



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## FOR EVERYONE AFFECTED BY BRAIN INJURY



Working in partnership with:



01482 620229  
[www.paulforbrainrecovery.co.uk](http://www.paulforbrainrecovery.co.uk)

# OFFERING HOPE AFTER BRAIN INJURY

If you, or your loved one, has been affected by acquired brain injury (ABI) then you may not know what to expect and may feel worried about what the future may hold. The P.A.U.L For Brain Recovery charity offers community-based support, guidance and education to individuals and families affected.

Our mission is to help make life easier after brain injury.

We have experience supporting people with various types of acquired brain injuries, including the below. This list is not exhaustive.

- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Arteriovenous Malformation (AVM)
- Tumours
- Stroke
- Aneurysm
- Haemorrhage
- Hypoxia
- Meningitis
- Encephalitis
- Concussion



“

**THE CHARITY HAS BEEN A REALLY GOOD LIFELINE FOR ME. I WAS REALLY STRUGGLING AND IT'S NICE TO KNOW THERE'S PEOPLE TO TALK TO, OTHERS THAT UNDERSTAND.**

”

Service user comment

# HOW THE CHARITY BEGAN

In 2012 I suffered a brain haemorrhage; nothing could prepare my family and I for the battle of brain recovery. I felt lost, lonely, confused and vulnerable. I know from personal experience that a brain injury can come with devastating consequences and be life-changing for everyone affected. We faced a long, difficult journey and soon realised there was a lack of support in the community.

For those reasons, I felt there needed to be somewhere to go, a lifeline, a place to obtain Positivity, Awareness, Understanding and Love. That's why I set up P.A.U.L For Brain Recovery. Our highly-skilled team is trained and experienced to support individuals and loved ones during recovery. You are not alone.



“

Having the right support after acquired brain injury is crucial.

*P. A. Spence*

”

Paul Spence,  
Brain injury survivor  
and charity founder



Centre opening in Hull, 2016



Paul with MP Chris Bryant -  
Palace of Westminster, 2018

## Why is community support so important?

After suffering a brain injury, life can be very different. Recovery can often be a long, challenging journey and in many cases, people are vulnerable as they adapt to life as their brain recovers. Some people struggle to maintain their relationships, friendships and the normal daily routines they had before their injury.

Community support can help to manage the different stages of recovery. All of our activities aim to improve quality of life after brain injury by giving our service users the practical skills and knowledge to manage daily living and avoid crisis.



We have built a thriving, social community of people who support one another towards living a happy and meaningful life.

## OUR SERVICES

Brain injury recovery is experienced differently by everybody. That's why we take a person-centred and holistic approach. Our sessions focus on engaging in activities that help the brain to heal and adapt, whilst working towards any aspirations that the individual would like to achieve. A support plan can combine any of the following sessions and activities:

- **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
Social sessions, outings, day trips
- **HEALTH & WELLBEING**  
Allotment, yoga, gym, walking groups
- **FAMILY SUPPORT**  
Helping everyone affected
- **ONE-TO-ONE & GROUP EDUCATION**  
Healthy lifestyle choices, self care, confidence, coping strategies, the brain and recovery
- **PEER SUPPORT**  
Connecting survivors
- **ADVOCACY SUPPORT**  
Assistance with accessing other relevant support/services



THERE IS NO COST  
TO ATTEND ANY OF  
OUR SESSIONS AND  
ACTIVITIES -  
IT'S COMPLETELY  
**FREE**



## Social sessions

At the charity community centre, our social sessions give service users an opportunity to meet regularly and socialise with others going through similar experiences. Service users enjoy interacting in a safe, non-judgemental and friendly space where they can be themselves and share positive stories about their recovery.

Optional fun and engaging activities like quizzes, bingo or crafts often form part of these sessions to provide some light-hearted, interactive fun.

## SESSIONS & ACTIVITIES



### Who do these sessions help?

People who feel they no longer fit in or feel comfortable among their friends following their injury. Also those who have become socially isolated or who would like to meet others going through similar experiences. New service users are welcomed with extra support, at a pace that's right for them.

Separate, smaller social group sessions are held for those who benefit from a slower, quieter pace.

### Why do these sessions help?

Social isolation can be a common consequence following ABI. Depression or low mood can often follow, especially when people feel they have a lack of purpose and struggle with their identity. Feeling supported and understood plays an important role in brain injury recovery. Our social sessions encourage new friendships within an understanding and supportive community. The feeling of belonging helps service users feel safe, happy and that they are not alone.

MEET  
NEW FRIENDS  
& SOCIALISE

FEEL A  
SENSE OF  
BELONGING

FEEL  
UNDERSTOOD  
& SUPPORTED

GAIN  
CONFIDENCE  
& FEEL  
EMPOWERED

IMPROVE  
WELLBEING



## Social outings

Aiming to appeal to a range of interests, several day trips are arranged throughout the year. Service users enjoy trips to the seaside, museums, bowling, nature walks and visits to local places of interest.

These sessions provide an opportunity to engage in social activities within novel and inspiring environments. This helps to build confidence and manage difficulties in different settings, to build bonds between friends and to encourage new interests and hobbies.

## SESSIONS & ACTIVITIES



### Who do these sessions help?

People who like to venture to new places, who are keen to develop new interests and improve their social lives. We offer a range of social outings to cater for varying levels of difficulties. We provide additional support for individuals where possible, to ensure our day trips are inclusive for all service users.

### Why do these sessions help?

Whilst service users feel safe and comfortable among friends, our social outings offer fun and interesting stimulation to engage the brain. Novelty and challenge within new environments stimulate brain activity, which releases 'feel good' chemicals in the brain. This can relieve stress, depression and promote a sense of fulfilment that can lead to feeling motivated and happy.

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## Allotment

During the warmer months, service users enjoy spending time at our charity allotment. These sessions provide healthy outdoor activities to stimulate both the body and brain. Service users can socialise, enjoying sunlight and nature whilst feeling a sense of purpose in a safe, outdoor environment.

Those attending can develop skills ranging from planting and digging or for those that prefer to be a little less active can participate by making drinks and watering plants.

## SESSIONS & ACTIVITIES



### *Who do these sessions help?*

People who enjoy being outdoors in the fresh air find this session helpful during their recovery, giving them a safe place to relax and socialise in a peaceful setting. For some service users, being able to grow and cook with the produce grown from scratch is very rewarding.

### *Why do these sessions help?*

After brain injury, people often express a lack of purpose and struggle with identity and self worth. Sometimes people benefit from having an active purpose and can feel more comfortable socialising whilst focusing on an activity or working together with others. This often drives a connection, teamwork and a sense of community, meaning that people feel happy and proud that they have contributed to something worthwhile.





## Yoga, gym & walking sessions

Regular yoga, gym and walking sessions are held to improve physical and emotional wellbeing.

These sessions are tailored to meet the specific needs of service users. They take place either in groups, or as one-to-one sessions based on physical abilities or personal aspirations. Areas of focus can include improving fitness, strength, balance and co-ordination, whilst the wellbeing outcome often results in improved confidence and feeling a sense of achievement.

## SESSIONS & ACTIVITIES



### Who do these sessions help?

People who would like to be more active and would like to improve their health. Also those who have difficulties with mobility, balance and coordination as well as memory challenges, low mood, depression and anxiety.

### Why do these sessions help?

During brain injury recovery, engaging in activity helps the brain to heal. Using the body and mind in challenging ways helps the brain to form new connections, which can help towards minimising the long-term impact of brain injury. Whilst these sessions help to improve the physical effects of brain injury, they can also help to improve memory, energy levels and sleep quality. Further outcomes could also be decreased levels of stress, depression and anxiety.







## Family support

Family support sessions are held at the charity centre. These small group sessions are facilitated by family members and staff from the charity. They are relaxed and informal. The focus is geared towards chatting about the common effects of brain injury and how this can impact family members, the family routine and the relationship dynamics.

Family members have the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and good news stories in as much, or as little detail as they'd like to.

## SESSIONS & ACTIVITIES



### *Who do these sessions help?*

Family members and loved ones wanting to learn more about the common effects of brain injury and how this can impact the whole family. Those who would like to connect with others going through similar experiences, as well as those who would like to learn ways they can best support themselves and manage difficulties at home.

### *Why do these sessions help?*

At the charity, we understand that brain injury can impact the whole family. Some families struggle to adapt to changes that have occurred or mask the difficulties they are facing.

Chatting to others may also help to highlight positive ways to support yourself, your loved ones and how to best manage difficulties at home. These sessions often emphasise the importance of self care and how to implement helpful coping strategies.

IMPROVE  
INSIGHT  
INTO ABI

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LEARN WAYS  
TO MANAGE  
DIFFICULTIES



## One-to-one & group education sessions

Education sessions and workshops are held to promote an understanding of brain injury and the common effects and consequences that can occur. These are delivered in an easy-to-understand way and offer an element of fun interaction.

Each session aims to inspire and motivate service users, providing them with the knowledge they need to help them manage their difficulties. Some sessions focus on exploring coping strategies whilst others encourage service users to incorporate healthy lifestyle choices into their daily habits to support their recovery.

## SESSIONS & ACTIVITIES



### Who do these sessions help?

People who like to learn ways to help support a better recovery, along with ways in which they can manage their difficulties in a positive way. Those who would like to talk more openly about their difficulties, connect with others and take ownership of their recovery.

### Why do these sessions help?

The effects of brain injury can leave people feeling sad and frustrated about their difficulties. Our education sessions help to provide a sense of hope and empowerment by offering knowledge and practical guidance within a supportive setting. This helps the individual to take positive steps towards reaching their new potential.

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# EMPOWERING OUR SERVICE USERS



## Peer support

We are extremely proud to connect ABI survivors who have, or who are going through, similar life experiences. Having someone who understands their specific situation enables survivors to interact, gain support and learn from like-minded people.

### *How can peer support be helpful?*

Peer support enables long standing-service users to assist others in their recovery journeys, helping others who may have become socially isolated following their injury.



It helps those involved to talk about their experiences and introduces them to new ideas and approaches that others have found helpful. This type of support helps individuals to connect, gives them a sense of belonging and provides reassurance that they are not alone in how they are feeling.



## Advocacy support

We make referrals and signpost to enable service users to fully participate in society. This involves providing support and information to ensure they are accessing any relevant services that they are entitled to.



### *How does advocacy support help?*

After brain injury, sometimes focus, reasoning and decision making can be affected. In addition, emotional changes can sometimes cloud judgement. Advocacy support lets service users know they have someone by their side, helping them to be as fully informed as possible in terms of their wider health and wellbeing needs.

## MANAGING ANGER KEEPS FAMILY TOGETHER

**Lynda -**

*BLEED ON THE BRAIN FOLLOWING A FALL*

It was my husband's 50th birthday, I was walking with my friend. Next thing I remember I was in Hull Royal Infirmary. I went for a head scan and the doctors said I had bleeding on the brain. They kept me in hospital and I was discharged after two days. I then got an abscess, which burst and the doctors gave me antibiotics. After my injury I didn't go outside for a long time as I was so frightened. I used to get frustrated with my husband and son. My husband continued to encourage me to go out with him on short walks. I saw a poster for P.A.U.L For Brain Recovery while in hospital and my husband said "let's go there".

Being part of the charity has been excellent. I know I've got a problem with anger but the charity has helped me with both my anger and anxiety. I don't go out much on my own but I go to the centre so I've got some of my independence back. I've made some great friends at the centre who I can now rely on. If I need them, they're always there for me. The staff are excellent, they help me a lot. I can tell them anything and they're always there for me and every other service user.



## FRIENDSHIP AFTER 16 YEARS

**Mike -**

*TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY FOLLOWING AN ATTACK*

I used to love going out partying. I was a single dad to a two-year-old boy. One night we were having drinks at the pub and my lodger hurt my cousin. When we got back to the flat, my lodger lost it. He kicked everyone out and attacked me, saying he would kill me. I was in a coma for six weeks.

After my TBI, I barely left the house alone for 16 years. If I did go to the shop, I would go before 7am so I wouldn't see people. My anxiety was crippling and I felt totally alone.

Since meeting the team at the charity, my life has changed. My confidence is better and I have a great social life. My anxiety is almost gone and I'm doing things I haven't done in years. When I had my brain

injury, I felt like a baby again but now I am regaining my independence. If I could tell someone with a brain injury anything, it would be that you can get through this.



“ I've met new friends that understand me and I've gained lots of confidence. ”

## FINDING HOPE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

In September 2015, I had an accident which left me with a catastrophic brain injury. Doctors said I would not survive. I was in a coma and when I woke up I had lost the ability to walk and talk and my memory had gone; I was like a rag doll. My life had changed forever. While in hospital, I felt lost, lonely and disconnected. I felt like I wasn't really there and my whole identity had changed.

After a year of being in hospital, I met the team at P.A.U.L For Brain Recovery and my life changed again, this time for the better. They supported me through everything, made me feel welcome and helped me with my challenges. It was amazing to meet people who understood me and who have been through similar experiences.



**Beth -**  
TBI FOLLOWING A CAR COLLISION

“

I met the team at P.A.U.L For Brain Recovery and my life changed again, this time for the better.

”

## ACCEPTANCE FOR BETTER MENTAL WELLBEING

After suffering a major seizure at work in January 2019, I was taken to hospital and later diagnosed with a brain tumour. I had been for a CT scan in 2010 but the tumour was too small and was not seen. I wasn't overly worried about the upcoming surgery until the night before, it suddenly dawned on me that I could die, have a stroke or be left paralysed.

I put so much effort into my physical recovery and I completely disregarded the mental battle that comes with brain injury. Work would not allow me back and this broke me, leaving me with severe depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts. I soon found out that my tumour had begun to grow back and I would need radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

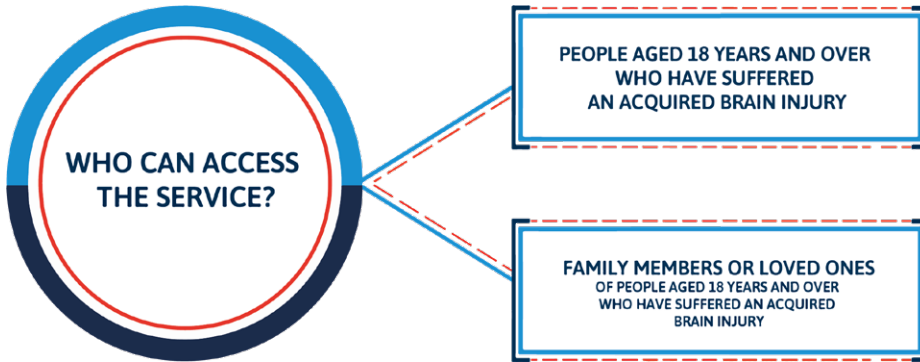
The charity has helped me to learn to accept that I do have a brain injury and that I need to respect and understand that, in order to



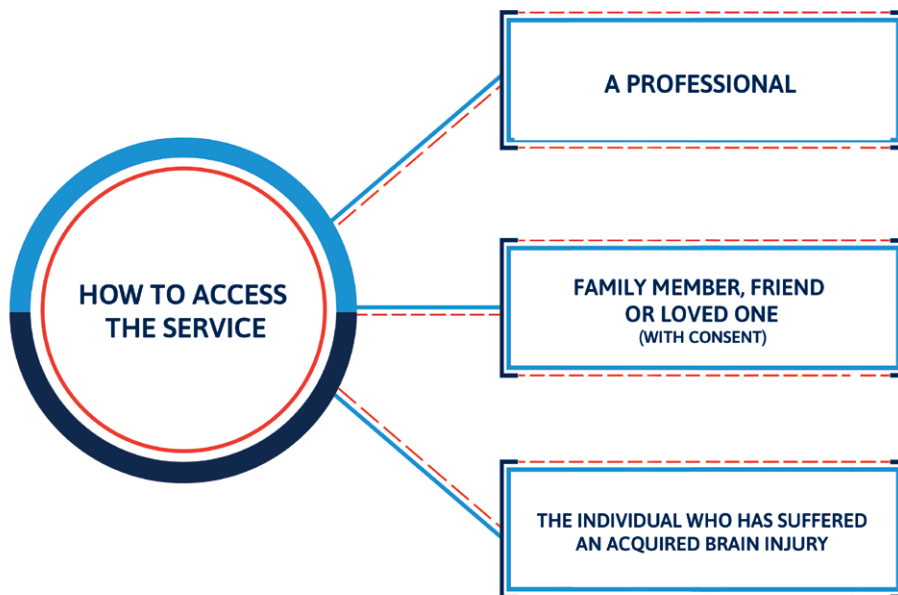
**Matt -**  
TUMOURS

overcome any barriers moving forward. I've met people that have also had brain tumours and brain surgery - suddenly, I'm not alone. On days where I would find myself at home, feeling sorry for myself, the charity allowed me to pop in and meet like-minded people, hone my photography skills and show me the benefits of nature..

# WHO CAN ACCESS THE CHARITY SERVICE?



# HOW TO ACCESS THE CHARITY SERVICE



“ It’s a special place, where we can be ourselves. Without the charity, I would be really struggling. ”

*Service user comment*

# HOW WE'RE DOING

Since accessing the service, our service users have reported improvements to their health and well-being.



## FEEL LESS ANXIOUS

Service users reported feeling less anxious after engaging with the charity



## HEALTH IMPROVED

Every single service user said their overall health had improved to a good level



## BECOME MORE ACTIVE

4 out of 5 service users say they now have a more active social life



Our service provision originates from the charity name - P.A.U.L which is an acronym for

**Positivity, Awareness, Understanding and Love.**

These values guide everything we do at the charity, providing a framework for our service.



Whether you have a mild, moderate or severe brain injury

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

Call 01482 620229 or email [info@paulforbrainrecovery.co.uk](mailto:info@paulforbrainrecovery.co.uk)



# P.A.U.L.<sup>TM</sup>

For Brain Recovery

01482 620229

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Working in partnership with:

