



the brain injury association

Manifesto

for the 2011

Scottish Parliament Elections

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About Acquired Brain Injury

Acquired brain injury (ABI) refers to any sudden damage to living brain tissue that is not degenerative. It is the most common cause of permanent disability in the adult population in the UK, and the effects can be utterly devastating. Every year in Scotland alone it is estimated that around 16,500 adults sustain a brain injury. For over 30 years, Headway¹ has offered support to ABI survivors, as well as their families and carers. In the run up to the 2011 Scottish Parliament elections, we are calling on all political parties to make a commitment to improve the lives of everyone affected by ABI in Scotland.

RECOGNISE the impact of ABI and LISTEN to those affected

- raise public awareness of the impact of ABI on people's lives
- collate accurate statistics on incidence and prevalence of ABI in Scotland to inform service planning and delivery
- recognise the need for ABI specialist services rather than generic services
- improve support and training for those who assume a caring role through implementation of 'Caring Together' Scotland's Carers' Strategy
- recognise the emotional impact of living with ABI on survivors, families and carers, and ensure support is available as and when required
- fully involve those affected by ABI at all stages of design, delivery and review of services

DELIVER the services that people affected by ABI need

- continue to support the work of Headway - the brain injury association in Scotland
- develop clear care pathways and ensure consistency in service delivery, irrespective of geographical location
- ensure timely and appropriate social care and community services are in place
- implement the ABI National Managed Clinical Network Standards for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) in Adults²
- ensure implementation of SIGN 110 on the early management of head injury³
- develop services which meet the specific needs of young men, the group most likely to sustain a TBI
- continue to support the National Managed Service Network for Neurosurgery in Scotland⁴

JOIN UP service delivery

- within each Health Board and Local Authority, ensure there is a named manager responsible for ABI rehabilitation services
- ensure there are clear guidelines for the different types of rehabilitation offered by health and social services, and that the services work effectively together
- ensure timely and clear discharge planning and information for people leaving hospital, and undertake regular audits of this process
- ensure health and local authorities put in place a case management system (or equivalent) to support people with ABI to navigate their way through the system

- ensure timely and consistent access to ABI specialist clinical services (e.g. Neuropsychology) at all stages (i.e. acute, inpatient and community)
- ensure appropriate service delivery for those with a dual diagnosis (e.g. ABI and mental health issues, or ABI as a result of drug/alcohol addiction), including a protocol for joint assessment
- raise awareness of ABI within the criminal justice system and take steps to provide appropriate rehabilitation rather than custodial sentencing for people with ABI

REMOVE the barriers faced by those affected by ABI

- increase awareness and understanding of ABI amongst frontline service providers who are often an individual's first point of contact (e.g. primary health care and social work)
- provide accurate and timely information to families and those who have sustained an ABI (e.g. at the time of discharge from hospital, and from their G.P.)
- make ABI an assessment category in its own right, distinct from Mental Health, Physical Disability and Learning Disability, and ensure adequate funding is allocated to this group⁵
- develop supported employment for people with ABI based on evidence already gathered in this area

REDUCE instances of ABI via a series of preventative measures

- raise public awareness of the risks, causes and effects of ABI
- introduce a network of cycle lanes and mandatory cycle helmet legislation for children
- introduce mandatory ski helmet legislation for children
- educate young people about the potential consequences of violent assaults, and other dangerous behaviours
- support and invest in research into ABI and treatments