**Rich Chilver**

I trained in playwriting at The University of Portsmouth and The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. After graduation I co-founded Frequency Theatre, an audio theatre company which created short plays from writers across the world. After several years running Frequency Theatre, wiser and more rounded artistically I returned to writing and became playwright in residence of Lakeside Theatre. I secured two rounds of funding from Arts Council England, tailored to support my development as a writer with dyslexia. These included projects with Paul Sirett, Jeni Draper and Dan Sherer.

To date my work has been limited to shorter works. I wrote a radio short for Menagerie Theatre and BBC East and twice my work has been part of Pulse Festival. Corpus Christi College and Scopus Films commissioned me to write an animated pilot to educate school children on the life of Matthew Paris, a thirteenth century monk. In 2016 Essex County Council hired me and two other local writers to write pieces of theatre to be performed in an abandoned shop; ‘Surprise’ shared the experience of controlling and coercive behaviour. This play about domestic abuse was viewed by 250 in Chelmsford, to date over 30,000 people have viewed it online. Two members of the public sought assistance directly after viewing the work, demonstrating the real-life impact my playwriting has had. “It’s important to acknowledge Rich Chilver for his powerful and highly-effective script” – Colchester Gazette on ‘Surprise’.

**Proposal**

Myself, three expert academics and the charity Headway wish to shine a light on those recovering from strokes, where support is lacking and their condition is rarely discussed by the public. My producer Packing Shed Theatre and I would be delighted to showcase this new project, testing new material and receiving feedback on a play depicting a young person recovering from Visual Neglect. This play would explore how science can contribute to boosting neuroplasticity whilst also exploring the reorganisation needed in the patients’ home life.

Visual Neglect is a frequent, severe and disabling syndrome classically defined as a loss of the side of space opposite to the side of a brain lesion. For example, patients with this condition may fail to acknowledge people, objects or even parts of their own bodies when positioned in their neglected side.

Dr Stephanie Rossit is a cognitive neuroscientist from The University of East Anglia who specializes in cognitive and sensorimotor deficits after strokes including Visual Neglect. She will be my primary collaborator on the project, supplemented by working with Dr Kennedy (University of Ulster and Dr Valentini (University of Essex) who have offered to provide in-kind support to further the projects scope, sharing their respective expertise on motor disorders in strokes and cognitive emotion. Furthermore Headway Essex have agreed to a partnership so as to consult and to facilitate working with their clients. I have just submitted an application to the Wellcome Trust, so as to support the research, writing and touring of such a play, outcome of this application would be known in October 2017. Testing Ground funding would support an additional sharing of the work, the creation of a theatre trailer and an event to engage with those in the Suffolk area effected by Strokes.