Innovative Practice 2019 on Independent Living and Political Participation

# An identity card to promote fair treatment for brain injury survivors encountering the criminal justice system.

# United Kingdom / Headway – The Justice Project, Brain Injury Identity Card

## Summary:

### Headway, a charity with 125 branches across the United Kingdom, provides information, support, and services to brain injury survivors and their families. Headway’s Justice Project has produced a free nationally-recognized Brain Injury Identity Card, which assists with fairer and more appropriate treatment and support when encountering the criminal justice system . The card also provides the user with access to criminal legal advice and representation via a 24-hour assistance number displayed on the card. As of November 2018, over 4,500 cards had been issued.

## Problems Targeted:

### Brain injury, sometimes known as a hidden disability, may affect a person’s control of their emotions, memory, and ability to communicate effectively. Those encountering the criminal justice system may not have their injury taken into account.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact:

### The Justice Project was developed to raise awareness of brain injury within the police and court systems and to ensure fair treatment for persons encountering these systems. A credit card-sized card is issued to persons who have been diagnosed by a clinical profession or a Headway group or branch as having sustained a brain injury.

### The user can show the card to professionals in the criminal justice system, which explains the individual user’s circumstances as a result of the injury (e.g., “I have speech difficulties” or “I have memory loss”). As well as showing the Headway logo, in England, Wales and Scotland the card displays a police logo (either that of the National Police Chief’s Council or Police Scotland), giving added credibility, especially when shown to a police officer. The card contains a 24-hour phone number for a specialist criminal legal advice and representation firm.

### Headway involved brain injury survivors in the development process when piloting the card at 17 Headway branches, and the card has since been made available across the United Kingdom. By November 2018, over 4,500 cards had been issued, with a survey revealing that 97 per cent of respondents find their card “helpful” or “very helpful” when used. Headway has also partnered with key agencies working in the UK criminal justice system, and has provided training to the Crown Prosecution Service.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability:

### The Justice Project is fully funded by Headway as the cards are provided for free, with the practice costing around £45,000 in 2018.

### In 2019, Headway will hold a public launch of the initiative in Wales and expects 6,500 cards to be issued across the United Kingdom in 2019. As a result of the success of the initiative, a UK charity called the Child Brain Injury Trust have produced a card for survivors aged between 11 and 18 years old. Headway is open to sharing its model and providing advice to organizations wishing to replicate it in their own countries.

### As a result of raising awareness, the National Appropriate Adult Network has included information about brain injury in its guidance for appropriate adults, and the Crown Prosecution Service is amending its guidelines for prosecutors to include a section on brain injury.

## About the Practice at a Glance:

### NAME OF INNOVATIVE PRACTICE: The Justice Project, Brain Injury Identity Card

### ORGANIZATION: Headway

### COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION: United Kingdom

## Facts and Figures:

### Some 4,500 cards are projected to be issued in 2018, compared to 367 in 2016.

### Training of 130 justice system professionals is planned for 2018, compared to 30 in 2017.

## Contact:

### Liz Partridge

### [justiceproject@headway.org.uk](mailto:justiceproject@headway.org.uk)

### [Headway Website](http://www.headway.org.uk/)

## Links and Further Reading:

### [Prince Harry Launches New Headway Initiative – Telegraph newspaper](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/20/prince-harry-launches-new-initiative-brain-injury-charity-headway/)

### [Why my brain injury gets me arrested, BBC News article](https://www.bbc.com/news/disability-40653929)

### [BBC News article](https://www.bbc.com/news/av/health-40662562/why-bar-staff-will-not-serve-afghanistan-veteran)

### [Cambridge Network news article](https://www.cambridgenetwork.co.uk/news/brain-id-card-launched-by-prince-harry-headway/)

### [Ipswich Star news article](http://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/prince-harry-visits-headway-suffolk-in-ipswich-to-launch-brain-injury-id-card-1-5115957)

## Quote:

“This vital project improves understanding of brain injury in the criminal justice system to ensure that a survivor’s disability is recognized, taken into account, and appropriate support is provided.”

—Peter McCabe, Headway Chief Executive

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