



Cyclists urged to ‘Protect their heads’ – ABI Ireland reminds cyclists during National Bike Week of importance of wearing helmets

16th June 2009: Cycling without a bicycle helmet is highly dangerous and cyclists need to be aware of the consequences of cycling unprotected, said Acquired Brain Injury Ireland (ABI Ireland). As Ireland’s first Bike Week gets under way, ABI Ireland is urging cyclists to take personal responsibility and protect their heads while cycling.

CEO of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Barbara O’Connell said, “Bike Week is a fantastic initiative which encourages people to get out and about, exercise and have some fun. But the brain is a very delicate organ and wearing a helmet not only reduces the risk of brain injury in the event of an accident, it can also reduce the severity of the injury. We see first hand the serious consequences of not wearing bicycle helmets and even the simplest fall can lead to a life long brain injury.”

“Research shows that wearing a helmet reduces the risk of head or brain injury by 65% - 88%¹. We believe that taking responsibility and wearing a helmet may help prevent loss of life or serious injury in the event of an accident”, she continues. “Helmet-wearing must become accepted as good practice.”

It is estimated that more than 10,000 people are impacted by ABI in Ireland every year. Founded in 2000, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, formerly The Peter Bradley Foundation, is the Irish national organisation which provides support and services for people with an acquired brain injury (ABI). This reminder is part of the Acquired Brain Injury Ireland’s Mind Your Head campaign, which seeks to raise awareness of the serious consequences of not wearing protective headgear in various every day situations such as cycling, working or playing sports.

Ireland’s first National Bike Week will run from 14th – 21st June and comprises a series of nationwide events organised by cycling groups, communities and local authorities supported by the Department of Transport.

¹ ‘Helmets for Preventing Head and Facial Injuries in Bicyclists (Cochrane Review)’ DC Thompson et al, Issue 1, 2003

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About Acquired Brain Injury 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.