

Preston brain injury charity needed now more than ever

Local brain injury charity Headway Preston and Chorley is needed now more than ever according to the results of a survey published by Headway UK.

The survey, which explored the impact of COVID-19 on people affected by brain injury, found that more than half of brain injury survivors have lost access to rehabilitation services as a result of lockdown and are finding isolation very difficult.

Early rehabilitation following brain injury can be crucial in helping survivors to regain a degree of independence and relearn lost skills, including walking and talking. But 57% of those who sustained their injuries within the past two years say their access to rehabilitation and community groups has been negatively impacted.

A further 64% of those living with the long-term effects of brain injury reported a deterioration in their mental health as a result of the measures implemented to control the spread of COVID-19, while almost two thirds say they now fear for their futures.

The key findings revealed:

- 57% of people who sustained a brain injury within the past two years reported that their rehabilitation has been negatively impacted
- Two thirds of respondents reported a negative impact on their psychological wellbeing
- 62% of respondents fear for their future
- 50% have lost access to vital support that helps them to cope
- 42% say their rehabilitation has been negatively impacted

Headway Preston and Chorley says that the stark findings highlight the importance of ensuring those affected by brain injury are provided with appropriate physical, psychological and social rehabilitation, and support.

Liz Bamber, Manager of Headway Preston and Chorley said: "The results of this study are deeply concerning. The first two years following a brain injury are very important in terms of a patient's long-term prognosis and any delay to receiving specialist rehabilitation and support can impact their ability to lead an independent life in the future.

"Headway Preston and Chorley is going to extraordinary lengths to ensure help vulnerable individuals and their families during the lockdown and has responded swiftly to the outbreak by tailoring remote services to help brain injury survivors cope with the situation. This has included a Keep In Touch project funded by the

Lancashire COVID-19 Community Support Fund and National Emergencies Trust and a Hospital Patient Virtual Service funded by the National Lottery.

However, the charity are under financial pressure and facing an uphill battle to survive. Many of the specialist rehabilitation and support services provided by Headway Preston and Chorley are funded by donations and through events and sponsorship which are on hold due to Coronavirus restrictions.

Liz Bamber manager concluded: "If the specialist community support we provide cannot continue many vulnerable people living in our area would lose the help they rely on. Headway Preston and Chorley needs to be here long after this pandemic, so we are able continue to improve the lives of people affected by brain injury."

To find out more about you can help Headway Preston and Chorley visit <https://www.headwayprestonandchorley.org.uk/how-to-donate/#>

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