

## GOOD PRACTICE IRELAND Acquired Brain Injury

### Contact person (NCO)

**Name and organisation**

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### General information about the MOGP

**Name of organisation and short description**

Headway (founded in 1985) provides support and services to people affected by brain injury. The Vocational Training Program is dedicated to supporting people with ABI to return to and remain in work or further education.

**Contact person**

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**Website**

www.headway.ie

### Information on the good practice 'Acquired Brain Injury'

**Aims**

- Equip clients with the personal and practical skills to move into education or employment.
- Empower clients to develop personal effectiveness and self-advocacy skills with regard to work matters.
- Foster independence by developing skills relevant to employment and further education.

**Target group**

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)



## Description

The program is structured into a series of modules that are constantly reviewed for their relevance to clients' needs and updated as necessary. Modules include: Cognitive Rehabilitation, Communications, Information Technology, Personal Effectiveness in the Workplace and Work Experience. The service also runs a client advocacy meeting every month where clients discuss any changes they want made to the program, and issues that affect them. It is a 2-year program funded by FAS<sup>1</sup> and offers FETAC<sup>2</sup> certification level 3 to 5 minor and major awards. The program is flexible and tailored to meet individual needs where possible, for example some clients may need assistive technology or literacy support. All clients require support from Headway, they may need things that colleges/employers cannot provide. Depending on the nature of the difficulties the client has when he/she is placed with an employer, Headway then provides the support needed.

## Why is it a good practice?

There is little understanding for employees with ABI. The Vocational programme gives people with ABI the necessary skills and confidence to go back into the workforce, or to pursue further education. In addition, depending on the nature of the difficulties the client has, when he/she is placed with an employer Headway then provides whatever support that person needs. Headway staff will meet with the client's work manager and assist the organisation in putting these supports in place, e.g. creating templates to assist clients with fatigue/memory problems in completing their work tasks.

Self-management, case management and coordination are the key elements in the approach.

Headway tries to promote quality of life for people affected by ABI. They see equality for their clients as an important component of this and they link with other organisations that promote citizens' rights and secure equality of treatment for their clients.

## Results

### Evaluation

The program has been evaluated and there is ongoing monitoring.

### Incentives for success

Insurance companies are beginning to show an interest in the area and have made initial approaches to Headway services at local level. However this is in its early stages.

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<sup>1</sup> FAS is the State Training Authority

<sup>2</sup> FETAC is the Vocational Training accreditation body



## **Barriers for success**

- Lack of funding has a negative impact on the service that can be provided. Funding has diminished even further with the current ongoing economic crisis.
- Human resources are also reduced and affect the service – a Social worker and a community integration staff member are required but funding is not available.
- Due to the economic climate there is less work available and more competition for that work.
- Social Policy issues – People on invalidity pensions are not allowed to work and this can go against what Headway is trying to achieve in terms of employment for clients. Clients have to keep applying for exemptions to this rule, which is difficult and acts as a deterrent to them taking up employment - they don't want to lose their social welfare benefit as they can be reliant on it for income and there are also ancillary benefits which may be lost upon taking up employment.

