



**Five simple ways to regain your confidence**

**Lack of understanding biggest issue facing people with neurological conditions, our survey finds**

**Double awards success for The Brain Charity's staff and volunteers**

## Activities for young people and their carers this summer

This summer The Brain Charity will host free activities and workshops for children and young people with neurological conditions and their parents and carers.

On Wednesday June 22nd join us from 9.30am - 1pm for Parental Lobe, an early years care information morning.

There will be talks from experts including Liverpool Women's Hospital, Family Fund, Newlife the Charity, Zoe's Place, Stick 'n' Step and case managers.

Sign up at [www.bit.ly/parentallobe](http://www.bit.ly/parentallobe)

We're also resuming public sessions of The Brain Changer Arts Project, which combines occupational therapy through art and craft for children and young people.

Sessions, led by an artist and an occupational therapist, cover interactive craft activities that improve fine motor skills, upper limb movement and confidence. They will take place throughout the summer holidays on Monday afternoons between 1.45pm - 3pm.

Sign up at [www.bit.ly/brainchangerarts](http://www.bit.ly/brainchangerarts)



### Still time to join our Stroll & Roll challenge!

There's still time to join in with The Brain Charity's Stroll & Roll challenge.

Travel 60km in May, whichever way you can, to support the 1 in 6 people living with neurological conditions. You can take part in this virtual charity challenge whichever way suits you, and from anywhere in the UK.

Walk, roll, cycle, wheel, run, jog or something else entirely. Any daily distance makes a difference!

Sign up now to receive your fundraiser welcome pack & information on how to set up a fundraising page: [www.bit.ly/strollandroll](http://www.bit.ly/strollandroll)

## We're going to need a bigger trophy cabinet!

We're thrilled and humbled to have recently received two prestigious awards.



Head of Communications Tui, Peace of Mind Project Officer Nikki and trustee Tim with Steve Morgan CBE

The Brain Charity was recently named Disability Champion at the Steve Morgan Foundation 20th Anniversary Awards, which celebrated the best of the third sector across Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales.



Volunteers Amber and Andrew and supporter Naheed at LJMU

A week later, we were announced Volunteering Organisation of the Year at Liverpool John Moores University Students' Union Society and Volunteering Awards.



Counselling Coordinator Sharon celebrating the Global grant with staff and volunteers

The Brain Charity has also recently received almost £40,000 in funding from Global's Make Some Noise to help us boost our counselling service and befriending team.



## Supporting carers and people receiving care to plan for the future

### Liverpool

Are you a carer or do you receive care?

Are you worried about what will happen in the years ahead?

Or have you already made plans for the future?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, then we want to hear from **you**.



Liverpool  
City Council



Peace of Mind  
Take care now and look to the future



The Brain  
Charity

## Helping carers plan for the future

The Brain Charity's new Peace of Mind project is helping carers take care now and look to the future.

We are working with Liverpool City Council to find out the best ways to support carers and people receiving care to plan for their futures.

### Share your views as a carer or someone receiving care

If you are carer or person receiving care, our Peace of Mind project team would like to hear your opinions, concerns and experiences on planning for the future.

We are happy to hear your stories in any way you would like to share them, and your thoughts and details will remain anonymous. You can get involved by:

- Sharing your story
- Answering a questionnaire
- Meeting us for a chat, on your own or as part of a group

- Joining a focus group
- Participating in an event day
- Coming along to a free advice workshop
- Joining in a relaxation and wellbeing session

### For organisations and practitioners

Are you an organisation or practitioner that supports carers or people receiving care to make plans in areas such as housing, legal rights, finance, medical treatment, day to day care, transport or employment? **We would like to hear your stories and views too.**

### Get involved

and find out more at

[www.bit.ly/POMproject](http://www.bit.ly/POMproject)

Alternatively, email

[peaceofmind@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:peaceofmind@thebraincharity.org.uk)

or call 0151 298 2999 and ask for

Liz or Nikki.

## Can you support a lonely person with a weekly befriending call?

Our befriending service is growing! We currently have more than 75 clients receiving calls each week from 36 volunteers. This is equivalent to more than 128 hours of calls each month via phone and MS Teams.

If you would like to become a Brain Charity befriender, email [befriending@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:befriending@thebraincharity.org.uk)

or follow this link to sign up as a volunteer: [www.bit.ly/befriendingvolunteers](http://www.bit.ly/befriendingvolunteers)

**“A stroke took my voice away.**

**Singing in The Brain Charity’s choir helped me find it again.”**



Rose singing with the Brain Charity’s Choir

In August 2015, Rose, 72, experienced a stroke while she was at work and was rushed to hospital. When she woke up in intensive care, doctors told Rose she may never speak or walk again. She was diagnosed with aphasia, which affects 1 in 3 stroke survivors.

Rose said: *“The moment I collapsed, my whole world suddenly changed. At first I wasn’t able to communicate with the outside world at all, which was very frustrating. All I wanted to do was to be able to speak again. Trying to speak and not being able to is such a horrible feeling.”*

Over the next few years Rose, from Old Swan, taught herself to write again with her left hand and her mobility improved.

But her talking was still limited - and when her voice did begin to return, people said her accent sounded Russian, German or Eastern European.

Rose said: *“I couldn’t believe I was having to explain that I was from Liverpool, when I’d lived there my whole life - my Scouse accent was a key part of my identity. I loved to chat with people, but I couldn’t do that anymore. People didn’t want to talk to me because they couldn’t understand what I was saying. I felt so lonely.”*

Rose has non-fluent aphasia, which is characterised by sporadic, hesitant speech. At first, she would struggle to find or say the right words out loud.

Her struggles with speech knocked her self-confidence, and she felt isolated and lonely.

But after a Stroke Association advisor suggested giving singing a go, Rose discovered she could sing clearly and coherently.

She joined The Brain Charity’s choir, and now sings with the group once a week and enjoys performing at our events.

Rose said: *“I was scared my speech would always be how it was when I first woke up in hospital, but I knew I wanted to get better. When I discovered I could still sing, even though talking was still difficult, it was incredible. It felt so powerful.”*

Rose, who volunteers in The Brain Food Café, recently underwent a programme of speech and language therapy funded by The Brain Charity.

Rose said: *“Speech and language therapy was miraculous. Now, as I speak I can’t believe I’m talking. I never thought I’d be able to speak like this again. I now feel able and excited to talk to anyone, because I know people understand me. It’s like a veil has been lifted. I’m so committed to raising awareness so other people understand the impact aphasia can have.”*



Rose volunteering in The Brain Food Cafe

# “I’m more like my old self”

## How speech and language therapy and neuroplasticity helped four people with aphasia communicate again



**Four people with aphasia have become more able to communicate thanks to speech and language therapy funded by The Brain Charity.**

Rose (see left), Dominick, Julia and Phil shared their experiences of the life-changing condition, which usually occurs when the left side of the brain is damaged, most commonly after a stroke.

Speech and language therapy (SALT) ‘rewires’ the brain to improve speaking, reading, writing and language understanding, using neuroplasticity- the brain’s ability to find new routes after injury or damage.

Rose, Dominick, Julia and Phil set their own goals and were assessed on their self-esteem after the course - with the therapy having a hugely positive impact on all four clients.

Following a brain aneurysm in August 2021, Dominick was diagnosed with verbal dyspraxia, dysarthria and non-fluent aphasia. After his sessions with Kellyann, he felt better understood and less frustrated and trapped by his speech difficulties.

He said: *“I couldn’t pronounce a lot of words when I first came to The Brain Charity and when I was speaking I sounded like a robot. I’ve developed my accent back now too. All round, I’m more like my old self.”*

Julia had a stroke 19 years ago which left her with non-fluent aphasia, meaning that she was not able to include grammar in her speech. After the therapy, Julia no longer reported feelings of anger and frustration around speech as she did before her treatment.

Phil had a stroke in 2018 and wanted to work on writing, reading comprehension, numeracy and improved speech expressions with Kellyann.

Phil said: *“Speech therapy is good for me. I am understanding verbs, nouns and pronouns and they are starting to make sense. I am able to see my progress clearly.”*



Kellyann said: *“The experiences of Rose, Dominick, Julia and Phil demonstrate how every person’s individual communication difficulties are as unique as they are.*

*“These stories teach us about the nature of communication difficulties post-stroke, and the potential impact a small amount of SALT can have on an individual.”*

Nanette Mellor, CEO of The Brain Charity, said: *“The emotional and mental health impact of aphasia can be huge. Feeling frustrated and literally voiceless in society is common.*

*“We would love to be able to employ a full time speech and language therapist to support those who are most in need, as we have seen first-hand the hugely positive impact SALT can have on people with aphasia’s lives.*

*“We also are hoping to find funding which will enable us to produce some online tools for people which integrate music and SALT for people with aphasia.”*

To add your name to the waiting list for SALT sessions at The Brain Charity, email [info@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:info@thebraincharity.org.uk) or call our free helpline on **0800 008 6417**.

# Neurodivergence and neurodiversity: explaining the terms

**Each person has a brain that is unique to them;  
no two brains are quite the same.**

## What is neurodiversity?

*Some people's brains simply work in a different way.*

For at least 20% of the UK's adult population, these differences mean they are not seen as 'neurotypical' and may be diagnosed with neurological conditions such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In the 1990s, a term was coined to describe these differences by sociologist Judy Singer, who is on the autism spectrum: neurodiversity.

Neurodiversity is the concept that brain differences are natural variations - not deficits, disorders or impairments.

## What about neurodivergent?

The term neurodivergent is now used to describe all people whose neurological conditions mean they do not consider themselves to be neurotypical. Neurodivergent was coined by the neurodiversity movement as an opposite to neurotypical.

## Can a single person be neurodiverse?

While some individuals do refer to themselves as neurodiverse, the term neurodiversity is most commonly now used to refer to a group which encompasses the full spectrum of brain differences and is made up of both neurodivergent and neurotypical individuals.

## The benefits of neurodiversity in the workplace

The Brain Charity has now launched neurodiversity training to teach businesses about the benefits of neurodiversity in the workplace. Diversity is key to the development and progression of any organisation. Hiring a neurodiverse workforce comes with huge benefits, and allows companies to access a wider talent pool.

Neurodiversity can empower the workplace and encourage creativity, new ideas and fresh perspectives. As well as their individual strengths, neurodivergent employees often possess highly desirable skills and attributes.

Find out more at [www.bit.ly/neurodiversitytraining](http://www.bit.ly/neurodiversitytraining)

## Special guest Sonia announced for The Brain Charity's Ice Ball

*We were Counting Every Minute until we  
could announce Sonia as our Ice Ball  
celebrity performer!*

Be Young, Be Foolish, Be Happy at The Brain Charity's Ice Ball on Friday, December 2nd at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Liverpool city centre from 7pm until late.

You can expect delicious food and drink, musical entertainment from Eurovision star Sonia and an unforgettable celebration.

Listen to Your Heart and get your early bird ticket for just £75 now (£65 for Brain Charity volunteers and clients).

Buy tickets at [www.thebraincharity.org.uk/iceball](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/iceball)



# Neurodiversity in the criminal justice system: helping prisoners with neurological conditions get extra support

The Brain Charity is calling on people who have been involved in the criminal justice system to share their views - to help prisoners with neurological conditions get extra support.

We are working with the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership on new research to help neurodiversity be taken into account when working with prisoners.

**Neurodivergent people more likely to be in prison and more likely to reoffend**

Studies have shown UK prison populations are disproportionately made up of people who have neurological conditions including brain injury, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder and learning disabilities.

Nearly half of all male prisoners (47%) have a history of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and people with neurological conditions are more likely to end up in prison and get trapped in a cycle of reoffending.

User Voice, a charity run by people with lived experience of the criminal justice system, interviewed 118 prisoners and found most were never screened for neurological conditions and had never been offered any adjustments to support their neurological needs.

**The Brain Charity's Another Sign project**

The Brain Charity's **Another Sign** project will aim to inform and make recommendations about how to meet the needs of people with a neurological condition throughout the criminal justice process.

This includes dealing with the police, at the point of arrest, going to court, during prison stays and through the probation service.

Nanette Mellor, CEO of The Brain Charity, said: *“At the moment, there is not enough specialist support for people with neurological conditions within the criminal justice system - despite their numbers among the prisoner population being disproportionately higher than the national average.*

*“We hope our **Another Sign** project will help change the system, by encouraging professionals to listen and look closer for the signs of neurodivergence.*

*“We want to ensure neurodiversity is recognised, and support identified, as early as possible - while equipping staff with the tools and support they need to bring about positive change and rehabilitation.”*



Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner Emily Spurrell with CEO Nanette and Head of Employment Projects Rhian, in front of The Brain Charity's new Farm Urban edible wall.

**Have you been involved in the criminal justice system? Share your views anonymously**

If you have a neurological condition and lived experience within the criminal justice system, please complete our anonymous survey - it *only takes two minutes but will make a real difference.*

Follow this link to find the survey online: [www.bit.ly/anotherstgn](http://www.bit.ly/anotherstgn)

Alternatively, ask for a paper copy or be part of the **Another Sign** focus groups by emailing: [anotherstgn@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:anotherstgn@thebraincharity.org.uk).

# Brain Charity survey reveals 8 in 10 people believe their neurological condition isn't understood

A lack of understanding is the biggest issue facing people with neurological conditions, clients at The Brain Charity have said.

Nearly 140 service users completed our 2022 survey, launched so we could gain an insight into the issues people with neurological conditions face on a daily basis.

Comments from clients on how their condition affected them included *“feeling like a burden on family”*, *“loss of identity and capabilities - not knowing how to move forward in life”*, and *“feeling isolated”*.

The number of people saying they needed to access mental health support at The Brain Charity rising from 54% in 2020 to 62% in 2022, and a 10% increase in interest in our counselling service.

Nearly half (47%) of survey respondents said The Brain Charity's services had helped them feel more confident, while almost four in 10 said they were more able to manage their condition.

Around 30% said they were less lonely, more active and had more friends, with respondents saying *“it's like having an extended family”* and *“I feel listened to at times of crisis”*.



Nanette Mellor, CEO of The Brain Charity, said: *“The lived experience of our clients – people with neurological conditions and their families and carers – is central to everything we do at The Brain Charity.*

*“All decisions on the future of our services, projects, strategy and growth are made with their needs and suggestions in mind.*

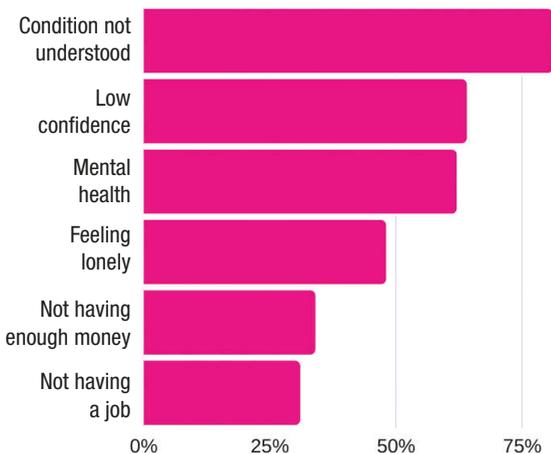
*“We thank everyone who shared their stories and feedback by taking part in our survey – particularly now, as we plan for the future post-pandemic.*

*“We will use the results of this research to focus The Brain Charity's resources where they are most needed, to provide services which will be the most beneficial to people with all forms of neurological condition.”*



Read the full infographic at [www.bit.ly/TBCcommunitysurvey](http://www.bit.ly/TBCcommunitysurvey)

## HOW DOES YOUR CONDITION AFFECT YOU?



*“Feeling isolated, getting out of the house is a nightmare.”*

*“Loss of identity and capabilities - not knowing how to move forward in life.”*

*“Feeling like a burden on family.”*

# Fighting for employment without barriers for people with MS

**The MS Society has recently published the 'Employment without Barriers' report. The report explores the issues surrounding employment for people who have the neurological condition Multiple Sclerosis (MS), whether that be staying in work, looking for work or leaving work.**

An All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for MS, which is a group made up of MPs and Peers from all political parties, established a design group to look at the lived experiences of people who have MS.

They were joined by 12 individuals from a range of backgrounds who are living with different types of MS, including The Brain Charity's volunteer Sarah.

Through a series of meetings and focus groups, the politicians heard about their journeys in the world of employment.

Some people had had very positive experiences, whilst others had faced a lack of support and understanding from their employers.

Others had made the decision to leave employment due to their condition deteriorating and felt cast adrift in the unfamiliar world of the welfare benefits system.

The report makes a series of recommendations, such as improving Job Centre services for people with MS, strengthening the Disability Confidence Scheme and developing an 'Adjustments Passport' to speed up Access to Work requirements by including discussion of the subject during the recruitment process.

The report also suggests that welfare benefit rates should be set at a level that allows disabled people, including those with MS, to cover their costs so they can live independent lives.



Read the report at [www.mssociety.org.uk/EmploymentReport](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/EmploymentReport)

## Donation swaps the way forward for Rob and Amanda

**Here at The Brain Charity we are all about reciprocal help. Here's another lovely example!**

NHS worker Rob, who works with patients with dementia at the Royal Liverpool Hospital, popped into our centre recently (right).

During his visit, Rob donated a Nintendo Wii Fit and plenty of games which we'll be using to set up a new regular Wii Fit activity session for our clients.

In return, our Knit and Natter group handed over a bag full of fidget mitts for Rob to distribute on the wards. These are colourful gloves covered in tassels and buttons which can provide stimulation and restore calm for people with dementia, autism and other neurological conditions.

Our volunteer Amanda, who runs The Brain Charity's Knit and Natter group, said: *"It really has been a pleasure to be part of something, I feel like I've contributed along with all our lovely people who are part of the Knit and Natter group."*



# The art of building confidence and five ways to improve yours

Living with a neurological condition can bring about many challenges. People may be told what they can't do and reminded of their limitations. Although this may be unintentional, this can limit their confidence and self-esteem.

Here, The Brain Charity's confidence coach Mandy gives 5 ways you can improve your confidence.



Mandy with a client

It is perfectly natural for all of us at some time or another to feel a lack of confidence.

Confidence is about accepting yourself and is built when a person does something for themselves.

## 1 Accept your limitations

Trusting and accepting yourself is not only recognising what you are good at, but accepting your limitations and challenges. The biggest hurdle many face is acceptance of having a neurological condition, but accepting your journey and redefining your strengths is part of the confidence-building process.

## 2 Change your mindset

Mindset plays an important part in confidence-building. Our self-doubt and self-talk contribute to our frame of mind. We need to be aware of our inner critic, the voice in our head making negative comments such as, 'I'm not good enough'.

If we continue to listen to this inner critic, our confidence is affected. The voice of the inner critic may sound and feel real, but it is important to remember it is just a thought.

Once we have this knowledge we can stop believing and engaging in them, telling ourselves it is not true. With this, our negative thoughts lose their power.

## 3 Be kind to yourself

Be kind to yourself and practice self-compassion. Focussing on the things you do well and have achieved helps build confidence. Write a list of things you are good at and what you like about yourself.

Stop comparing yourself to others and worrying what others think. It is a waste of time and energy. You cannot control how others think, so invest your energy in you.

## 4 Do something that scares you!

Step out of your comfort zone and overcome fear of failure which, as you build your confidence, you will feel more comfortable to do.

## 5 Rome wasn't built in a day

Think of building confidence as a work in progress, it won't happen overnight.

Ease the pressure off yourself and set realistic expectations. I often say to my clients, 'remember; Rome wasn't built in a day'.

**In other words, great work takes time - so trusting and accepting yourself takes time.**



# What's on: May and June



The  
Brain  
Charity

**We have a host of activities and events happening in May and June, so get involved!**

Find out more and sign up at  
[www.thebraincharity.org.uk/events](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/events) or email  
[activities@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:activities@thebraincharity.org.uk)

## Activities

### Mondays

- Coffee morning: 10.30am - 12.30pm at The Brain Charity and via Microsoft Teams (monthly)
- Walking football: 12.30pm - 2.30pm at The People's Hub - Everton in the Community (weekly)
- Shared reading: 12pm - 1pm at The Brain Charity (weekly)
- Laughter yoga: 1pm - 3pm at The Brain Charity (weekly)

### Tuesdays

- Online cookalongs: 3pm - 5pm via Microsoft Teams (fortnightly)

### Wednesdays

- Knit and natter: 10am - 12pm at The Brain Charity and via Microsoft Teams (weekly)
- Neuroversity employment course: 11am - 1pm at The Brain Charity (six week course - restrictions apply)
- Maths: 2.30pm - 4pm at The Brain Charity (weekly)

### Thursdays

- English and IT: 10am - 12.30pm at The Brain Charity (weekly)
- Still life art class: 1pm - 3pm at The Brain Charity and via Microsoft Teams (monthly)

### Fridays

- Choir: 4pm - 5pm at The Brain Charity (weekly)

## Events

Why not take part in one of our summer events! Find out more and sign up or buy tickets at:

[www.thebraincharity.org.uk/events2022](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/events2022)  
or email [events@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:events@thebraincharity.org.uk)

We also have just two places left for our Liverpool Anglican Cathedral abseil on **July 16th** - email the events team to book yours now!

**May 1st:** Stroll and Roll challenge starts  
(see page 2)

**May 22nd:** Wirral Coastal Walk

**June 3rd:** Volunteer BBQ

**June 22nd:** Parental Lobe (see page 2)

**June 24th:** Burns Night



# STROLL & ROLL



# 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**.

## 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)

## DONATE VIA QR CODE

Scan the QR code below on your mobile phone camera now to donate:



## 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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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)