

Congratulations to volunteer of the year Georgia

Meet our new Employment & Welfare team

The rise in COVID-related anxiety -  
and how to help



# Busting myths around living with dementia



**Norrms McNamara, from Torbay, Devon, is the founder of the global Purple Angel Dementia Campaign and has Lewy body dementia. Here, he shares his inspirational story – and busts some myths around living with dementia.**

*At the age of just 50, I was diagnosed with dementia.*

*My world fell apart, but rather than sit back and do nothing, I founded what is now a global dementia campaign after being spoken to rudely by a shopkeeper. I decided to change the way people see dementia and treat others by asking local shop staff to read a guide to understanding dementia in order to be awarded a Purple Angel logo for their window. We now have more than 1,000 Purple Angel ambassadors globally and have raised awareness across the world. But these statements show there is still so much to do:*

- 1. People still think that dementia is an age-related disease. This is not true.*
- 2. People still tell me 'you don't look like you have dementia'.*
- 3. It still happens – people cross the street when they see me, apparently because they think they might catch dementia?*

*I was first diagnosed with Alzheimer's, but it soon became apparent to my wife, a professional carer of 30 years, that it was Lewy body dementia. After months of tests, I was re-diagnosed. My advice is to ask your consultant they are completely certain they have got the right dementia diagnosis, as receiving the correct medication is pivotal to how well you will feel.*

*I continue to hallucinate and have night terrors every night, and often see things that feel real to me but are not visible to anybody else – a common effect of Lewy bodies.*

*With the love and support of my family, I get through each day one day at a time.*

*Sometimes I find it easier to type than speak.*

*I will continue with the work I started for as long as I can, so please look at our website to see what we have achieved: [www.purpleangel-global.com](http://www.purpleangel-global.com)*

**The Brain Charity is holding a one-off public Music Makes Us! dance & physio workshop to mark Purple Angel's World Rocks Against Dementia (WRAD) month on Wednesday, July 21st at 11am.**

Register here: [www.bit.ly/MMUJuly](http://www.bit.ly/MMUJuly)

## Giving invisible disabilities their time in the sun

**The Brain Charity has had a restock of Sunflower Invisible Disability Lanyards, which also feature our logo.**

Masks are still mandatory in all indoor public spaces. We understand many of you may be exempt and don't always want to have to explain why, so the sunflower symbol represents your hidden disability and is now widely recognised.

Lanyards are free to anyone who needs them, with a suggested donation of £3 for those who can afford it.

Pick them up via our website ([www.bit.ly/SunLan](http://www.bit.ly/SunLan)) or drop into The Brain Charity HQ. Alternatively, if you email [info@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:info@thebraincharity.org.uk) we can post one to you.



# The rise in COVID-related anxiety - and how to help



**It is no secret just how drastically the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on people's mental health.**

Unfortunately, The Brain Charity's counselling team has seen an increase of more than 50% in the number of people coming to us at the point of mental health crisis. In particular, many people are struggling with feelings of anxiety.

Our CEO, Nanette Mellor, explained the impact of coronavirus. She said: *"The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most seismic societal crisis of a generation. For the vast majority of people, 2020 was the first time in their life they have ever felt directly impacted by a global emergency of this scale."*

*"People's sense of self, community and safety has been rocked – anxiety, triggered by the body's fight or flight response, is the brain's natural reaction to this instability."*

But how can you help someone with anxiety practically? Here, Nanette lays out what to say to someone with anxiety.

## I'm here to listen

The most important thing is not necessarily to say anything at all – it's to listen. The person will be having lots of anxious thoughts, so giving them the opportunity to offload is helpful.

## Shall we talk at a different time?

Someone with anxiety may be feeling quite defensive and under threat, which triggers the 'fight or flight' response and means they may perceive a question as an attack.

Be prepared for this, stay calm and ask them if they would prefer to talk at a different time.

## How can I help?

Give them the opportunity to say they are struggling with anxiety. Talk through any potential causes and solutions to help remove them from the thing which is causing them stress.

## What about a decaff?

Lifestyle factors can have a huge impact on anxiety. A really big thing that affects anxiety is caffeine, so someone with anxiety should look to reduce or completely cut this out. A healthy diet is also really important.

## Why don't we go for a (socially distanced) run together?

Physical exercise does absolute wonders for anxiety, and it doesn't have to be running a marathon – you just need to get out of breath. When you exert yourself, your body floods your brain with feel-good chemicals which take away the anxiety almost instantly.

## Have you spoken to your GP?

If they're really struggling, always encourage them to go and speak to their GP.

The Brain Charity offers free counselling to anyone affected by a neurological condition. To self-refer, email:

**info@thebraincharity.org.uk**  
or call **0800 008 6417**

## Gerard's story:

“I was left  
with **nothing...**  
but **The Brain Charity**  
saved me from going under”

**Gerard, 54, had been working in Milan, Italy, as a fashion designer and had temporarily returned to Liverpool when he had a stroke in January 2020.**

Gerard spent weeks in hospital, and doctors discovered he had developed epilepsy as a result of the stroke. During his recovery, he and his partner both lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic shutting down Milan.

With no source of income and unable to work as he recovered, mortgage payments mounted up and Gerard feared his home would be repossessed.

He said: *“Before we had six figure salaries, but when we had nothing and needed help the bank didn't want to know.*

*“Soon, the bank began threatening to repossess the house.*

*“I've paid every bill I've ever had. It's the last thing you need when you're trying to recover.*

*“You can see how people get trapped in poverty – once it starts you can't do anything, and it spirals.”*

Having always been financially independent, Gerard had no idea what support was available. He turned to The Brain Charity for advice, and was awarded enhanced rate PIP and a back payment thanks to the work of our Information and Advice Officer Janet.

Gerard said: *“I came to The Brain Charity out of desperation. I thought I was going to lose my home. I didn't even know things like PIP existed, because no one tells you.*

*“Janet helped me apply for what I was entitled to, and when I had my assessment, she was there on the call with me too.*

*“She was so helpful – she knew exactly what she was doing.*

*“I'm so grateful The Brain Charity was able to support me. Receiving PIP was such a weight off my mind.*

*“Having that help to get the financial support I needed, pay some bills and pay off the mortgage let me get things straight and gave me some breathing space.”*



# Helping you take the next step:

## meet The Brain Charity's new Employment and Welfare Projects team

The Brain Charity now has a brand new Employment and Welfare Projects team. Together, they will help our clients find work, access training and further education opportunities, develop skills and build self-confidence.



The team is (L-R in picture):

### **Mandy Morrow – Confidence Coach**

Mandy will work one-to-one with clients to build self-esteem and confidence which may have taken a knock. Her tailored sessions recognise every client is unique in their needs, and each journey is individual. Mandy will also be running group sessions on empowerment, mindfulness and self-help.

### **Anna Quintal – Employer Relationships Officer**

Anna will build relationships with employers across the Liverpool City Region to show them the talent within our community. She will meet with employers to evaluate their positions, matching them to the aspirations of clients and offer employers advice on recruitment.

### **Rhian Beckett – Projects Manager**

Rhian is the team manager. She is responsible for the success of the employment projects the team deliver. She will also manage in-house adult learning, welfare law services offered by partners and other employment projects such as Kickstart.

### **Scott Black – Employment Officer**

Scott will coordinate the European Social Fund projects the team runs, Directions and New Horizons. Day-to-day, he will work closely with clients looking for a job or change career. He will offer skill and CV workshops, interview preparation and mentoring to help clients find their next opportunity.

The team will also soon be joined by a Welfare Benefits and Employment Law Officer who will work across the organisation supporting our clients, staff and partners on employment law, legal rights and requirements.

Rhian said: *“It’s a really exciting time for our team.*

*“We are all new to The Brain Charity and bring a diverse and experienced skillset, with the team having worked helping people with a range of needs for decades.*

*“Our aim is to provide a holistic, person-centred approach, working with clients and employers alike to create a more diverse, happy and fulfilled workforce.*

*“We want to do all that we can to support The Brain Charity’s clients to realise their full potential as, often, finding employment or the journey towards employment can be daunting.*

*“Clients can be met with complex barriers and in some cases, discrimination.”*

Are you unemployed and looking to change your situation? Or are you having issues in your current workplace which you believe are a result of your condition?

Do you need help with confidence and building yourself back up? Or are you looking to improve your CV and practice interview techniques?

Contact our friendly, approachable team today: [employment@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:employment@thebraincharity.org.uk)

Or go to [www.thebraincharity.org.uk/employment](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/employment)



# Four things you didn't know about occupational therapy

By Amy Humphreys, Occupational  
Therapist for The Brain Changer  
Arts Project

**1** The value of occupational therapy – also known as OT – has been recognised throughout history! In 100BC, a Greek physician named Asclepiades used OT techniques to treat mental illness. Wounded soldiers returning from World War I and World War II also relied heavily on OT. This pushed the profession to standardise training and certifications.

**2** In the context of OT, occupations refer to not just jobs but the ordinary, familiar and everyday activities people do to occupy their time and bring meaning and purpose to their life. Occupations include the things people need to, want to and are expected to do. If you are having difficulty with any occupations, an occupational therapist can help you find a new or alternative way to do them.

**3** Occupational therapists work with people of any age, from newborn babies, to the world's oldest man or woman! Our occupations change as we grow, so occupational therapists help you do what's important to you, whatever age you are. This could be related to personal care, school, home, work, or leisure activities.

**4** Occupational therapists are uniquely trained as they can address both physical and mental health needs. As a result, they are not confined to a single setting – they work in hospitals, community, schools, outpatient clinics, hospices, and charities to name but a few! The Brain Charity has an OT working on our Brain Changer Arts Project, which combines art and craft with occupational therapy for children of all ages, with all forms of neurological condition.

## Occupational Therapy through Art and Craft



Amy at work on The Brain Changer Arts Project



Do you have a child who might benefit from The Brain Changer Arts Project? It's open to children from anywhere in the UK. Sign up today: [www.bit.ly/thebrainchanger](http://www.bit.ly/thebrainchanger) or email [info@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:info@thebraincharity.org.uk)

April was The Brain Charity's  
**best month ever**  
for donations  
– thanks to our incredible  
fundraisers

**This April, The Brain Charity received an incredible £16,000 in donations made throughout March – making it our most successful month ever by quite some distance.**

What helped us achieve this goal? Amazing new fundraisers from across the UK who were eager to get out and support The Brain Charity by setting their own challenges.



The team included brothers Oliver, 12, and Charlie, 10, pictured, from Devon. They ran 100km over the month, raising an incredible £770 in honour of their aunt, who required major brain surgery after being diagnosed with Chiari malformation.

The boys were in great company, as a team of 19 cricketers from Hemsworth Miners Welfare CC in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, also ran at least 100km each over the month – raising a staggering £2,775 combined.

And it seemed running was the theme of the month all round, with Kaileigh and Georgie, both pictured, taking part in Virtual Racing UK's Harry Potter-themed Dobby Dash race to boost our total.



The £16,000 raised will support our COVID-19 appeal, meaning we can keep our vital front line services running while facing greater demand than ever before. The Brain Charity's whole team is unbelievably honoured.

But many of the issues caused by the pandemic aren't new for our service users, and unfortunately we expect the shockwaves of coronavirus to be felt for years to come.

The world may be reopening, but we still need your help, more than ever before.

Summer is here, so it's the perfect time to set your own sponsored challenge to support The Brain Charity. You can choose a challenge which suits your own needs, abilities and fitness goals.

**Sign up as a fundraiser for The Brain Charity, and you'll receive:**

- A free t-shirt or running vest if you pledge to raise at least £100
- Sponsorship forms, collection buckets and fundraising posters as required
- Regular emails about The Brain Charity's work which you can share with your supporters to encourage donations
- Shout outs to our more than 20,000 social media followers to boost your total

Sign up to fundraise for us  
on JustGiving now:  
[www.bit.ly/JustTBC](http://www.bit.ly/JustTBC)  
or email the team to find out more:  
[fundraising@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@thebraincharity.org.uk)

# Grants? Trusts? What are they, and how does The Brain Charity use them?

If you've used our counselling service, participated in our Brain Changer Arts Project or visited our building and used our state-of-the-art Changing Places bathroom, you've benefitted from a grant.

**Many people are not aware of this element of The Brain Charity's fundraising, but it is of vital importance.**



Our Grants and Trusts Officer John Anderson explains more...

## What is a grant?

When you think about charity fundraising, you're likely to picture people shaking buckets in the street, or the amazing volunteers who run marathons or climb mountains in our name.

However, those activities are just some of the many important ways that we raise money to support our clients. Another is through applying for grants. A grant is a sum of money given to us by a charitable foundation or a trust set up in someone's name.

There are thousands of trusts and foundations in the UK, all of whom exist to fund the work of charities such as ours.

As Grants and Trusts Officer, it is my job to identify the foundations whose interests best match with ours, and write applications to convince them that they should fund our work.

## What does my role involve?

There's no such thing as a regular day in the job, so here are a few things I do during the average week.

### Research

A lot of people find research boring, but luckily, I don't!

I stay up to date with newly announced funds, I always start my day by checking emails and some online grants portals where they are advertised.

If an opportunity looks promising, I familiarise myself with the guidelines before discussing how best to approach the application with my manager Tui, our Head of Fundraising.

I also stay on top of news in neurology and in the charity sector. Lately, for example, I've been reading a lot of research reports about the impact of COVID-19 on people with neurological conditions. This is important so that our applications are always backed up by strong evidence to make them compelling.



The best evidence of our good work, however, comes from our community. Our service users know better than anyone what it's like to live with a neurological condition. That's why the surveys we send around and the case studies we put together are so important.

## Writing

Although I spend a lot of my time writing applications, it's never boring because of the sheer variety of what we do at The Brain Charity. In the past month I've written applications to fund: counselling, disability gym equipment, eco projects, the Fabric District's upcoming Arts Festival and employment support.

Some funders prefer to donate towards equipment or building work, such as our refurbished bathrooms. Others want to fund specific projects, for example our telephone befriending service, or our fun hat making course.



Writing applications can look boring from the outside: after all, telling a funder what we want to do with their money does involve being very specific and putting clear budgets together.

However, it's not hard to get passionate when you're writing. For example, in an application to fund our counselling service, you detail the hardships our clients have endured during lockdown.

It's my job to show the funder how they can work with us to make this situation better, to create a brighter future.

## What happens next?

Although waiting for a decision from a funder can take months, it's all worth it when they call and tell me that we've been successful - not least because it's so competitive.

Some funders are only able to fund 10% of the applications they receive, which means you get used to receiving lots of rejections!



I'm also in charge of writing impact reports for all of our funders. After all, they need to know that their money is being spent wisely, and that people really are benefitting from their grant. I co-ordinate the collection of data and case studies, so that our funders get the best possible picture of the good that their grant is doing.

The hope is that building a good relationship will lead to further grants down the road!



Do you have an idea for a project The Brain Charity should fund next, or something that would help you?

Email [fundraising@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@thebraincharity.org.uk) with your suggestions.

## Volunteer Georgia is LJMU's number one

**Georgia Chapman, The Brain Charity's digital marketing volunteer, was recently named Volunteer of the Year by her university - Liverpool John Moores.**

Georgia has been part of the communications team since August 2020, volunteering for one day a week. She focuses on creating fun and interesting social media posts which share our work with our on-line followers. Georgia said:

*"I couldn't wish for a better organisation to volunteer for."*

**We send our congratulations to Georgia on her very well-deserved recognition!**



# *Planting the seeds of recovery: how therapeutic gardening has transformed lives*

**Growing Sudley CIC is a not-for-profit gardening project based at Sudley Estate Park in south Liverpool.**



Since 2017, the organisation has provided therapeutic gardening for our clients - using fun, healthy outdoor activities to nourish soul and body. Their social and therapeutic horticulture group meet weekly from spring to autumn, and continued sessions through the winter during the pandemic, between lockdowns.

As well as gardening, Growing Sudley's practitioners run nature therapy sessions, forest schools and workshops in art, outdoor cooking and in making natural dyes and herbal balms from the produce grown. Organisers now plan to further develop the site's historic but dilapidated walled garden into a therapeutic space.

They also want to turn a derelict council building into a therapy and wellbeing centre, providing an income stream to support their work.



Board member Lucy Dossor, who has been working with the group for five years, said: *"Our activities not only get people out in the fresh air and sunshine, they create a space to be mindful and focussed and to express ourselves in harmony with the natural world."*

*"The benefits are multi-layered, from the physical (being active, obtaining vitamin D, fresh air) to the psychological (learning skills, communicating, observing) and the social (connecting with others, contributing to group practice)."*

*"The Brain Charity welcomed us with open arms - they believed in us and saw our vision for turning an underused space into a therapeutic garden. Their support has been really important and it's been a joy to work with such a dynamic and creative organisation - not to mention their amazing members."*



Growing Sudley is now focussed on future survival and is fundraising for renewable technology to make the building low carbon. Support them here:

**[www.spacehive.com/growingsudleyeco](http://www.spacehive.com/growingsudleyeco)**

# A COVID-19 **UPDATE** on events...

After the Government announced the full easing of lockdown restrictions will be delayed by at least four more weeks, we have sadly made the decision to postpone some of our events.

- Our Volunteer BBQ will now take place on Thursday, July 22nd from 4pm – 8pm.
- Sports day will be held on Thursday, July 22nd at the later time of 1pm – 4pm.
- Pamper night has been rescheduled to Friday, August 6th at 5pm – 9pm.

We would like to remind all visitors to our building that masks or face coverings are still mandatory unless you have a medical exemption, and to follow social distancing rules.

Tui Benjamin, Head of Communications at The Brain Charity, said: ***“Cases in Liverpool are on the rise, so we need to be particularly vigilant to protect our clients and volunteers, many of whom are physically vulnerable, and help keep rates of COVID-19 down in our city.***

***“We will monitor Government guidance closely and hope to be able to reopen our building at full capacity later this summer, when it is safe to do so.”***

You're invited to all our events! Email [events@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:events@thebraincharity.org.uk) to let us know what you'll be attending.

## We are still safely running activities! Here's what we're offering in July & August:

### Coffee mornings

**Day:** Monday **Time:** 10.30am – 12.30pm  
**Dates:** First and third Monday of the month - July 5th, July 19th, August 2nd, August 16th  
**Where:** At The Brain Charity and via MS Teams

### Art club

**Day:** Mondays **Time:** 1pm-2pm  
**Dates:** July 5th, July 12th, July 19th, July 26th, August 2nd, August 16th  
**Where:** At The Brain Charity and via MS Teams

### Choir Practice

**Day:** Monday **Time:** 4pm - 5pm  
**Dates:** July 5th, July 12th, July 19th, July 26th, August 2nd, August 9th, August 16th, August 23rd  
**Where:** At The Brain Charity

### English

**Day:** Tuesdays **Time:** 10am - 12.30pm  
**Dates:** July 6th, July 13th, July 20th, July 27th, August 3rd, August 10th, August 17th, August 24th, August 31st  
**Where:** At The Brain Charity

### Hat-making

**Day:** Tuesdays **Time:** 1pm - 3pm  
**Dates:** July 13th and 27th  
**Where:** Via MS Teams

### ‘Goodbye & Good Riddance’

Creative workshops  
**Day:** Wednesday **Time:** 10am - 11am  
**Date:** July 7th, July 14th  
**Where:** At The Brain Charity and via MS Teams

### Electronics & programming

**Day:** Wednesdays **Time:** 11am - 1pm  
**Dates:** July 28th, August 4th  
**Where:** At The Brain Charity and via MS Teams

### Canal walking group

**Day:** Thursdays **Time:** 2pm - 3pm  
**Dates:** July 1st, July 8th, July 15th, July 22nd  
**Where:** Via MS Teams and at locations across Merseyside

### Aromatherapy

**Day:** Fridays **Time:** 10am - 12pm and 12.30pm - 2.30pm  
**Dates:** July 2nd, July 9th, July 16th  
**Where:** At The Brain Charity

### Bat & chat: learn ping pong

**Day:** Fridays **Time:** 11am - 1pm  
**Dates:** August 13th, August 20th, August 27th  
**Where:** At The Brain Charity

### Wheels for All accessible cycling

**Day:** Various **Date & time:** Flexible  
**Where:** At locations across Merseyside

### Get Moving:

Virtual workouts with Ataxia North West  
**Day:** each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday  
**Time:** 11am – 12pm **Where:** Via Zoom

To take part in any of our activities or receive an MS Teams link, please register by emailing [activities@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:activities@thebraincharity.org.uk)  
In-building places are limited due to social distancing measures, so don't delay!

Find more information on our website calendar:  
[www.bit.ly/TBCwhatson](http://www.bit.ly/TBCwhatson)

# Ways you can support us

We are very grateful for any support during these challenging times.



## DONATE ONLINE

Making a regular or a one-off donation will help The Brain Charity continue to do the amazing work it does on a daily basis. Donating couldn't be simpler. Just visit: [www.bit.ly/give2TBC](http://www.bit.ly/give2TBC) to give an amount of your choice today!

## DONATE BY TEXT

Give just £3 now by texting **BRAIN** to **70460**. Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive any marketing communications, text **BRAINNOINFO** to **70460**.

## AMAZON SMILE

You can also choose to support us when shopping through the Amazon Shopping app on iPhone or Android or on Amazon's website - just be sure to bookmark the [smile.amazon.co.uk](http://smile.amazon.co.uk) site and use it each time you shop.



You shop. Amazon gives

## WEBSITE SHOP

We offer all our charity-branded items for sale, from t-shirts to teas, through our online store: [www.thebraincharity.org.uk/shop](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/shop)

## EASY FUNDRAISING

When you sign up as a supporter with easy-fundraising 5,700 shops and sites, including all the big names, will donate for free every time you shop online: [www.bit.ly/TBCeasy](http://www.bit.ly/TBCeasy)



## ABOUT THE BRAIN CHARITY

The Brain Charity offers emotional support, practical help and social activities to anyone with a neurological condition and to their family, friends and carers.

For more information, contact the centre or visit our website:

[www.thebraincharity.org.uk](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk)

Connect with us:



You can also find us on:



by searching for The Brain Charity

If you wish to be added to our mailing list, to receive news and fundraising updates including The Nerve, please go to [www.bit.ly/signupTBC](http://www.bit.ly/signupTBC) or ask our information team (on the numbers and email addresses below) to add you to the list.

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Tel: 0151 298 2999  
Helpline: 0800 008 6417  
Email: [info@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:info@thebraincharity.org.uk)

The Nerve is available in large text on request and as a PDF on The Brain Charity website:  
[www.thebraincharity.org.uk](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk)

The Brain Charity is registered as a charity (No: 1114999) and a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (No: 05741930)