

Volunteering with

HEADWAY*Luton*

A brief guide

1. Background

HEADWAY*Luton* is a registered charity based in Luton, but also serving the surrounding areas, offering professional care and support to individuals with acquired brain injury and their families / carers.

Over 100 clients, carers, and families currently access our services. We aim to provide:

- Advice and information on acquired brain injury
- Greater awareness of the causes and effects of an acquired brain injury.
- Professional care and support
- Home visits
- Benefit and legal advice
- Basic counselling
- Therapeutic day care
- Educational and social opportunities
- Liaison with statutory services
- Advocacy

2. Company Structure

HEADWAY*Luton* is a voluntary organisation, a company limited by guarantee with a Board of Trustees. Staff are appointed to undertake the day to day management and development of Headway. The staff group currently consists of a Service Manager, a Community Services Co-ordinator and two full time Centre staff.

The **Service Manager** has overall responsibility for management of the service, including staff and personnel issues, policies, service development and funding.

The service can then be subdivided into two main areas:

1. **Community Services** – Offering a wide variety support in the community to clients, family members and carers, including basic counselling, home visits, benefits advice and hospital visits.
2. **Headway Centre** – [HEADWAYLuton](#) has a fully equipped Centre at 41 Cardiff Road in Luton, where a diverse range of activities and opportunities are offered.

The Centre is open from Monday to Friday 10 am – 3 pm.

Many courses and activities are offered, including:

- Basic Computer skills
- Independence skills
- Creative Writing
- Cognitive Exercises
- Community trips and outings
- Self esteem
- Physical Exercise
- Current affairs & Group discussion
- Internet Skills
- Complementary Therapies
- Support to community gyms
- Literacy & Numeracy
- Digital Photography
- Art
- Social activities
- Confidence Building

3. Brain Injury Explained

CAUSES

An acquired brain injury can happen to anyone at anytime. The causes of the injury may include accidents, eg road traffic, recreational or work related, non-accidental injury, infection, tumour, stroke or haemorrhage, poisoning or anoxia (lack of oxygen to the brain).

EFFECTS

The effects of a brain injury can differ with every individual and are dependent upon the severity and the location of the brain injury. The effects of an acquired brain injury can be widespread and diverse and can cause major changes in lifestyle, personal relationships and employment. Brain Injury can affect the whole pattern of life and has far reaching consequences for the individual and their families and carers.

A person with an acquired brain injury may experience difficulties in all or some of the following areas: Physical, emotional, psychological and social. Some of the most common difficulties include:

- Loss of concentration
- Poor memory
- Personality changes and/or mood swings
- Communication difficulties
- Poor organisational and planning skills
- Lack of motivation or initiative
- Physical disabilities
- Visual and/or hearing problems
- Lack of insight and understanding
- Depression or anxiety

Whilst the effects of the brain injury may be manifested in physical disability, brain injury is often referred to as the hidden disability, because the effects may not be physically obvious, involving social, cognitive or emotional difficulties.

4. Volunteering Opportunities

Initially opportunities are in the Centre. The main purposes are:

To provide an efficient and effective service [HEADWAYLuton](#) relies on the valuable support and assistance of volunteers. With only two centre staff the services [HEADWAYLuton](#) provide within the Centre would be extremely limited without the help of regular and committed volunteers.

There are so many varied activities at the Centre, that whatever your reason for volunteering, whether you have some time on your hands, if you want to get some work experience, or to put something back into the community – there is sure to be a volunteering opportunity for you.

Whether you:

....enjoy meeting people?

enjoy the gym?

...love computers?

....enjoy making tea?

...ARE ARTISTIC?

....want some work experience?

...LOVE TO CHAT?

...have good basic skills

....like to support group outings?

...want to make a positive difference to people's lives?

....HAVE UNUSUAL HOBBIES?

...and are good at listening and communicating

Whatever your skills, likes and dislikes, the work in the Centre is so varied that there is bound to be a niche for you! Consider what you would like gain from your experience and set yourself objectives. It will help you if you have something to aim for!

Volunteering with [HEADWAYLuton](#) works most successfully when volunteers make a realistic commitment of their time and maintain that level of attendance.

5. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

[HEADWAYLuton](#) recognises the value of volunteers and the contribution they make to the work of the organisation. We are committed to providing a safe working environment; to this end we have policies covering the following areas:

- Health and Safety
- A 'Working in the Community' policy
- Equal opportunities
- Complaints and Grievances

We also refund any out of pocket expenses necessary for the volunteer role.

We are also committed to the individual volunteers' development. To this end we provide:

- A wide choice of volunteering opportunities
- A full induction at the start of the placement: which is compulsory.
- Ongoing training relevant to the role; some of which is compulsory.
- Support and supervision
- Support for personal development

Regardless of your age*, the amount of hours you can offer or amount of previous experience, we believe there may be a rewarding volunteering opportunity waiting for you at [HEADWAYLuton](#).

** Centre volunteers must be 16 years old and volunteers working in the community must be 18 years old.*

You must be eligible to work in the U.K.

*The placement is not subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, therefore you will need to declare any offences, binding-over orders and cautions. **Volunteering with us is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check; which will need to have been completed prior to you starting your placement.** Having offences, binding-over orders and cautions does not necessarily mean you are unable to volunteer with us.*

If you are enthusiastic, flexible and can get on with people, then look no further, this may be the opportunity you are looking for...

please contact:

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