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We can provide this leaflet and other information in a range of different formats, call for more information.



# Caring for someone with an acquired brain injury



## Acquired brain injury

Brain injury has many causes and levels of severity. Any brain injury that has occurred since birth is known as an acquired brain injury (ABI). Common forms of ABI include: traumatic brain injury (such as those sustained in road traffic collisions, falls or assaults), stroke, encephalitis, meningitis, hypoxic/anoxic injury, brain tumour, and hydrocephalus.

Acquired brain injury can leave people facing complex disabilities including physical, learning, emotional and social difficulties. Lives are changed, sometimes forever.

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## Becoming a carer

Sometimes the full impact of an acquired brain injury is not felt until an individual returns home. Often people are discharged from healthcare services with no further support in place, meaning that the individual and their family find themselves struggling to cope with the changes that have occurred.

Becoming a carer is one of the most difficult challenges anyone can face. Caring for a relative who has experienced a brain injury can be particularly daunting, due to the effects on their personality and cognitive functions, as well as any physical disabilities. When a relative survives a brain injury, life can change completely without any warning and the resulting affects can be overwhelming.

## Support we offer

Headway Devon run a monthly carers support group. This group meets once a month (currently the first Tuesday of the month) at the XCentre in Exeter.

At this group people are able to meet others facing similar situations and get support from one of the specialist team at Headway Devon. Through the group, individuals are able to get advice on issues such as accessing social care services, claiming benefits and coping with behaviours caused by the brain injury (e.g. strategies for managing anger or impaired memory).

Headway Devon also provide services for people with acquired brain injury which can be a valuable source of respite for carers and family members. We run a number of day centres throughout Devon and our community support team work one to one with people in their homes.

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## Future plans

We recognise the vital role that carers provide and realise that there is not enough support for those caring for someone with an acquired brain injury.

We are currently developing our carer support and now have a dedicated Carers Support worker who will be expanding the carer support groups and establishing a telephone carer support clinic, and peer support network.

Please get in contact for further information.