



•Mark Cassin has been a member of Headway since experiencing a bleed on the brain in 2003 Picture: ROB CURRIE (35805512)

‘The acceptance and experience has been life-changing’

Bryce Alford, fundraising and events manager of Headway Jersey, shares the stories of two of the charity’s members, and gives readers a message

STROKES, falls, road traffic collisions, assaults, brain tumours, meningitis – these are just a few examples of incidents that can cause brain injury.

During the recent Action for Brain Injury Week, Headway Jersey aimed to highlight the fact that it only takes a few seconds for a life to be completely knocked off course.

One powerful statistic shows that, every 90 seconds, someone in the UK is admitted to hospital with a brain injury. Brain injuries can have devastating, lifelong effects on anyone, including individuals and their loved ones.

Headway Jersey is here to support everyone affected by a brain injury, and those caring for them.

Through our support, we rebuild lives – second by second, step by step, day by day.

Headway Jersey would like to ask JEP readers to take a second to find out more and, if you can, please get involved – by donating, volunteering or simply raising awareness of our services – because someone like you needs our help.

Last year, Headway Jersey celebrated its 25th anniversary. Here are the stories of two members who have been helped by the charity.

Mark Cassin

Mark has been a member of Headway since 2003 following a bleed on the brain, which was diagnosed after a year of visits to the doctor and a variety of tablets led to a specialist brain scan. At the point at which the blood clot was diagnosed, Mark was experiencing many highs and lows and mood swings which made family life very difficult.

After becoming aware of Headway Jersey, he became interested in the activities the charity provided and, in 2006, he began volunteering in our charity shop in The Parade. Mark has been a tremendous volunteer supporter for the past 17 years both in the shop and at our fundraising activities.

He finds helping at the shop gives him a sense of purpose and he enjoys meeting people. He regularly attends our Wednesday sessions at our Headway Centre in Springfield Road and his participation in the activities at the centre also help him to socialise and meet new people.

The Covid pandemic and lockdown, when the shop was shut, became a difficult period for him. He was isolated, losing his sense of purpose and losing contact with his friends at the centre, although he was grateful for our regular phone calls which helped him to retain a sense of being part of our community.

Mark has also enjoyed attending the Headway swimming therapy sessions and has participated in the Headway team in the Swimathon on a truly impressive 16 occasions.

Maxi Coburn

The life of Maxi Coburn, who has a doctorate in psychology, changed in September 2020 during the Covid lockdown, when she had a stroke.

Maxi spent two months in hospital followed by a four-month rehabilitation period in London. On her return to Jersey, she received a further two weeks of treatment and was then sent to a care home, where visits were very limited and she wasn't allowed out.

The isolation and the fact that her speech had been affected greatly by the stroke meant that Maxi was unable to communicate with her daughter. On returning home, she received care support for four months before it stopped. This affected her emotional health, which caused her to become angry and upset.

The stroke, difficulty in speaking and isolation caused her to regress, which affected her confidence and

speech even further, making it even more difficult to communicate with her family.

Maxi found Headway Jersey last year following the recommendation of a friend and she now takes part in many of our activities, including our communications group and the social activities we provide which have helped her greatly, improving her confidence, speech and movement.

She says that the acceptance and experience at Headway has been life-changing for her.