



# Acquired Brain Injuries



**WALSINGHAM**  
SUPPORT Everyone is different

# It's not just support, it's happiness.

We are Walsingham Support, a charity that has been supporting people with learning disabilities, autism, brain injuries and complex needs for more than 30 years.

Whether it's a couple of hours a week or 24-hour, seven-day support, we provide bespoke solutions that enable individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling, happy lives.

At Walsingham Support, we do things differently. We really take time to get to know the people we support; to identify their needs, to learn about their abilities and aspirations, and to recognise what makes them unique.

By taking this approach, we jointly develop and deliver tailored, person-centred support to enable every individual to live life to the full.

Flexibility is key to achieving this, but while our work and the support we provide constantly evolves to meet the demands of an ever-changing social care landscape, our vision has remained the same:

***We seek an equal and diverse society, in which people with disabilities are citizens in their own right who are supported to be happy and to reach their full potential.***



# What is acquired brain injury?

An acquired brain injury (ABI) is injury or damage to the brain that someone has 'acquired' rather than having been born with it. An ABI can have any number of causes, such as a stroke, a fall or a road traffic accident.

Every acquired brain injury is different and the effects vary hugely from person to person, depending on which part of the brain is affected and how badly. People with brain injuries can have a range of physical, cognitive, emotional or behavioural challenges.

This means that each person's needs are very different. At Walsingham Support, we deliver bespoke support solutions that focus on rehabilitation, enabling people to regain practical life skills and to live as independently as possible.

The support we provide is designed to meet each individual's needs, to help them overcome challenges they face in their day-to-day lives, and to support them in building their skills and abilities.





# Challenges associated with brain injury

The specific challenges an individual experiences after an ABI depends on which part of the brain has been damaged.

In broad terms the difficulties individuals might experience fall into **physical**, **cognitive**, and **emotional** or **behavioural** symptoms.



Physical symptoms include:

- mobility problems
- impaired speech
- weakness or paralysis
- epilepsy
- difficulty with balance
- sensory impairment

Cognitive symptoms include:

- reduced concentration
- problems with memory
- loss of language
- difficulty processing information
- repetitive behaviour

Emotional and behavioural symptoms include:

- depression or anxiety
- mood swings
- anger or frustration
- personality changes
- loss of confidence
- abusive behaviour
- disinhibition

# Supporting people with brain injuries

The support people with an ABI require is as diverse as the causes and symptoms of a brain injury itself.

Whatever an individual's challenges and needs, we focus on their rehabilitation journey, helping each person to relearn skills they might have lost or to develop new ones, supporting them to move forwards and live as fulfilling a life as possible.

Whether it's working with someone who has limited mobility and no speech, or providing support for someone who has no physical disability but whose short-term memory is impaired, we will create the right support plan for them that ensures we are there every step of the way.

Depending on a person's preference, we can support them in residential care, or in our supported living facilities that have been specifically developed for people with brain injuries. We also provide support in a person's own house or flat, so staying in their home is a real option.







## Person-centred support

The support we deliver to each individual is unique, but it's always created in the same way. We work with the individual and their family, listen to what they want and what matters most to them, and then we create a solution that meets those needs.

When it comes to supporting people with a brain injury, our person-centred approach means taking time to understand how their injury affects them, the full extent of the challenges they face, and what their personal goals are.

The severity of their difficulties and the degree to which they need support with different aspects of life is unique to each person. So, it's important that we empower people to do as much as they can for themselves, while relearning or developing skills that will ultimately help them to live more independently.

But, it's equally important to be realistic and to manage people's expectations. We don't push people beyond their capabilities; instead focusing on small achievements and building on them.

## Our staff

It's crucial that our staff have the skills, knowledge and personality to support an individual with an acquired brain injury in the right way.

So we look for people who can be consistent in their approach, provide structure and clear instruction, and have patience. We invest in them, providing training in a range of recovery and rehabilitation models so staff understand brain injuries, their impact and appropriate support.

Our staff also undertake recognised and accredited training in supporting positive behaviour, prevention strategies and intervention techniques. This comprehensive training is 'topped up' using bespoke training that explores the very best in contemporary support methods for each person.

Our programme of continuous professional development (CPD) means that, as a team, we are always ready to meet the challenges of the evolving social care sector, whatever the individual's circumstances and needs.





## Ben's story

Gerald 'Ben' Bennett was 28 when, in 1992, he was involved in a devastating road traffic accident that left him with a brain injury and in need of constant support.

An active member of the local bike scene at the time, Ben found his life was turned upside down. He was forced to move from his own house to a long-stay residential home and soon lost touch with most of his motorcycling friends.

In 2013, Ben moved into one of Walsingham Support's new supported living services, which was specifically developed for people with brain injuries and delivers a round-the-clock, personalised rehabilitation programme that covers every aspect of Ben's life.

After moving to the service, Ben told the team that a huge goal was to reconnect with friends. Staff helped Ben to track down one of his old mates and sign up to a social networking website.



In a matter of days, Ben had connected with hundreds of friends, and ever since he's been catching up with people he knew before the accident. Some of Ben's old friends even made it to his 50th birthday party.

The personalised support Walsingham Support's staff have provided to Ben has gone beyond helping him find his friends.

Previously, Ben would only receive the dedicated support he needs in short time slots across a day. He wasn't actively involved in certain aspects of his life, like food shopping, cooking, or choosing when and where he would go out.

Now, Ben has constant one-to-one support and he's happy that he has regained the power to make choices about his life.

He is supported to do the things he wants to do, whether that's visiting the local motorcycle dealer to see the latest bikes, or going to the pub for a whisky.

Speaking about where he lives now, Ben said: "Good staff, good room, good food, good friends."







# Why we are different

Everybody is different. We don't just acknowledge that – we celebrate it.

So we make sure we're different, too.

That means offering more than a standard, one-size-fits-all service. It means delivering a tailored support package for every single person we work with, custom made to fit them.

We look beyond a person's disability. We work with individuals, their families and carers to really understand the challenges they face, and the support that will best meet their particular needs.

Then, together we develop creative yet practical solutions that match each person's abilities and goals, giving them the tools they need to thrive and enjoy a fulfilling, happy life.

We believe that our way of thinking sets us apart from other providers in our sector – and we're proud of that!



If you would like to find out more about Walsingham Support and how we can help people with acquired brain injuries, please get in touch.



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