

The Nerve



National support for all neurological conditions

November/December 2023



Report launch in Parliament
Neuro-Gym to open
Championing neurodiversity

The Brain Charity highlights neurological conditions to policymakers at party conferences

Raising awareness among policymakers of the impact of neurological conditions is a key part of The Brain Charity's work. This year we attended Conservative and Labour party conferences in Manchester and Liverpool to reach MPs, aides and healthcare experts.

Conferences give members of a party opportunity to debate and vote on issues and policies through panel events, inviting discussion and questions from the audience.

Many of these panels included health and care professionals discussing key topics including the NHS workforce crisis, how to meet the needs of an ageing population and shifting from treatment to prevention.

We were able to meet MPs and network with other charities, discussing the impact of neurological conditions and sharing the vital work done by The Brain Charity.

United with other charities, alongside The Neurological Alliance we co-hosted a fringe event at Malmaison Liverpool. Here we invited MPs and policymakers to back the 1 in 6 living with a neurological condition.

Labour peer Lord Alfred Dubs shared his personal experience of neurological conditions alongside The Brain Charity's volunteer Rupak, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2018.



Rupak said: ***"The members of The Neurological Alliance I've found are actively helping people like me. Without them I cannot imagine the life I would have right now."***



Malmaison & Hotel du Vin team up with The Brain Charity!

The Brain Charity will receive support from an exciting new corporate relationship with national hotel groups Malmaison and Hotel du Vin

For the next two years, Malmaison and Hotel du Vin are committed to fundraising for The Brain Charity and raising awareness of neurodiversity.

Their staff will receive The Brain Charity's Neurodiversity Training, equipping them to better support their neurodivergent customers and colleagues across their hotels, bars and restaurants.

The Brain Charity is also providing all hotel guests with tips on improving sleep quality, promoting the crucial role sleep plays in maintaining brain health.

Hotel and restaurant customers will be able to make donations by rounding up their food, drink or hotel room bill.

There will also be incentives to opt-in to eco-housekeeping, including a donation to The Brain Charity made on behalf of guests who make the environmentally friendly choice to not have their sheets and towels replaced every day.



Employees from Malmaison and Hotel du Vin's 35 locations have already started taking on fundraising challenges, with staff members abseiling, running and hosting events to raise money.

Thank you to Malmaison and Hotel du Vin for choosing to support The Brain Charity!

'Inside Neurology: Our Unique Brain' *available to stream in December*

ITN Business has partnered with The Brain Charity to create a programme dedicated to highlighting the unique capabilities of neurodivergent individuals and the skills they bring to the workplace and society.

The show will be released online in December with a trailer premiered at The Brain Charity's annual celebration event on Wednesday, 22nd November.

A film crew visited The Brain Charity's headquarters in October to film the centre, activities and to interview clients who benefit from our services.

Head to the ITN Business website on Thursday, 14th December to watch the programme in full!



Sophia, a client of The Brain Charity, being interviewed for ITN Business in The Brain Food Café

Delayed diagnosis report launch at Houses of Parliament

Rupak Rahman, a client of The Brain Charity, shares his experience in London launching the It's all in your head report

In September our team launched the 'It's all in your head' report in Houses of Parliament, highlighting the journey to, and impact of, diagnosis for those with neurological conditions.

The event, hosted by Sir Chris Bryant MP, saw people with lived experience of neurological conditions, such as myself, discuss findings of the report and the impact of delayed diagnosis and misdiagnosis.

For those of us travelling from Liverpool this was a very long day, leaving at 6am and not getting back until past 11pm.

We arrived at Stanmore Underground Station, parked our bus and took the tube to Westminster. For me, being a Londoner, this was something very special.

I came to Liverpool after I was first diagnosed with MS (multiple sclerosis) in 2018. Things gradually got worse as I became unable to walk, my speech became slurred, I went from using walking sticks to being fully wheelchair bound and lost one of my eyes. Numerous other parts of my body would not listen to signals from my brain.

I grew up riding the tube and spent nearly 30 years commuting on it, but never thought I'd be able to ride it again. This was a massive thing for me, for my mental health and for my spirit.

We engaged with at least 25 MPs, with many signing our pledge board and listening to what we had to say. They heard first-hand what living with a neurological condition means.

Staff at The Brain Charity helped me get off the streets and into my home, giving me time with my children.



Rupak speaking with Peter Grant MP at the event in Parliament

For an MP to hear both my story and the charity's experience of what it means to support someone going through that - I imagine can be very impactful.

We were able to explain more about what a neurological condition really means to those who can have a positive impact and help us all.

I hope they take on board all we had to say and create real change.

I'm supporting The Brain Charity's calls to back the 1 in 6 with neurological conditions.



The Brain Charity



UNWRAP OUR 2023 CHRISTMAS CARD COLLECTION

Looking for a special way to spread Christmas cheer to your loved ones this year? Our new range of Christmas cards is sure to impress.

With a variety of styles and themes to suit everyone's taste, you're bound to find the perfect card. Whether you're looking for traditional designs, modern takes on classic themes, or something a little more unique, we've got you covered. And the best part? Each pack of 10 cards is on sale for just £3.50 + P&P. Not only will you be spreading friendship, joy and happiness with each purchase, but you'll also be helping The Brain Charity to continue to offer its vital services free to people when they need them most.

Visit our centre or website to explore our new Christmas card designs and get ready to spread the magic of Christmas in 2023: www.bit.ly/TBCxmas





Tidings of comfort and joy: THE BRAIN CHARITY'S CAROL CONCERT

Mark your calendars for a festive addition to your Christmas season! We're delighted to invite you to include our annual carol concert in your holiday plans.

This year's event will feature the melodious voices of LIPA Primary choir, SingMe Merseyside, the Asylum Link choir, The Brain Charity singing group, our exceptionally talented soloist Jess and a surprise special guest. They will each be spreading the joy of carols galore for your entertainment!

We hope you and your loved ones can join us from 5pm - 7pm on Wednesday 6th December in one of Liverpool's most stunning churches - St Francis Xavier on Salisbury St, L3 - for an event that's guaranteed to get you in the mood for Christmas.

 If you let us know you're coming, we can reserve you a seat, or pew!
Sign up on our website: www.bit.ly/Nerve23112 

Specialist Neuro-Gym to open in The Brain Charity

It will be the only facility in Merseyside offering community-based free rehabilitation and physiotherapy services to those with neurological conditions



Gym Manager Scott demonstrates gym equipment to Stephen McPartland MP and our CEO Pippa Sargent

The Brain Charity is set to open a specialist Neuro-Gym in November. The facility will have adapted equipment to support a variety of needs and will be fully accessible, catering specifically to people with neurological conditions.

Scott Black, previously part of the charity's Employment and Welfare Team, has taken up the post of Gym Manager and tells us he looks forward to welcoming people to use the facility. He said: *"We know the benefits that a healthy lifestyle can provide. With regular, high-quality physical activity through the Neuro-Gym people's lives will be massively enhanced. I'm excited to be in this role and increasing what we can offer our clients, as well as developing partnerships across the region."*

Services at the Neuro-Gym will include inductions, personal training, physiotherapy, group sessions, events and activities, health and wellbeing workshops, fitness testing and signposting to other services.

Alongside Scott will be regular volunteers, including Sophia. She said: *"I'm looking forward to learning about the different equipment, including the ones where we can stand up and it engages different parts of our brain. There will be equipment at the Neuro-Gym I've only used once in a private physio gym, which was too expensive."*

As a wheelchair user, Sophia explains she has been sedentary for much of her life, but then became an active gym user to help support her mental health. She said: *"Exercising gets me out and about. Even if I feel like I don't want to do a session I always feel great afterwards. I'm looking forward to meeting new people with similar conditions who will support each other."*

The gym will be opened at our annual celebration event on **Wednesday, 22nd November** by **Steve Johnson, Disability Manager at Everton Football Club**. If you would like to attend the opening please contact events@thebraincharity.org.uk.

The Brain Charity would like to thank its generous anonymous donor and the National Lottery Community Fund: Reaching Communities, for funding the Neuro-Gym.

Former Patron of The Brain Charity honoured with lasting Liverpool tribute

Sir Bert Massie was renowned for his work campaigning on equal rights

A Liverpool road has been named in honour of Sir Bert Massie, a disability rights campaigner who was key in securing the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

He was also instrumental in setting up the Equality and Human Rights Commission - the public body which enforces equality and non-discrimination laws in England, Scotland and Wales.

Sir Bert was The Brain Charity's Patron, and supported the organisation's work until he passed away in 2017. As our Patron, Sir Bert regularly attended our Liverpool headquarters and took an active interest in the work the charity did to support those with neurological conditions.

Liverpool City Council has recognised his work by naming a road in Knotty Ash 'Sir Bert Massie Way' in his honour. The road leads to a new housing scheme with homes designed to Lifetime Standard, making them easily adaptable at minimal cost.



Sir Bert Massie

Pippa Sargent, CEO of The Brain Charity, said: *"Sir Bert Massie was a key figure in effecting great change for the rights of those we support at The Brain Charity. We are proud to have worked with him as our Patron and to see his life's work recognised. This gesture is a fitting lasting tribute to the incredible work he did, in a city he clearly loved."*

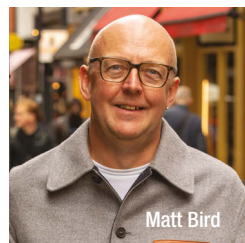
SPOTLIGHT ON...

Championing neurodiversity and visual thinking

Public speaker, author and entrepreneur Matt Bird shares his experience of dyslexia

The education system has historically focused on verbal thinking, when information is processed as spoken words or sentences, Matt Bird tells us. However, like many people who are dyslexic, he is a visual thinker. Matt processes information through imagined multi-sensory, multi-dimensional pictures in his head - like making and watching a movie.

Throughout his career he says this has been a huge advantage, and as a public speaker he doesn't need to use notes.



Matt Bird

"I visualise my talks as a simple story board or sequence of pictures in my mind. I use the same methodology when I write a book or coach others to write and publish their books. This is my visual dyslexic brain at work."

Matt emphasizes dyslexia means information is processed differently, not defectively.

"We need to change the way we think and speak about dyslexia and neurodiversity. It's time to change the education system and the way intelligence is measured. It's time to fully embrace the 10% of the UK population the NHS says are dyslexic."

Volunteer voices: Meet befriender Kirsty

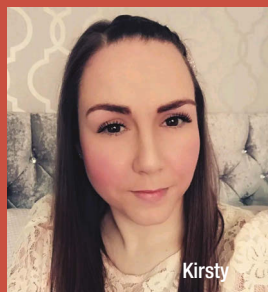
“Giving someone your time and a listening ear is a selfless act”

I have been a befriender with The Brain Charity since May 2022. I applied for the role while sat in my hospital bed at The Walton Centre after my own brain surgery to remove a tumour.

This role is so rewarding, knowing you can walk alongside a service user during their journey with a neurological condition. There is nothing more valuable than having lived experience. Granted, we may not have the same condition, but I get to be authentic, which has allowed me to gain a deeper connection and become more empathetic with the people I befriend.

Giving someone your time and a listening ear is a selfless act and in a way, it has become a form of therapy for me, by being able to give back to others. It makes my week when I have a good chat and catch up with the ladies who I support.

I have volunteered for the last few years in different organisations after losing my leg. My initial aim was to support amputees, but the joy, knowledge and confidence I got from the experiences with a range of different demographics has motivated me to pursue a career in counselling/mentoring which I am currently studying towards.



Kirsty

Neurodiversity training delivered to 300 working in criminal justice system

Earlier this year The Brain Charity delivered a pilot project to educate those working within the criminal justice system (CJS) on neurodiversity.

The project followed the publication of the ‘Another Sign’ report, which found 76% of criminal justice professionals had not received neurodiversity training, and 44% did not know how to refer someone for an assessment for a neurological condition.

Funded by Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, the ‘Another Sign’ training project delivered 27 sessions to 13 different organisations including Merseyside Police, the National Probation Service and His Majesty’s Prison Service.

The aims of the training are to improve knowledge about the range of neurological conditions and the way these may present at each point of contact, the successful management of people who are neurodivergent and understanding how to address barriers.

It also covers how to make simple adjustments to create a safer environment for staff and service users.



Following the training, 99% of attendees agreed or strongly agreed the event was relevant and helpful. All agreed or strongly agreed they left well-informed on the subject matter.

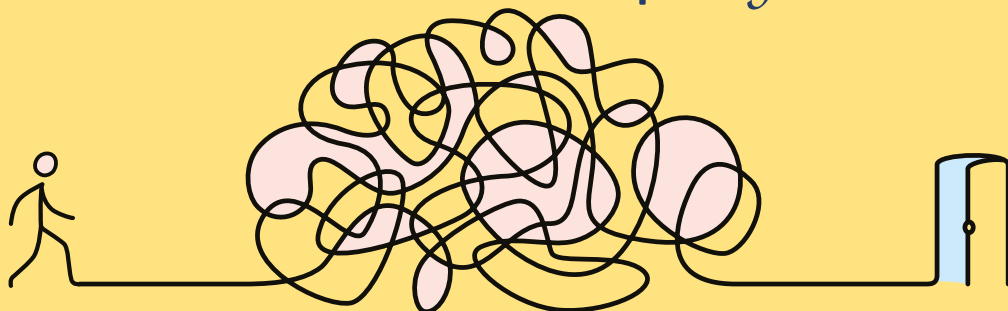
Attendees responded positively and told The Brain Charity they would feel confident identifying that someone may have a neurological condition.

They said they would feel more confident supporting or signposting to a medical professional, in the hope to better support the person to reduce or minimise their risk of offending.

Following the conclusion of the project we realised there remained an unmet need for neurodiversity training within criminal justice settings. This need prompted the roll-out of The Brain Charity’s CJS training, which is now delivered nationally.

For more information, call us on **0151 298 2999**.

How to score in life, when your brain doesn't want to play ball



Our volunteer Pauline is one of the 11 million people affected by a neurological condition in the UK. She shares her experiences below:

Over the years I have made peace with my diagnosis of superficial siderosis by adapting my mindset, researching my conditions and giving myself grace.

During the process of relearning, I felt isolated, hopeless and frustrated.

I lost my hearing rapidly in my early twenties and left my university course due to discrimination. I also lost my job due to lack of workplace adjustments.

My balance and coordination declined and coupled with ataxia getting about was a challenge. I was embarrassed and felt I couldn't fit in, withdrawing from my friends and family.

I was verging on depression. I felt cheated, alone and angry about the things I could no longer do.

I later realised that I was grieving. I allowed myself to feel these emotions, recognising them as part of my healing process.

Reminding myself of things that I could still do, I took courses and pursued hobbies, proving that despite the challenges, I am still useful, and I have talent - just like anyone else.

I also began researching my health conditions. With increased understanding came the power to work with my conditions.

For example, I now know ataxia causes extreme exhaustion that worsens throughout the day. I set my alarm early to get all the important things done, so when the fatigue sets in, I still feel accomplished.

It doesn't matter how small, if I feel I'm doing something positive to manage my conditions I am much happier.

I also make sure not to be too hard on myself. I have two young children and used to beat myself up that I couldn't run around the park. But that's OK, and instead I find alternatives that work. I sit on the grass and play ball with my girls, or time them around an obstacle course. We adapt and we still have fun.

Everyone is different and will find their own ways of dealing with their condition, but I hope someone will read this and be inspired. We're all in this together.

Activities and events November - December

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Mornings	Art for wellbeing 10.00am - 12.15pm*		Knit and natter 10.00am - 12.00pm Crafters club 10.00am - 12.15pm Boccia (indoor bowls) 12.15pm - 1.30pm	Ukulele for beginners 11.00am - 12.00pm
Afternoons	Maths 1.45pm - 3.15pm* Shared reading 3.00pm - 4.00pm Shared reading plus 4.00pm - 5.00pm	Tai chi (standing) 2.30pm - 3.15pm Tai chi (seated/adapted) 3.15pm - 4.00pm	Drawing class 1.30pm - 3.00pm Aphasia social 2.00pm - 3.00pm Sing and a social 4.00pm - 5.00pm	New age kurling 1.00pm - 2.00pm

*waiting list only

For more information on any of our activities, please email activities@thebraincharity.org.uk or call us on **0151 298 2999** and choose activities from the menu.

Poetry prize returns for Burns Night

Our popular competition for budding poets returns with a new guest judge, Ian McMillan, the Bard of Barnsley who will be judging entries in time for our Burns Night Poetry Awards in January 2024.

For more details on how to enter the contest, which retains its open and neurodiverse categories, please follow the latest updates on our website www.thebraincharity.org.uk



Ian McMillan
Photo courtesy Adrian Mealing

The great Christmas raffle

How would you like to win a brand-new car for Christmas? We've teamed up with Charity Escapes to make this a Yuletide to remember.

You could win a Toyota Aygo X Edge if you are the lucky winner drawn on 30th November at 10pm.

Entries cost £5 and you can enter as many times as you like. Be sure to click on The Brain Charity as your charity of choice.

You can enter online at: www.thegreatchristmasraffle.com

Coffee morning

10.30am - 12pm on Mondays 6th November, 4th December, 9th January 2024

Aphasia social

This group is for those looking to gain confidence speaking again. It is hosted by our wonderful volunteer Rose, a familiar face in The Brain Charity. Rose was diagnosed with aphasia following a stroke and is dedicated to helping others by using tried and tested techniques to encourage talking in a safe, relaxed atmosphere. Wednesdays, 2 - 3pm, in The Brain Food Café.

Annual celebration

Our 30th birthday will be marked with a special celebration evening on Wednesday 22nd November in The Brain Charity's Norton Street centre. Serving as an informal AGM, the event highlights our work over the past 12 months and looks ahead to our exciting plans for the next year.

To find out more, head to our website: www.bit.ly/Nerve23114

A night at the Electro Circus

There's still time to get your tickets for our fundraising event of the year on **Friday 1st December** at Lutyens Crypt in Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral.

Our headline act is UNE, fronted by broadcaster and musician Mark Radcliffe, best known as the host of the Folk Show on Radio 2. There will be music and circus acts plus a DJ.

Doors open at 7:15pm and the event ends at 11pm.

Book your tickets now via:
www.thebraincharity.org.uk/UNE



Christmas closing

The Brain Charity building will be closed for the holiday period from 2pm on Friday 22nd December 2023 to 9am on Monday 2nd January 2024.

But don't worry, if you need us urgently, you can still reach us by phone from 9am to 5pm on 27th - 29th December. Just call **0151 298 2999** and we'll be happy to help.

Ways you can support us

We are very grateful for any support during these challenging times.
Here are some of the ways you can help:

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.thebraincharity.org.uk/donate
to give an amount of your choice today!

Give as you live



Give as you Live®

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.thebraincharity.org.uk/donate
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 Xmas cards, through our online store:

Donate via QR code

Scan the QR code (right) 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

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** or ask our information team (on the numbers and email addresses below) to add you to the list.

The Brain Charity

Norton Street,
Liverpool
L3 8LR

Tel: **0151 298 2999**

Email: **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

Connect with us: @thebraincharity



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



The
Brain
Charity

Responsibly sourced paper

