



**22 May 2019**

## **Westminster hosts a reception for Acquired Brain Injury survivors**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Acquired Brain Injury (APPG on ABI) brought together survivors of ABI and their MPs at a reception on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 in the Speaker's House, Westminster, London. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of ABI, the need to improve neurorehabilitation services across the UK, and to discuss the APPG's feedback on the response by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) to its report launched last year '**Acquired Brain Injury and Neurorehabilitation - Time for Change**'.

Speaking at the reception, Chris Bryant MP and APPG on ABI Chair said: "On behalf of the many experts and organisations that inputted to the 'Acquired Brain Injury and Neurorehabilitation – Time for Change' report, the APPG on ABI welcomes the feedback from the Department for Health and Social Care received earlier this year. There are some examples of positive action but much more focused and coordinated attention is required in order to address directly the report's recommendations."

As well as the DHSC, individuals with ABI impact on several government departments, including the Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Education, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Ministry of Justice. The APPG on ABI is calling for the government to work in a coordinated and consistent way by bringing departments together, as a matter of urgency, to form a taskforce to address the issues and recommendations outlined in the report.

The report, and the APPG on ABI feedback to the response by the DHSC, are available on the United Kingdom Acquired Brain Injury (UKABIF) website:

<https://www.ukabif.org.uk/campaigns/appg-report/>.

**ENDS**

## **Notes to editor**

### Acquired Brain Injury

ABI is a hidden epidemic with life-long consequences. Neurorehabilitation is a vital part of the brain injury care pathway that ensures the best possible recovery for survivors - it is one of the most cost-effective treatments in the NHS. But neurorehabilitation services are variable and difficult to access, in-patient beds are lacking, community services are poor, and there is a lack of skilled personnel. The APPG on ABI is driving that change for brain injury survivors and published a report last year 'Acquired Brain Injury and Neurorehabilitation - Time for Change'. Its recommendations are:

### **'Acquired Brain Injury and Neurorehabilitation - Time for Change'** **Key recommendations**

#### **Neurorehabilitation**

- Rehabilitation Prescriptions should be available to all individuals with an Acquired Brain Injury on discharge from acute care, held by the individual with copies made available to the general practitioner
- A national review of neurorehabilitation is required to ensure service provision is adequate and consistent throughout the UK
- The Government should collate reliable statistics for the number of individuals presenting at Accident and Emergency Departments with Acquired Brain Injury, and record the numbers that require and receive neurorehabilitation
- There should be a significant increase in neurorehabilitation beds and neurorehabilitation professionals so that every trauma centre has a consultant in rehabilitation medicine, and individuals with an Acquired Brain Injury have access to neurorehabilitation
- Cooperation between key government departments (i.e. the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Work and Pensions) is required to review funding for in-patient and community neurorehabilitation services

#### **Education**

- Acquired Brain Injury should be included in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice
- All education professionals should have a minimum level of awareness and understanding about Acquired Brain Injury and the educational requirements of children and young people with this condition (i.e. completion of a short online course for all school-based staff). Additional training should be provided for the named lead professional who supports the individual with Acquired Brain Injury, and for Special Educational Needs Coordinators
- The Acquired Brain Injury Card for the under 18s (produced by the Child Brain Injury Trust) should be promoted in all schools, hospitals and Local Education Authorities
- Many children and young people with Acquired Brain Injury require individually-tailored, collaborative and integrated support for the return to school, and throughout their education. An agreed 'return-to-school' pathway plan is required, led and monitored by a

named lead professional, to provide a consistent approach and support for the individual, their family and teachers

### **Criminal justice**

- Criminal justice procedures, practices and processes need to be reformed to take into account the needs of individuals with Acquired Brain Injury
- Training and information about Acquired Brain Injury is required across all services including the police, court, probation and prison services
- Brain injury screening for children, young people and adults is required on entry to the criminal justice system and, if identified, an assessment of the effects, deficits, severity and impact is required with the appropriate interventions planned and implemented by a trained team
- All agencies working with young people in the criminal justice system, schools, psychologists, psychiatrists, general practitioners and youth offending teams should work together to ensure that all the needs of the individual are addressed

### **Sport-related concussion**

- The Government should ensure that there is collaborative research to evaluate and improve practical assessment tools, develop objective diagnostic markers and gain a deeper understanding of the recovery process and long-term risks of sport-related concussion
- An enhanced education campaign should be implemented in schools to improve awareness and understanding of sport-related concussion with the support of government departments (i.e. Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care)
- Sport, government and professional clinical bodies must work collaboratively to improve professionals' knowledge of concussion management
- The National Health Service should develop better pipelines for the diagnosis and care of sport-related concussion

### **Welfare benefits system**

- All benefits assessors should be trained to understand the problems that affect individuals with an Acquired Brain Injury
- Re-assessment for welfare benefits for people with Acquired Brain Injury should only take place every five years
- A brain injury expert should be on the consultation panel when changes in the welfare system are proposed

### UKABIF

UKABIF aims to promote better understanding of all aspects of Acquired Brain Injury; to

educate, inform and provide networking opportunities for professionals, service providers, planners and policy makers and to campaign for better services in the UK. UKABIF is a membership organisation and charity, established in 1998 by a coalition of organisations working in the field of Acquired Brain Injury.

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