

## Brain Injury Victim Urges Students to Mind Their Head When Cycling Back To School

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland's 'Mind Your Head' campaign ambassador, Sam Fleming, is urging parents to make sure their children wear their helmets when cycling back to school.

Speaking on behalf of ABI Ireland's back to school 'Mind Your Head' campaign, Sam Fleming told the story of his own cycling accident that resulted in a brain injury; "It all happened ten years ago, I was only 20 years old when I suffered a brain injury. I was cycling home one night when a drunk pedestrian walked out in front of me; I pulled on my brakes and hit the ground with my head. It all happened in a split second; I was pout cold", he said.



"I was not wearing my helmet at the time, and that is something I regret to this day. I was left both disabled and unable to walk; my life was never to be the same again. There was so much I had not yet experienced, and it wasn't going to happen now", added Fleming

After eight months of hospital treatment Sam was discharged and now lives in an ABI Ireland Assisted Living House, in Ennis Co Clare. Here Sam is encouraged to live as independent a life as possible, in a supportive living environment. Now as an ABI Ireland ambassador Sam is committed to spending his time educating young students about the dangers of not wearing a helmet, through schools presentations, talks and interviews.

Barbara O' Connell, Chief Executive of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, is encouraging everyone to get behind this campaign and remember 'Prevention is Key', she said: "It makes me sick when I hear people saying that wearing a helmet reduces the enjoyment of cycling, in actual fact wearing a helmet reduces the risk of a head or brain injury by 65-88 per cent; should a collision occur".

"Anyone who has that attitude should come and visit one of our residences and see the terrible consequences, and lifelong injuries which are suffered by people with an acquired brain injury (ABI), as a result of a cycling accident. From today even think of Sam's story", she added.

ABI Ireland is appealing in particular to parents of young children to make sure they are wearing a helmet while cycling to school. Wearing a helmet not only reduces the risk of brain injury, it will also reduce the severity of the injury, and the amount of time a victim spends in recovery and rehabilitation.

Between 10,000 and 13,000 people acquire a brain injury in Ireland every year. Acquired Brain Injury Ireland is the leading provider of flexible and tailor made services for people with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). For more information see [www.abiireland.ie](http://www.abiireland.ie)