



Acquired Brain Injury Ireland highlights importance of helmet wearing during winter sports

18th March 2009: Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, which provides support and services to people with acquired brain injury, has expressed its deep regret at the news of Natasha Richardson's recent accident while skiing in Canada.

Barbara O'Connell, CEO of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland said, "Our thoughts are with Natasha's family and friends at this time. Brain Injury can happen so quickly and the effects can be hard for family and friends to deal with. People with acquired brain injury may often look fine but can have many problems that affect personality, memory, speech, mobility among other things."

Ms O'Connell said that Acquired Brain Injury Ireland supports the Association of Quebec Emergency Room Doctors' request to make helmet-wearing mandatory during winter sports. They made the request earlier this year, claiming that 60 per cent of head traumas could have been avoided by wearing a helmet while performing winter sports.

She continues, "While it is up to the individual whether a helmet is worn or not, we do recommend that helmets are worn particularly by all children under 13 years. Wearing a helmet not only reduces the risk of brain injury, it can also reduce the severity of the injury. Many sports shops are now providing trendy ski helmets."

-Ends-

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.