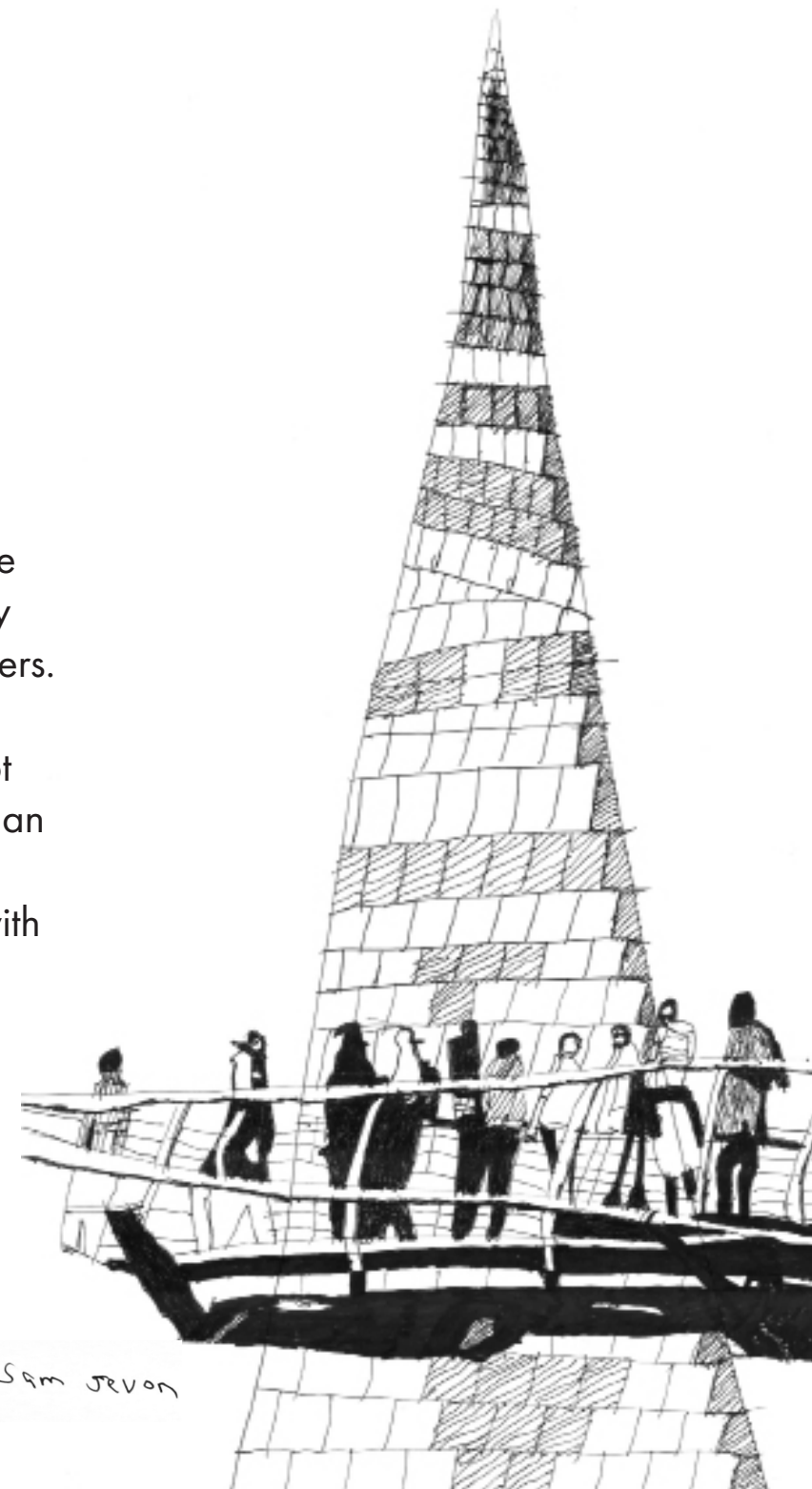
Brain injury can have a significant impact on the life of the individual and those closest to them. For many, it becomes a long-term condition which requires long-term support.

Headway East London was founded in 1997, and opened its doors to members\* one year later. To begin with, we just worked in Hackney,

but we've grown significantly and today help people from across 13 London boroughs. In 2020/21, we supported around 750 brain injury survivors, family members and carers.

Over the next five years, we've got ambitions to reach more people than ever before. This strategy – which was developed in collaboration with our members, staff, volunteers and trustees – explains how we'll get there.

\*we call people who use our services members



## Our Mission

We empower our community of brain injury survivors and their families to imagine new possibilities – ones filled with creativity, embracing diversity and backed by specialist support.

## Our Vision

Brain injury survivors experience a world which is accessible to them, and where their contributions are valued and celebrated.





BY E. Drysdale



# Our Principles

**Coproduction:** Members are at the centre of everything we do; they are actively involved in designing new projects, developing new ideas and helping to make decisions at all levels.

**Equity, diversity and inclusion:** We are committed to valuing every person as an individual and ensuring that our members, staff and volunteers do not experience discrimination at Headway East London. We will continue to work hard and create space for these conversations with everyone involved in the organisation.

**Sustainability:** We want to be around for the long term, to support survivors of brain injury now and in the future. To do this we will make sure our systems and processes are efficient and effective to support our work, and work hard to make sure our financial position remains positive. We care about broader sustainability too. That's why we're committed to cutting our carbon footprint, including through reducing our dependence on non-renewable energy sources.



# We combine expertise to do things a little differently.

Brain injury is complicated. It affects people in lots of different ways, and not all of them are visible. In fact, brain injury is often referred to as a hidden disability.

In many cases, people with a brain injury are offered generic support for a physical disability, which makes only a limited difference. This not only represents poor value for money for commissioners, but it can also lead to a deterioration in health, wellbeing and relationships; requiring additional intervention for both survivors and their families.

At Headway East London, we offer services specifically tailored to the needs of people affected by brain injury. Most importantly and uniquely, we always work in partnership with those we support. We know our members are experts in their own injury and needs; that only they can tell us what is most important to them. We combine this expertise with our own, empowering people affected by brain injury to explore new identities; developing new skills and interests along the way.



# Supporting Connection

Ex-fitness fanatic Rosy had been experiencing very high levels of social isolation and depression when we first met her.

Working together, we helped Rosy to fundraise for an adapted bike, before supporting her to complete a physical trainer course with the intention of helping other people with disabilities enjoy cycling.

We then introduced Rosy to another member living nearby; the two of them now socialise independently whilst Rosy also introduced them to cycling as an activity.







# We understand and support the whole person.

We believe in the **power of connection and creativity** to create better futures for those affected by brain injury. Our holistic approach means that projects are co-produced in response to members' needs, desires and ambitions, whilst the breadth of our work reflects the diversity of Headway East London's community.

Our art studio – **Submit to Love** – provides a means of discovery and expression, whilst our kitchen project encourages people to work together on a shared goal. Weekly dance, music, writing and exercise groups provide several ways for

members to gain skills, share stories and find agency in their own journey. Meanwhile, our partnerships with leading organisations like the Barbican validate and celebrate our members' work and talents on a national stage.

All of this sits alongside our established day services, neurological therapies, community support and casework and advocacy services. We take a responsive approach, so that members can access the support and projects they feel will most benefit and interest them.





## Supporting Creativity

“I’d only been in the art studio a handful of times before the ceramics workshops. I do have a creative side, I just haven’t had a chance to use it for a long time. But something about ceramics grabbed me: this feeling of creating something from nothing, and being totally free in what you make. I’ve enjoyed it a lot. I take pride in the work, especially when you see the finished product. I’d like to share my skills with those people, and maybe give them some inspiration.”

- Alex, Day Service Member









# We're one big team.

At Headway East London, members, staff and volunteers talk about feeling part of one **community** in which every person is valued and respected. We're all equal partners, combining our collective experiences to make a difference.

Members have a feeling of belonging and can be themselves, or find themselves again. Since many of our volunteers have personal experience of brain injury, they also bring invaluable insight to our work. Decisions and ideas are shared, and we place a strong emphasis on peer support in all that we do.

Each day we come together to discover what's meaningful in life; forging friendships and connections along the way. While we have ambitious plans to grow, we are dedicated to maintaining this philosophy and community. It's what makes us so special.





## Supporting Community

"I never thought I'd be cooking twice a week for 50 plus people. Helping to cook, that's one of the beautiful things about the Headway kitchen, you're never alone, there's always someone to help you out, a member of staff or volunteer. But there's also the lovely experience of cooking with fellow members and feeling like you're part of a team, we don't really get that in the world, we don't have a workplace where we're part of a team, but Headway provides that."

- Dave, Day Service Member



# We've got big plans.

We've got ambitious plans for the next five years. We want to be the leading brain injury organisation in London providing high quality, innovative specialist support, and to have a strong voice across the health and social care sector. We also want to create more opportunities for our members to share their contributions and talents, and to interrogate what true collaboration looks like in the process.

In 2016/17, the most recent year for which data is publicly available, almost **40,000** people were admitted to a London hospital with an acquired brain injury. That was a **15% increase** over the 10 years to that point.

**There is no shortage of people who would benefit from our help.**





# A City Utopia – A vision for Headway East London



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"In 5 years' time, the area stretching west from the dusty frontage of St Leonard's Hospital on Kingsland Road all the way down to Hoxton Street, is now named on Google Maps as "Hoxton-Headway". This new Headway is a centre of excellence in the understanding of all things neuro, where brain injury survivors, neurology experts and all associated practitioners live together in a culturally open community. And it has become a surprise prototype for how future "micro-societies" can thrive.

Gone is the association with the "treatment" of addiction or impairment. "Rehab" is now a new way of living together, in which each "member" – be they a car-crash survivor with massive frontal lobe damage, or a top brain surgeon – has equal rights and opportunities, and each is supported by their fellow members to flourish as an individual in a curiously diverse collective." - Billy, Day Service Member

# Our aims for the next five years:

## 1. Help more people than ever before; we want to double the number of people we reach each year across London to 1,500 by 2027

- Through relatively light-touch approaches such as new online groups and increasing our advocacy work, community services and hospital presence, we'll reach more survivors, families and carers than ever before.
- We'll particularly focus on reaching people who are currently under-represented among users of brain injury support services; including women, young people and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. We'll explore ways to identify need in our area, and specifically currently-unmet need. This will enable us to prioritise areas for action and then find ways to meet this demand.
- We'll use new methodologies to measure the impact of our services. Using recognised outcome measurement tools will help us more reliably prove the difference we make through our unique approach. This will provide further evidence that our work results in positive outcomes for brain injury survivors and that it offers real value for money for commissioners and local authorities.

## **2. Provide new innovative and creative ways of supporting brain injury survivors, and different opportunities for people to connect with us**

- We'll continue to create partnerships with other organisations who can support the development of our projects and services. We'll build upon our successful public engagement work and occupational projects, and empower our membership to take on new roles in the process.
- We'll make better use of our data to establish what else we could be doing. External frameworks will help guide us in providing the best possible support, and help us identify new potential services or projects. Coproduction will be at the heart of this, with possible areas of development including vocational rehabilitation, specialist personal care, member-led training and increased online support options.



# Our aims for the next five years:

## 3. Continue to fight for equity for brain injury survivors and develop our social justice voice; raising awareness of the impact of brain injury and our work

- We'll involve more members and families in our awareness raising work, and be led by their needs in the fight for social justice and better support for brain injury survivors. We will always champion neurodiversity, and we'll connect more with other charities and organisations prioritising this approach too. We will also challenge and approach with those not currently engaged in these discussions, to encourage wider change.
- We'll communicate and collaborate more effectively than ever before by building even stronger relationships with stakeholders, GPs, hospitals and commissioners. We'll also review our relationship with the Headway UK to ensure it's creating the maximum possible benefit.
- We'll launch a new website clearly explaining exactly what we do and why it's so important. We'll also celebrate our achievements and milestones – including our silver jubilee in 2023. All of this will tie to our continuing dedication to fundraising, ensuring strong finances which help us deliver support to those who need us.

## **4. Make sure that everyone who is part of Headway East London enjoys their role and feels they are contributing towards the same goal**

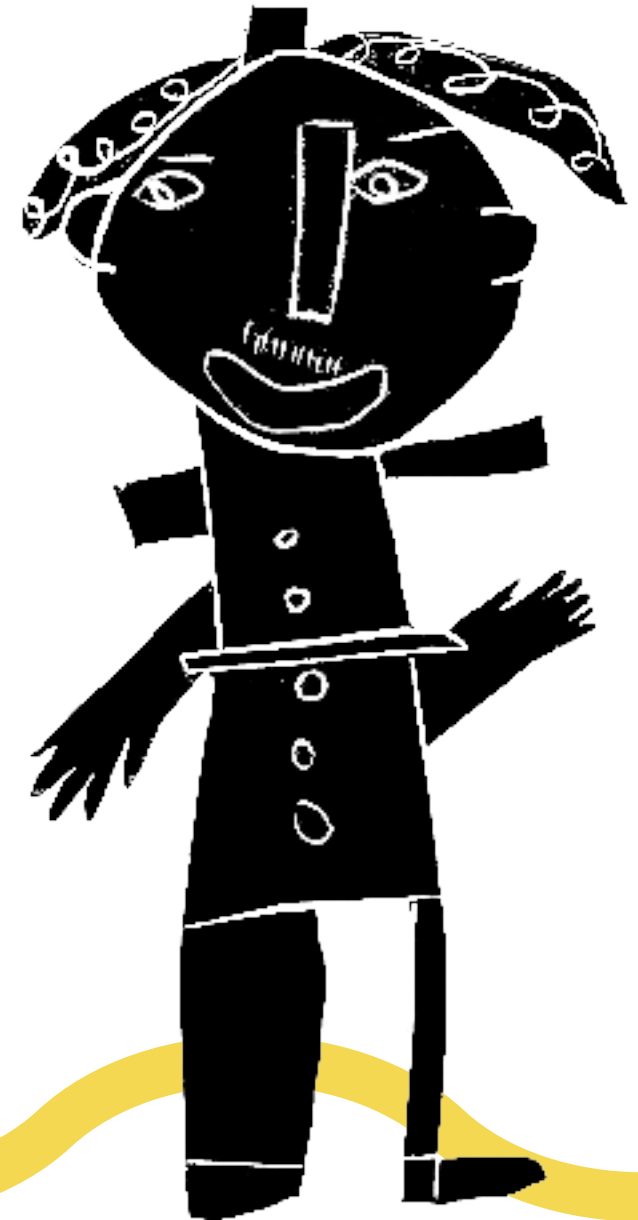
- We're going to develop a shared vision and understanding to underpin our already-strong team approach. We'll continue to take a creative and genuine approach to equity, diversity and inclusion; valuing the skills, gifts and characteristics of everyone at Headway East London. That will include employing more people with brain injuries, in all areas and at all levels of our organisation.
- We'll investigate gaining external quality marks such as Investors in People, to provide a formal structure through which we demonstrate how highly we value our people. This will all be backed by effective leadership and a dedication to staff development.
- By investing in well-resourced and crucial support functions – such as human resources, training and development, administration, communications and fundraising teams – we'll make sure our wider staff team can spend more time doing what they do best: supporting survivors of brain injury.

# Why it matters.

Our work is important – to people affected by brain injury and their families, but also to the communities in which they live.

The impact of brain injury on someone's life can be severe. We help people to not only navigate this unimaginable experience, but move towards a place where they can meet their potential and thrive. At the same time, we also reduce pressure on non-specialist services and ensure public money is spent more effectively.

Every person we support should be able to live the life they want, without facing marginalisation and lack of understanding. That doesn't only affect our members: it benefits entire communities and health and social care economies. Together we can discover new ways of looking at the world, and ensuring it is accessible to everyone.







# The Importance of Specialist Support

“We hadn’t realised how much we needed your help. You just plod along not noticing that you are slowly deteriorating both mentally and emotionally. We now feel much better equipped to go on A’s journey with him for which we can never thank you enough”

*- Family member*





# The Value of Headway East London

**“Headway has been a total lifeline, and it will continue (to be). Being able to be with people every day even through all this has truly saved my life after I’ve lost a lot. I just want to carry on all together and keep making art and dancing.”**

*- Sandra, Day Service Member*









# To find out more...

To find out more about Headway East London and our progress towards our goals, visit [headwayeastlondon.org](https://headwayeastlondon.org)

You can also follow us on social media:



Twitter - @HeadwayELondon



Instagram - @headwayeastlondon



Facebook - Headwayeastlondon



LinkedIn - headway-east-london

Or email us: [info@headwayeastlondon.org](mailto:info@headwayeastlondon.org)



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Affiliated to Headway - the brain injury association