



## **Acquired Brain Injury Ireland launches ABI Programme for Carers**

### **Pobal funding provides much needed support to Carers**

**25<sup>th</sup> May 2009:** Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, which provides support and services for people with acquired brain injury (ABI), today announced it will hold a series of training programmes for those caring for people with ABI throughout Ireland. Funded by Pobal, the ABI training programmes will allow carers to develop their knowledge of ABI and its effects on individual and family life.

There are an estimated 10,000 people in Ireland with a brain injury, many of whom are being cared for in their own home by family members. Acquired Brain Injury Ireland received the funding from Pobal under the Dormant Accounts fund, which is managed on behalf of the Department of Social and Family Affairs and Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

16 training programmes are planned in eight centres throughout Ireland over a two year period. The modules of the programmes will help carers to better understand ABI and the effects of brain injury on a person's emotions, behaviour, communication, attention and memory. Attendees will also learn how to cope with the emotional and psychological aspects of the role of 'carer' and how ABI can affect the family environment.

Barbara O'Connell, CEO of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland said, "Caring for someone with an acquired brain injury is a major challenge for any family. Consequences of brain injuries can range from quite subtle to very significant personality and behavioural changes and as a result, relationships with families and friends can be put under strain. Increased dependency of people with ABI can lead to demands for constant attention from caregivers. Families have had to become therapists, with no instruction or guidance and with little support services currently available for carers, they may often find themselves very isolated and develop stress-related symptoms such as anxiety and depression."

She continues, "The Acquired Brain Injury Ireland training programme will provide a supportive environment where carers can come together to share information and learn from each other's experiences and knowledge. It will give carers the skills they need to cope with their situation and to provide the best care possible to the person with ABI."

A pilot ABI Carer's Training programme will run over 6 weeks in Kilkenny from 20<sup>th</sup> May - 24<sup>th</sup> June. Those interested in attending a training programme should visit [www.abiireland.ie](http://www.abiireland.ie) or contact Acquired Brain Injury Ireland's head office on 01 2804164.

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### **About ABI Ireland**

Established in 2000, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland (formerly the Peter Bradley Foundation) was set up to provide a range of pioneering, flexible and tailor-made services to people with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). The services provided by the organisation place a critical emphasis on client-centeredness, quality, effectiveness and value for money. Rehabilitation and clinical support are key aspects to the service.

Approximately 10,000 people suffer from a head injury in Ireland each year and face a dramatically altered life thereafter. People with ABI progress at different rates, and may need to access services at different points in time as their needs change. Within each stage of rehabilitation a range of different service providers is involved, which must be coordinated. Once back in the community the emphasis is on more extended activities of daily living, integration, and return to work or education. Interventions focus on enhanced participation, improved quality of life, psychological adjustment and carer stress. Acquired Brain Injury Ireland is filling a vital service gap, in collaboration with statutory bodies.