

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



The Magic of Chaos: A new documentary about acquired brain injury, community and new identities

Release date: 8 November 2024

Available to view online at headwayeastlondon.org/magicofchaos

Runtime: 21 minutes

Assets and film trailer available to view, download and share from [here](#)

#magicofchaos @headwayeastlondon

Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund

On the 8th November **Headway East London** launches ***The Magic of Chaos***, a documentary short made by award-winning filmmaker [Kit Vincent](#). This poignant documentary invites viewers into the magical world of Headway East London's centre in Hackney, a sanctuary for over 200 individuals living with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI).

ABI is a silent epidemic; every 90 seconds someone from the UK is admitted to hospital with a brain injury.



The Magic of Chaos film poster, designed by Lucia Garcia Studio © Headway East London

The film follows the journeys of four Londoners:



Yoki Mekuria, 34, developed a brain injury after an infection at 17 years old. A Hackney resident, she joined Headway East London as a member, and now works at the charity, providing support and advocacy to other brain injury survivors, as well as completing a degree in Criminal Law. She has recently been nominated for [Headway UK Achiever of the Year Award](#).

Dave Mercer, 58, was a chauffeur to the rich and famous, before developing a brain injury due to viral encephalitis. Since joining the charity, he has embraced his creativity through cooking and developing a new identity as an artist. The film explores how the brain injury has affected his relationship with his teenage son, Milo.



Margie Milner, 52, is the life and soul of the Headway East London community, who spreads joy through her love for food and music. A sudden aneurysm at home alone left her fighting for her life, when she was found by a neighbour. She is now a dedicated mum to her two boys, and determined to enjoy life to the fullest.

Marie-Claire Nonchalente, 50, is rebuilding her life after an aneurysm left her in a coma at forty. A successful business woman and matriach, her brain injury changed her role in society and her family overnight. A member of Headway East London for 7 years, she is a passionate advocate for the rights of people living with brain injury.



Through their stories, this touching film focuses on the often-hidden nature of acquired brain injury; the cataclysmic effect it has on loved ones and relationships, invisible disability and creating a new sense of self.

The Magic of Chaos offers a glimpse into Headway East London's Day Centre, where the transformative power of art, music, food and above all community bring light to lives forever changed by brain injury.

Sarah Lantsbury, Chief Executive at Headway East London, said: *"I hope this film moves people and makes them think, giving a glimpse of the amazing things people with brain injuries can contribute. More than anything, I want viewers to leave feeling inspired by their strength and the hope they bring to the world."*

In keeping with the ethos of the organisation, the film has been coproduced and filmed with the members of Headway East London, who all have lived experience of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI).

Director Kit Vincent is also an ABI survivor. After being diagnosed with a brain tumour at 24, Kit turned the lens on himself and made his debut feature *Red Herring* (2023) which documented the absurdity of the things we do to find solace in times of inexplicable tragedy. *Red Herring* was nominated for a British Independent Film Award and won Best UK Feature at the Raindance Film Festival.

Kit Vincent, Director, said: *“When we spoke to members about what we should feature in the film, they were clear that whilst the film should show what a joyful place Headway is, we shouldn’t shy away from the realities of living with brain injury.”*

Every year in the UK, 350,000 people are admitted to hospital with an acquired brain injury sustained through illness or injury. That's one every 90 seconds, and the number is rising annually. Today, Headway East London support over 800 survivors of brain injury each year, across 13 London boroughs. Members and their carers and families are offered specialist, holistic services, including a day centre, neurological therapies, community support, and casework. Day-to-day, Headway East London’s bustling community centre is awash with life; as well as their art studio [Submit to Love](#), they run singing groups and workshops on music and writing, and their daily lunches – prepared by a talented medley of members, staff, and volunteers – are famously delicious.

This project is the culmination of Headway East London’s heritage project, funded by the **National Lottery Heritage Fund**, marking 25 years of changing the lives of people living with brain injury. The project celebrates its astonishing trajectory from humble beginnings in the Alfred Health Centre in Homerton on Thursday 12th March 1998, when Headway East London opened its doors for the first time, with just one staff member, a single volunteer and three survivors of brain injury. Over 25 years the Hackney-based charity has become a leader in delivering innovative, tailor-made services for people living with brain injury. *The Magic of Chaos* captures these origins, and the powerful community ethos that continues to make the charity a sanctuary for people with brain injury in the heart of East London today.

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Press images available online

Press images and [film trailer](#) available to view, download and share from [here](#)

About Headway East London

[Headway East London](#) is a charity supporting people affected by brain injury. Working across 13 London boroughs we offer specialist support and services for survivors and their family. We offer therapies, advocacy, family support and community support work alongside our day service: a community venue where people can make the most of their abilities and interests and take part in music, art, dance, cooking and many other activities. We have an onsite art studio, [Submit to Love](#), with the mission 'discovery through art'. Our vision is to build a community where people with brain injury are valued, respected and able to fulfil their potential.

Headway East London, Timber Wharf, 238-240 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8AX

Registered Charity No: 1083910

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About Kit Vincent

[Kit Vincent](#) is a London based award-winning filmmaker. His films have been supported by BFI Doc Society, Sundance Documentary Film Program, The Whickers, France TV, Jewish Story Partners and Jewish Film Institute. After being diagnosed with a brain tumour at 24, Kit turned the lens on himself and made his debut feature Red Herring (2023) which documented the absurdity of the things we do to find solace in times of inexplicable tragedy. Red Herring was nominated for a British Independent Film Award and won Best UK Feature at the Raindance Film Festival.