

SUMMER 2017



 **Spinal  
Injuries  
Ireland**  
Support at every stage





# Limited Mobility Vehicle



## Driving Tuition and Assessment Service

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**Fully Adapted Vehicle Dual controlled  
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With summer in the air, Spinal Injuries Ireland (SII) has a spring in its step with the launch of our annual rib trips for SII service users at Dun Laoghaire pier last month.

Every year we see more and more people taking trips out on the rib with us and you can read all about Mark Nugent's experience last summer. Thank you to all our volunteers that make this possible.

Meanwhile, on page 4 we discuss the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) and how it will improve your right to a more inclusive society. Ireland is the last country within the UN that has yet to ratify this treaty and we explain in more detail what it will mean for any person living with a disability in Ireland when it is enacted into government.

Elsewhere in this issue, we have a feature about an accessible holiday in Bordeaux, a health feature on infection prevention and control for SCIs, and a health feature on resilience and how to deal with chronic pain.

Thanks to so many generous supporters and volunteers our 2016 raffle was a huge success, and this year we are hoping to reach out to even more people to take part. We have enclosed 2 books of tickets and please get in touch for more books if you need them.

Lastly, we would just like to say a massive thank you to the organisers of our Spring Lunch in Dublin on Saturday 27 May. Philip Quinlan & his committee raised almost €40,000 which will be invested back into our SII outreach services in the local community.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of our Spinal Injuries Ireland magazine and if you would like to get in touch to send in a news story or feature for our next issue of the magazine we would love to hear from you.

Yours sincerely

**Fiona Bolger CEO**



The SII team at the BagIT2017 designer handbag auction event in May

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SII Vhi Women's Mini Marathon Team on June 5th





## UNCRPD – HOW YOUR RIGHTS ARE AFFECTED

### Did you know that Ireland is the only country in the UN that has failed to ratify the disability legislation?

What is the UNCRPD and how can we ensure that the government will take the rights of people with disabilities seriously?

The answer is simple, the Irish government needs to ratify the UNCRPD as a matter of urgency.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), put simply, is a treaty that will allow every person living with a disability in Ireland access to certain rights that currently, they may not be legally entitled to.

It contains no new rights. What it does is bring together in one document all of the existing rights in other conventions and international human rights treaties. When Ireland ratifies the Convention, we will be obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights are being implemented.

Nearly every aspect of life is covered for people with disabilities in this Convention including employment, accessible housing, work place accessibility, social welfare payments, PA hours, etc

When the Convention is ratified, it will mean that the government and society as a whole will have to produce measurable outcomes and quantifiable results that

show they are keeping in line with the rights of people living with disabilities. The problem is that Ireland is currently the only country in the UN, out of 192 countries, that has yet to ratify this agreement.

By not ratifying it, it means that as yet, we as a society do not have to be held to account or show measurable changes that have been enacted to effect change for people living with disabilities.

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Councillor Deirdre Donnelly (Ind) is currently trying to tackle this problem along with many other local politicians around Ireland. She has contacted a number of other Independent councillors around the country to ask for support in the ratification of the UNCRPD.

She said: "Ireland signed the convention in 2007 but we are still one of the last member states to ratify it. This is not

**“ The problem is that Ireland is currently the only country in the UN, out of 192 countries, that has yet to ratify this agreement ”**

acceptable to the thousands of Irish people with disabilities and their families and carers.”

Cllr Donnelly said she also raised the issue at government level and explained that she believes that it is important for all public representatives to help make the lives of those with disabilities better.

She added: “I have spoken personally with the Minister for Disabilities, Finian McGrath, T.D., who has been the driving force behind the ratification. I understand that he has been working hard on this since his appointment a year ago but some legislation needs to be amended by the Minister for Health and Minister for Justice before this can progress. I am quite saddened to date that this has not happened.”



Disability Rights Campaigner Sean O'Kelly and Cllr. Deirdre Donnelly

**“ Ireland signed the convention in 2007 but we are still one of the last member states to ratify it. This is not acceptable to the thousands of Irish people with disabilities and their families and carers. ”**



## DENIED HER RIGHTS FOR 10 YEARS

### Julia Thurman has been fighting for a decade to move out of a nursing home and into accessible accommodation

Julia Thurman was 33 years old when she contracted a rare viral infection called Acute Disseminated Encephalomyelitis (ADEM) that left her in a coma for three weeks.

"It came on very suddenly. I was fine, I was working full time. Myself and my housemate had a party in the house a few days prior and all I remember is that I was feeling unwell. I tried to take my temperature one day and I called my housemate to ask her if she'd help me go to the doctor and that's the last thing I remember."

Julia, who is originally from Berlin, suffered a sudden onset of ADEM which meant she had severe inflammation on her spinal cord and her brain stem.

"The injury was at T4 on my spine. When I woke up initially I had no hand function at all. I was paralysed from the neck down but luckily I regained movement in my hands. I am a complete spinal cord injury from the waist down though so I am in a wheelchair now."

Since the onset in 2007, Julia has fought hard for her right to live independently but has been met with obstacle after obstacle. She initially spent three months in Beaumont Hospital and a further 11 months in the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH).

"I was only in the NRH for that length of time because I basically had nowhere else to go. I couldn't go back to the house I shared because my bedroom was upstairs and it wasn't wheelchair accessible."

Julia began to look into her options as to how she could live independently but her first battle came when she was refused funding for a personal assistant which would have enabled her to move into wheelchair-accessible accommodation. As a result of this and some other setbacks along the way, she was turned down for social housing too.

In 2008, a NRH social worker found a bed for Julia in a north Co. Dublin nursing home and Julia resigned herself to the fact that this was the best option for a while. "At that stage I already had plans to go back to work so I said 'Ok, take me to the nursing home. I'll go to work from there, I don't care.'"

Over the last 10 years, Julia has found herself caught in a type of cat and mouse game with the HSE and the Fingal County Council (FCC) over her living conditions. "A few years ago, the Council said that they needed confirmation from the HSE that they will provide me with a personal assistant (PA) if they find me somewhere to live. But then the HSE said: 'We need the Council to find you a house first before we can commit to giving you PA hours.'" Julia decided that the best route to take would be to engage with the Council first as she needed the house first and then she could apply for PA hours.

"In 2015, the Council told me that they had my name down for a house in Swords. They said they had to find an architect and then go through the process of building it. They told me this two years ago this summer. I was just at that site last week and nothing is happening there because they had to put it out to tender and they had to open it for submissions."

The Council also told Julia that she had another option - if she found another suitable place, an existing apartment or bungalow, then they would purchase it and adapt it for her.

"Last summer, I started looking with Siobhan from Spinal Injuries Ireland (SII). Siobhan came on board and she was great. We viewed everywhere we could and we found an apartment in Swords with a bus stop right outside the door. It was big enough and it was not far from work so I was more connected than where I am now. We suggested it to the Council, they viewed it and true to their word they bought it. So I thought, great, I have somewhere to live."

"However, when the architect and the occupational therapist came to visit the apartment they said it wasn't suitable because of fire safety. They said that because I couldn't get onto the balcony it was dangerous and there were a few other issues too. So I was told it was not going ahead so it was back to square one."

Julia is now still living in the nursing home and the development site in Swords where she is hoping to get a house has yet to begin works.

"I find it very hard to live in this nursing home. I was 34 when I came here and now I'm 43. The only people I talk to in here are the staff really."

"I know it sounds very bad but I can't even sit in the dining room any more. There are things I just can't watch anymore. There are also people shouting at night and during the day here all the time too."

Julia explained that her friends tend not to visit her anymore and she prefers to go out and meet them outside the nursing home. "They tell me I need to get out of here. I mean it's not nice, I always apologise when people come here because I have to say sorry about the smell and things. It's not really nice to have friends around in this environment."

"I would love to live somewhere independently, have my own little apartment with help in the morning and evenings. That's all I'd need pretty much."

**“ We need the Council to find you a house first before we can commit to giving you PA hours. ”**





## WATERSPORTS INCLUSION GAMES

### Why not come along and get involved in a lovely day out in Dun Laoghaire

SIJ is delighted to be involved in hosting the Watersports Inclusion Games on Saturday June 24 and Sunday June 25 in Dublin.

The event will take place in Dun Laoghaire at the Royal St George Yacht Club and will see people taking part in sailing, rowing and canoeing.

The day is open to people of all abilities from the physical, sensory, intellectual and learning difficulty spectrums so it is a day not to be missed.

The Games are aimed primarily at secondary school-going young people along with their families and friends, but it is open to all ages (over 12 years) to participate. Equipment will be provided and no experience is necessary.

The Watersports Inclusion Games is a free event and is organised by the Irish Sailing Association in partnership with Dun Laoghaire Sailability, Canoeing Ireland, Dun Laoghaire Sea Scouts, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, and Spinal Injuries Ireland.

If you know of a club, organisation or community group working with people with disabilities or from disadvantaged areas that are interested in bringing a group or individuals along to the event, simply register by emailing Johanne at [wsinclusion@gmail.com](mailto:wsinclusion@gmail.com)

The event is also open for people to register if they have up to two family members or friends that would like to attend, if there are any volunteers who would like to help out on the day, or if there are any watersports clubs/activity centres that would like to showcase at the EXPO element of the event.

For more information see [www.sailing.ie/watersportsinclusiongames/](http://www.sailing.ie/watersportsinclusiongames/)

## JACK BREAKS BOUNDARIES

### Jack Kavanagh, David Henry and Leen Tangney win at the Garden State Film Festival 2017 for their documentary 'Breaking Boundaries'

Jack Kavanagh's documentary 'Breaking Boundaries' won the coveted Best International Feature Documentary Award at the Garden State Film Festival 2017 in Atlantic City, New Jersey in April.

Jack's documentary originally aired on TV3 and 3E in Ireland last year and received an overwhelming response nationally for showing how Jack overcame the challenges of a spinal cord injury with the help of his family and friends.

'Breaking Boundaries' is a documentary that follows Jack and his friends David Henry and Leen Tangney as they head to the west coast of America in search of adventure.

Jack and David had made a promise to each other prior to Jack's injury that they would one day go travelling the world together. The two men kept their promise and took to the skies to prove that they could achieve anything they wanted to in life.

Jack explained that he was surprised and delighted that 'Breaking Boundaries' won the Best International Film Documentary at the Garden State Film Festival this year.

"We had no idea that we had won anything until it was announced on the night. It was one of those things that you don't really expect at all. There were so many cool movies there and a lot of talented people who had a lot more experience than we had. This was only a first production for us so we were absolutely thrilled to get it. It was a really amazing trip." Jack said that he feels one of the reasons his documentary won was down to the human aspect of the story.

"I think the story transcends the fact that it was about a spinal injury. That was the initiation of the story, but people really associated with the fact that everybody has their problems. Everybody faces challenges in their life. This was more of a human story in that, ok you're dealt this challenge, but it's always going to be about the response. And that sentiment really hit home with people and that was the reason it was so well received I think.

"It's been an amazing experience and I could never have anticipated how much we would learn and the experiences we would have through taking on this film. We're absolutely over the moon at winning the award," said Jack.







## CHALLENGING ACCESS

Stephen Cluskey with Irish footballer Kevin Kilbane.

### What would be your one simple change?

If you could make one simple change to make Ireland a more inclusive society, what would it be?

That is the question that entrepreneur Stephen Cluskey is asking communities around Ireland to think about as part of his Challenge Access campaign.

It doesn't have to be a big change, it can be something as simple as providing a ramp in a local post office to allow better accessibility for people in wheelchairs.

Stephen, who is the creator of the award-winning Mobility Mojo, recently took his Challenge Access campaign onto RTE's Late Late Show on Friday 7 April and made a huge impact by enlisting the help of broadcaster Kathryn Thomas and footballer Kevin Kilbane.

Both celebrities spent the day in a wheelchair and cameras followed them as they tried to make their way to two separate destinations in Dublin. It did not prove to be easy for either celebrity.

Stephen made the point that if everyone in Ireland began to make one simple change or began to look at things from the perspective of someone with a disability, it

would be a more inclusive society for people to live in.

Stephen explained: "As a wheelchair user myself, I know that people with higher access needs can be unwittingly isolated in society. Barriers in our physical environment can be more disabling than the disability itself but small changes have the power to make a world of difference to people dealing with mobility, visual, hearing and cognitive challenges.

"Imagine trying to meet friends for dinner but there isn't enough space between the tables for you to navigate your wheelchair around. Things that many people take for granted as being simple can become major barriers for people with higher access needs. So small changes can make a huge difference."

Currently there are 600,000 people living in Ireland, or 13% of the population, who live with a disability. One Simple Change: "The Challenge Access Campaign" aims to break down these barriers, by encouraging communities, schools, councils, businesses and members of the public to take simple steps aimed at making a more inclusive society.

Stephen explained that he initially came up with the idea for his Challenge Access Campaign when he heard about a hotel group that were taking steps to make their buildings more inclusive for everybody.

"I was inspired by a Scandinavian hotel group. They have a big emphasis on accessibility but what they found was that even the smaller things can make a big difference. One of the examples they gave was making a change in the reception area of their hotels. In the past, when an older person came in that uses a walking stick, they'd leave their walking stick at the bottom of the reception desk when signing hotel check-in papers. More often than not their stick would fall over causing unnecessary problems.

"So, they went down to their local Ikea, spent about €3/€4 on a couple of hooks, put them below the reception desk and now when someone comes in who uses a walking stick they simply hook their stick into it. They said that they got more good will and compliments about that little change than most other things that they've done. That was really the inspiration for this campaign, it was about all those little things that when combined can make a world of difference."

Stephen took a year to plan the campaign as he was keen to bring people with all kinds of disabilities on board for it.

"The campaign is not just focused on mobility issues, it's also focused on visual, hearing and cognitive impairments. So it's trying to tackle all of those different disabilities."

The campaign is proving very successful following on from Stephen's appearance on the Late Late Show in April.

"We got a great response after the launch of the campaign, especially after the Late Late Show. There was a lot of contact from hotels especially from individuals who had accessible accommodation throughout the country who were interested in improving their facilities. So there was a really positive response to it and I think if nothing else, it got people focused and thinking about these issues which most of us wouldn't have as much of a grasp on or have an idea about."

*To find out more about the Challenge Access Campaign visit [www.challengeaccess.ie](http://www.challengeaccess.ie) for ideas and practical tips on how to improve accessibility in local communities, schools, councils and businesses. You can also get involved in the conversation on social media by using the hashtag #ChallengeAccess*

**“Small changes can make a huge difference”**





## SAILING HIS WAY TO SUCCESS – THE JOHN TWOMEY STORY

### Paralympian John Twomey proves determination is the key to success

Cork man John Twomey is a renowned Irish athlete, having competed in no less than 11 Paralympic Games over the last 40 years.

He has taken part in every Paralympic Games since 1976, taking home a silver medal for table tennis at the 1976 Paralympics in Toronto and taking home a bronze medal for discus at the 1984 Paralympics in Great Britain.

His biggest achievement to date is winning a gold medal for the discus at the 1988 Paralympic Games in Seoul, but he is perhaps best known in the latter part of his sporting career for his achievements in sailing.

John began his Paralympic career following a cycling accident in Cork in 1970 which saw him sustain a spinal cord injury when he was just 14 years old. He has been using a wheelchair ever since. He never let his injury get in the way of success, however, and he quickly became one of the most well-known sportsmen to ever compete in the Paralympics.

"I initially got involved in sports in the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) and that led me into all sorts of different sporting activities throughout the rest of my life," explained John.

"I first took up table tennis, then the discus and then I took up sailing in the late 70s."

John explained that as part of his rehabilitation after he left the NRH, he began training for the Paralympics quite quickly once he was discharged as a patient.

He initially played table tennis and won a silver medal at the 1976 Paralympics in Toronto but he soon realised that his passion lay in a different sport – the discus.

"I loved the discus and I gained my first Irish cap for the discus in 1973 at the Paralympics," he explained.

"I ended up throwing the discus for Ireland for 20 years and at the same time

I was sailing for fun. I competed in all the Paralympics for those 20 years as a discus thrower, from Canada to Atlanta. I won a bronze medal in 1984 and a gold medal in 1988 for the discus.

"When I retired from the discus after the Atlanta Paralympic Games in 1996, I wasn't quite sure what to do next. As I was a keen sailor, a few of my friends talked me into competing in sailing for the Sydney Paralympics in 2000 and it went from there."

John explained that he always had an interest in sailing from a young age and said: "My involvement in sailing came after I sustained my spinal injury. I live in Kinsale which is a real sailing town. "I went out with some friends around Kinsale initially when I was younger and I got into it that way. I really enjoyed it." John went on to compete as a sailor at the Paralympic Games from 2000 until his last Paralympics in Rio 2016. He competed in Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008, London 2012, and Rio 2016.





You can help John raise much needed funds for SII in Cork by supporting

The Cork Jazz Ball in aid of SII  
Saturday October 28th

Clayton Hotel Silver Springis

Contact [events@spinalinjuries.ie](mailto:events@spinalinjuries.ie)  
or call 01 2355317 for more information.

When asked what his fondest memory of his Paralympic career is to date, John explained that he has many great memories but one in particular makes him very proud.

"My standout memory is still winning gold in 1988 in Seoul. That was probably the highlight of the whole 11 Paralympics." Following on from the 2016 Paralympics in Rio, John decided that at the age of 61 his competing career was coming to an end and he retired from competing professionally.

"Now I sail for fun and I do a bit of fundraising too. So there was no more Paralympics after Rio."

John explained that he was always glad he took up sports, in particular sailing and urged anyone thinking of trying sailing to give it a go.

"I think sailing is a fabulous sport for anyone with a disability because you get out there on the water and it's just you and the elements and there is a great sense of freedom to it as well."



**"I initially got involved in sports in the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) and that led me into all sorts of different sporting activities throughout the rest of my life"**

"I would encourage anybody with a disability, be it a spinal injury or any form of disability to go out and try sailing. I think they'll get fabulous satisfaction and enjoyment out of it. They don't even have to do it at a competitive level if they don't feel they want to do it at that level. There's a great enjoyment at getting out on the water and enjoying that freedom. "There's lots of clubs with para-sailing projects going on around Ireland. I know there is one in Galway, and one in Cork, and it has spread right around the country."

John explained that he is now enjoying his retirement and more recently he has become involved with the ongoing work at Spinal Injuries Ireland (SII).

"I've been a client of SII since it was founded in 1993 and I still go back to the NRH in Dun Laoghaire for an annual check-up on the same campus as SII. As I've been with SII since it started, I was asked if I would like to join the Board of Directors in October last year when I came back from Rio. I decided I would and I'm really enjoying it. It's nice to be able to give something back after a long sporting career. Now that I'm not competing any more too, I have more spare time to help."

John was also asked to join the Board of the Irish Sailing Association (ISA) when he came back from Rio and he agreed to that too.

As part of his work with SII, John is holding a ball called the John Twomey Cork Ball in aid of SII in October this year and it is an event he is really looking forward to.

"We're hoping to have a ball and a jazz weekend on the October bank holiday weekend in Cork and it should be a great event. I'm really looking forward to it." John explained that when he is not working with SII and the ISA he spends the rest of his time either sailing or enjoying family life.

"During the whole of my sporting career, it was great to have the support of my wife Mary and the family down throughout the years. I have two daughters and I have one grand-daughter who was born in 2016 and I am looking forward to spending more quality time with all of them now as part of my retirement from competing at the Paralympics."

*For more information on the John Twomey Cork Ball or to buy tickets for it see [www.spinalinjuries.ie](http://www.spinalinjuries.ie)*



**"I would encourage anybody with a disability, be it a spinal injury or any form of disability to go out and try sailing."**



## INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL FOR SCI

### What you need to know to avoid infections when living with a spinal cord injury

Infections are caused by bugs such as bacteria, fungi or viruses entering the body. Infections can be minor and stay in one area, like a boil, or their effects can be felt throughout the body, like flu. Often, infections are easily dealt with, but sometimes infections can be more serious.

#### MDROs

The emergence of MDROs (multi-drug resistant organisms) is increasingly recognized as a major public health threat. A MDRO is a bacteria that is resistant to many antibiotics. If a bacteria is resistant to an antibiotic, it means that certain antibiotics will not work. MDROs can be challenging to treat, since there are limited antibiotics that work to treat them. A person can be either colonised or infected with an MDRO. If a person is colonised, it means that the bacteria is present on their skin or in a body opening e.g. the bowel, but they have no signs of illness. If a person is infected, it means that the bacteria is present on their skin or in a body opening and it is causing illness.

#### UTIs

UTIs (urinary tract infection) commonly occur in patients with spinal cord injury (SCI). Some patients will have recurrent UTIs. Recurrent UTI requires multiple courses of antibiotic therapy, markedly increasing the incidence of MDROs (Salonen et al 2006). If you catheterise, you will always have bacteria in your urine. Resistant bacteria can form;

- if you use an antibiotic again and again with bacteria present in the urine but no physical signs of infection,
- if you use antibiotics repeatedly to treat full-blown infections, or
- if you stop taking prescribed antibiotics before all the targeted bacteria are killed.

In all three cases, some of the bacteria can survive, reproduce and eventually become a completely resistant strain. Hand hygiene is the most important measure to avoid the transmission of

harmful bacteria and prevent health care-associated infections (WHO 2015). Cleaning hands gets rid of bacteria you pick up from other people, from the surfaces you touch and prevents these bacteria being spread to others. Just because hands look clean, we can't assume that they are clean. To reduce the spread of infection it is important that hand hygiene is carried out at the right time and in the right way. Hand hygiene should be carried out at the following times:

#### BEFORE

- opening a urinary catheter bag
- preparing/ handling food
- putting on gloves

#### AFTER

- using the toilet (changing incontinence pads).
- blowing your nose or after sneezing in your hands.
- touching raw meat, poultry, or fish.
- handling rubbish.
- Visiting or caring for sick people.
- contact with areas/ items in the home likely to be contaminated during household duties e.g. bins or cleaning cloths, toilets, touching pets

#### Extra opportunities for Carers

Hand hygiene should always be carried out:

- Before any clean task such as assisting a client to brush their teeth, bed bath, shower, putting on gloves.
- After any clean task such as assisting a client to brush their teeth, bed bath, shower, dressing the client.
- After contact with body fluids such as handling soiled bed linen, emptying commodes/urinals.
- After removing gloves.
- After they leave the home when care is finished.
- Hand hygiene can be carried out with alcohol hand rub or soap and water.

#### Alcohol Hand Rub

- If your hands look clean, use an alcohol based hand rub
  - Apply a sufficient amount to cover hands
  - Rub the alcohol hand rub into all areas of your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds
- Alcohol hand rub is not effective if your hands are dirty or if you have an infection caused by C. diff. Alcohol content should be at least 70%.

#### Standard Precautions

Standard Precautions are a set of protective measures designed to prevent contact with blood and body fluids of any other person. They are used at all times regardless of whether or not you know if there is an infection. They include the following:

- Hand hygiene
- Sneezing and cough etiquette (sneeze into your arm or a tissue)
- When to wear gloves, aprons and masks/goggles
- Cleaning of the home and care equipment
- Care with laundry
- Dealing with body fluids safely
- Care with needles (sharps)

Infectious diseases in carers can be readily transmitted to susceptible clients. Patients' health, hygiene and immunisations, e.g. Hep B & influenza, are all important.

#### Personal protective equipment

Your carer should wear an apron and gloves while performing intimate care for you. If an MDRO is present the carer should wear a long sleeved gown for prolonged and intimate care such as turns, bladder or bowel management.

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*3. Rhinehart, E. & McGoldrick, M (2006) Infection Control in Home Care and Hospice London, Jones and Bartlett.*

*4. HSE/HPSC (2009). Standard and Transmission-based Precautions. Draft consultation document, November 2009. www.hpsc.ie Local contact*

**By Catherine O'Neill, Infection Prevention & Control Nurse at the NRH**





## PARA-CARRIAGE DRIVING DAY IN WICKLOW

### Emma Golding hosts a para-carriage driving day for anyone interested in taking up the sport

Emma Golding is a passionate para-equestrian carriage driver and has achieved a massive amount of success since she started carriage driving at the age of 21.

Emma (34) sustained a T5 spinal cord injury in 2001 while she was horse riding in Necarne Castle near Enniskillen. Having dreamed her whole life of pursuing equine studies, her injury came as a huge shock but she never gave up her dream of pursuing horse riding.

She has now competed in five para-world championships over the last 10 years and achieved massive success along the way. She is also the only carriage driver in a wheelchair in Ireland that competes in the wheel driving trials, with her competitors all being able-bodied athletes.

Emma explained: "It's the same in all countries, the disabled drivers compete on the national levels against able bodied drivers. You do get various compensations to try and even the playing field a bit."

In addition, last year, Emma won the novice pony points league for the first time ever, against her able bodied counterparts. "I was really delighted. It was the biggest class in the league. It was a good way to end the season last year."



On April 8 this year, Emma held a 'Try Carriage Driving' day in Spruce Lodge Equestrian Centre, Co Wicklow and invited anyone interested in trying carriage driving to come along on the day.

It was a great day and Emma had a great group turn up eager to take up carriage driving.

Emma first gave a talk about what the day would entail, then she gave a demonstration on how to carriage drive, and then she helped everyone who came along to try it out.



"It was a great day and I was delighted that so many people turned up. I would encourage anyone thinking of taking up carriage driving to give it a try."

If you would like to get involved with carriage driving then you can contact Emma via her Facebook page [www.facebook.com/EmmaGoldingParaCarriageDriver/](https://www.facebook.com/EmmaGoldingParaCarriageDriver/) or call her on 0860282826.

**“ I would encourage anyone thinking of taking up carriage driving to give it a try ”**







## ACCESSIBLE HOLIDAY IN BORDEAUX

### Edmund Stammers took a trip to Bordeaux and was impressed with the accessibility of the city

In March this year, having decided at fairly short notice to take a quick break, Bordeaux came to mind immediately due to the lovely spring climate, culture, food and, it goes without saying, wine.

Typically, the dates we chose to fly were days when there were no direct flights so we flew with Cityjet from Dublin to Paris, and then flew with Air France from Paris to Bordeaux.

Check in at Dublin was faultless, as was boarding. Luckily we had a bit of time between flights as the assistance at Paris was a long time coming to take me off the plane. Eventually we were hustled through the airport, fast tracked through passport control and, because of the delay, boarded last onto our connecting flight.

Shortly, over an hour later we landed in Bordeaux. From there we were given every assistance from the aircraft seat all the way through to our transport outside.

Transfer to our hotel in the city centre was pre-booked and our driver was waiting in the arrivals area. Whilst of no great significance, he was obviously only

used to the folding type of wheelchair, and my Quickie was a bit of a mystery to him.

After some typically Gallic flair, humming and blowing he managed to get everything into the car.

As a note on this issue, I don't like being crammed in, so I had booked a vehicle suitable for four passengers, four medium suitcases and a wheelchair. Had we been a party of four it would, to say the least, have been interesting!

It was then a fairly short 30 minute transfer from the airport to the city.

When we arrived at the hotel, our driver had to use an intercom to gain access and get us in. It was interesting to note the number of wheelchairs and scooters being used in and around the hotel. As it was a short break, we decided to spoil ourselves and we stayed at Le Grand Hotel, Bordeaux (part of the IHG group).

At first glance the place looked impenetrable with a 150mm step up from the square followed by steep steps up to the entrance. However, a doorman very

quickly appeared with a folding ramp and showed me a discreet entrance with a lift leading directly to reception.

Check-in was quick and easy, especially as we had been given a room upgrade. Unfortunately, the bathroom in our room wasn't quite as accessible as I'd hoped. I couldn't get the wheelchair through the door from the bedroom so I had to go around through our sitting room to the other door.

The suite, however, was superb, with fabulous views across to the Opera House.

If you are staying in the city centre of Bordeaux it is very easy to get around. The city centre is, in the main, pedestrianized and kerbless which I found great.

Most of the main cultural and heritage interest is within 10 or 15 minutes stroll.

There were no issues with getting the wheelchair anywhere. There is a modern, efficient tram throughout the main areas and every carriage is accessible.





**“ Bordeaux really is a city to relax and enjoy yourself. ”**

In the outlying parts of the city there is a network of small buses and again, each has a capacity for wheelchairs.

In addition, I was very impressed that within every 100 metres of the city there is an accessible public toilet.

Whilst engaged in a bit of retail therapy, I noticed that a good number of shops had a step or two at the entrance. Most of the shops, however, had a button to press to get assisted access. The same applied to the only museum we found time to visit –

the Museum of Aquitaine. The staff, whilst not speaking any English, were eager to help.

Bordeaux is of course known for its cuisine and wine. There are just over 1800 restaurants in the city catering for just about every taste.

We were tired on our first evening and just wandered across the square to the first hostelry we found (sacrilege, I know, but Italian and we dined on antipasto, followed by veal and a couple of bottles of excellent Chianti for less than €100 including a tip).

Subsequently, the next day, we had our lunch at a family run oyster restaurant where we sat outside and enjoyed a bottle of good white Bordeaux with our food. This little brasserie was lovely where everyone seemed to know each other and no English was spoken.

We pushed the boat out on our last evening and dined at Le Noailles on allees de Tourny. It was classic French cuisine which included Aquitaine caviar, foie gras and scallops with a wine list to match. It all came in at the same price of a very average meal in Ireland so we were delighted.

Bordeaux really is a city to relax and enjoy yourself.

Don't set yourself an agenda, just wander wherever takes your fancy. Every corner and alleyway holds something new.

We sat and had a breakfast of fresh pastries with hot chocolate / lemon tea in the main square, and fed the sparrows while watching the world go around. We

also found a little corner bar and spent an hour (with a beer) looking at the architecture; wandered in and out of churches and antique shops; and sat with a bottle of water and listened to a virtuoso violinist playing for herself (and anyone who wanted to listen).

We only had one incident with the wheelchair while we were there. In a part of the old city, a builders van was blocking a drop kerb. Whilst it didn't matter to me, a passing pedestrian took objection and gave him a dressing down that surpassed my level of French!

We did use one taxi within the city. The driver was extremely helpful (although, in typical French fashion, it was not until we got out that it became apparent that his English was better than my French). He also made sure that the wheelchair access at the Museum of Aquitaine was ready for us. Just one thing to note, be aware that French taxi meters move a lot faster than ours do!

Our return journey was pretty much the same as outbound, with very poor assistance at Paris. Although this time, my long-suffering companion got a chance to look at the goodies in the beautician section of the shops while we waited. We also enjoyed a surprisingly good meal at the airport.

I know that at times we criticise them, but, to be honest, OCS at Dublin Airport is about the best in the world.

Now to the main question - will we go back? The answer is yes, I can't wait until October!!



### Ed's Tips

1. There are direct flights from Dublin to Bordeaux, but not daily.
2. Very little English is spoken away from the main city centre, including in top restaurants, major hotels, and some shops, so some French is very useful.
3. In the summer Bordeaux is very hot and is a holiday destination for French people. When I talked about arranging a return visit we were recommended to stick with spring or autumn.
4. Later this year there will be a fast train service from Paris to Bordeaux, taking just an hour. We're thinking about that for our next trip.



## SII'S SUMMER RAFFLE IS BACK!

**This month we are launching our second annual SII Summer Raffle! It's so easy to take part and once again we have €8,000 worth of prizes to give away that you along with friends, family and colleagues could win.**

### How to enter...

You will receive two books of 6 tickets with your Spinal News magazine and each ticket costs €5 but you can purchase a full book for just €25, meaning that one ticket is completely free! Just remember to post back the books using the freepost envelope provided and fill in the donation slip.

### Prizes

There are lots of great prizes to be won in this year's raffle, and thanks to our amazing sponsors Windsor Motor Group, all proceeds will go towards supporting people living with a spinal cord injury and their families.

The cash prizes include:

- 1st prize €5,000
- 2nd prize €2,000
- 3rd prize €1,000

We also have a fantastic Top Seller's prize of €500 to give away to whoever has sold the most tickets by the end of the closing date. Everyone will start with two books but you can request more by emailing [events@spinalinjuries.ie](mailto:events@spinalinjuries.ie) or calling us on 01 2355 317.



### Early Bird Prize

If you send your ticket stubs back by July 28, we'll enter your name into an extra draw for a chance to win a BBQTex with a stylish Flogas Gaslight cylinder worth €250 in total. (See below) Perfect for the summer months!

## FLOGAS COMPETITION BBQTEX AND GASLIGHT CYLINDER

Flogas is delighted to support Spinal Injuries Ireland with its Summer Raffle by donating a BBQTex and one of its stylish and lightweight Flogas Gaslight cylinders to enjoy over the summer months.

The new, compact, portable BBQTex is proving very popular as it can be used at home or put in the car for a day away so it's ideal for camping and caravanning. It is also very easy to assemble and has sleek split cast iron cooking grills.

Not only are Flogas Gaslight cylinders about half the weight of the traditional steel models, the semi-translucent exterior allows you to see exactly how much gas you have left. No more running out of gas when your local shop is closed! The cylinders are as safe as steel and won't leave rust marks on patios or decks. They fit all leading brands of LPG appliances, so they're ideal for barbeques and patio heaters as well as caravans, campervans and motor homes.

For more information see [www.flogas.ie](http://www.flogas.ie)





# Colour MeFriday 2017

## CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

We would love you to get involved in our campaign this year

SII's national flag day Colour Me Friday is back on the 6th October 2017 and this year we plan on making it bigger and better than ever.

We have collections taking place around the country and we need Team Captains that will help to coordinate local collections.

If you can help in any way with the following collections please contact us on the details below or check out [www.spinalinjuries.ie/colourme](http://www.spinalinjuries.ie/colourme) for more information.

### DUBLIN

- Frascati Shopping Centre, Blackrock. Dates: Thursday, Friday and Saturday 5th-7th October
- B&Q at Liffey Valley Retail Park: Friday 6th October
- Blanchardstown Shopping Centre: Friday 6th October
- Liffey Valley Shopping Centre: Saturday 7th October
- Stephen's Green Shopping Centre: Friday 6th and Saturday 7th October
- Dundrum Town Centre: Saturday 7th October

### CORK

- Mahon Point Shopping Centre: Friday 6th October
- Merchants Quay Shopping Centre: Tuesday 3rd October

### LIMERICK

- Crescent Shopping Centre: Saturday 7th October
- Parkway Shopping Centre: Friday 6th October

### GALWAY

- Eyre Square Shopping Centre: Saturday 7th October

### WATERFORD

- City Square Shopping Centre: Friday 6th and Saturday 7th October
- Dungarvan Shopping Centre: Friday 6th October

### KILKENNY

- MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre: Friday 6th October



### DUNDALK

- Longwalk Shopping Centre: Saturday 7th October

### DONEGAL

- Letterkenny Shopping Centre: Friday 6th October

You can organise your own event! If you are not from any of the above areas perhaps you would like to organise your own collection or event in your town. Our team would be happy to help you organise this! You can contact us for your Colour Me Friday pack on [events@spinalinjuries.ie](mailto:events@spinalinjuries.ie) or call us on 01 2355317 for more information.

All funds raised from Colour Me Friday will go towards running our Community Connect Team located nationwide.







## MARK NUGENT TAKING TO THE SEA

**After sustaining a T2 complete spinal cord injury last summer following a cycling accident, Mark Nugent took his first trip out to sea on a rib with Spinal Injuries Ireland while still a patient in the NRH.**

He had heard about the rib trips with SII and although he had a fear of boats, he decided to face his fear head first and in doing so he found a new love for the sea. "I don't like boats at all. I was petrified the first day we went out, I didn't know what to expect. The only boat I'd ever been on was a ferry and I would always get sea sick so it was my partner Jackie who pushed me to go for it."

Mark, from Maynooth, explained that one of his worries about going out on the boat trip was being hoisted onto the boat as he was unsure of how it would work.

"I was petrified of being hoisted onto a boat and being uncomfortable, but the guys were so well organised. They just used the hoist as you would normally, and got me onto the boat. They even had blankets for us when it got cold. The first night I went out I was freezing cold because I can't control my body temperature. It was a beautiful evening that night and I went out in short sleeves and a t-shirt and when we came back in I

had a jacket on me, a silver blanket and a blanket over my legs to keep me warm. Everything that we needed was on the boat.

"The whole thing was very well organised because a bus picked me up at the door of the hospital, dropped me off at the door on the way home, and we got fish and chips on the way home. The next time we went out we got sausage and chips on the way home, and ice-cream another time. It's just a brilliant trip."

For the first trip he went on, the rib took Mark, Jackie and two other patients around Dalkey Island and up the River Liffey.

"It just happened to be the nicest day of the year last year when I went out for the first time. It was a beautiful sunny day. It was great to get out on a Tuesday evening from the hospital. At the time, because I was still a patient, I wasn't used to leaving the hospital. I wasn't even going home at weekends at that stage. So



**“ It was one of those things that I will always remember as being brilliant ”**





to be able to get out of the hospital environment and to have a bit of a break from the hospital setting was just brilliant.”

Mark explained that on both of the trips he did with Spinal Injuries Ireland, he travelled up the River Liffey.

“On one of the trips we went as far up as the Four Courts, and on the other one we went up as far as O’Connell Bridge. We also stopped off for coffee and tea. Then on the boat trip on the way back we stopped off at the Poolbeg Yacht Club and it was the nicest cup of tea and a snack bar that you will get!

“To go up the Liffey and see Dublin in a completely different way, in a way that you’ve never seen it before in your life, is just amazing. I don’t like boats, I don’t like them at all, but this trip was different. Even to go from Dun Laoghaire, across Dublin Bay and up the Liffey, it’s just a rush.

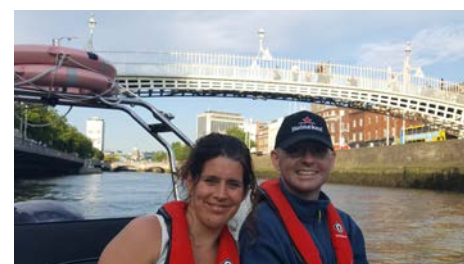
“We were coming back one night and we were bouncing over the waves, and I was holding on for dear life but the two guys that were with me, they were just loving it!”

Mark explained that he would highly recommend heading out on the rib with

SII and said it is something everyone should try to experience

“It was one of those things that I will always remember as being brilliant, and the photographs I got were amazing too. I got loads of photographs going out on the boat and going up the Liffey. The rib trips were one of the highlights of last year. It’s definitely up there with one of the best two things I did while I was in Dun Laoghaire and I’d highly recommend to anyone thinking of doing it, to go for it.”

**If you would like to take part in a SII rib trip over the summer months contact [jennifer@spinalinjuries.ie](mailto:jennifer@spinalinjuries.ie) or call the Spinal Injuries Ireland office on 01 2355317.**



**“ The only boat I’d ever been on was a ferry ”**





## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER

**Based in the west of Ireland, Sorchá Silke is a Community Liaison Officer with Spinal Injuries Ireland - By Sorchá Silke**

As the Community Liaison Officer for region 5, I visit people in the counties of Galway, Mayo & Donegal.

Currently, I work Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but I try and provide a flexible service and visit people on Mondays and Fridays if it is the only suitable day for people to see me. My car is my office and I spend much of my day driving between visits.

As a Community Liaison Officer, it is a privilege to work with service users and their families and to help service users identify goals that are important to them, address various issues and work together in partnership to realise their future plans and aspirations. Those plans may include returning to employment and education, taking up a new hobby or a sport, joining a community group, learning how to drive or just taking a holiday.

Reaching those goals sometimes involves addressing barriers such as lack of information, queries on entitlements, queries on career opportunities, accessing counselling support and addressing issues including bladder, bowel and pain.

I try to address all of these issues in many different ways but one way which has proved quite beneficial is through the use of expert speakers at the quarterly regional meetings that are organised in each county.

I hope through my visits and the relationships I have built with our service users and their families that they are confident that they can approach me with any issues or goals that they may have and that I will do my best to listen and support them.

I always stress that no issue is too small and no goal is too large to surmount. Sometimes people just want a chat and that is always a pleasure too.

My job brings me into contact with lots of different people, issues and aspirations, giving me lots of scope to learn and develop as a worker.

Each day is a reminder of the strength and resilience innate in each of us. I am honoured to be welcomed by service users and their families into their homes on a daily basis and fortunate to be trusted to work with them to fulfil their true potential.

For all those service users and their families I have met thus far it has been a pleasure and to those I hope to meet in the future, I am very much looking forward to it. My door is always open. Sorchá can be contacted via email – [sorchá@spinalinjuries.ie](mailto:sorchá@spinalinjuries.ie) or on her mobile – 0858584246.

## GETTING ACTIVE IN DONEGAL!

**A sports event will be held in Donegal in July for people with all levels of mobility**

An inclusive sports event for people with a range of disabilities will take place in the Aura Leisure Centre in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal on July 15.

The aim of the day is to host a fully inclusive event for people living with disabilities and those without disabilities, so that they can come together for a family day out. The event will also be a fundraising event for the No Barriers Foundation, a charity that aims to raise €150,000 by the end of 2017 to purchase an EKSO exoskeleton to help people living with limited mobility particularly in the north and west of Ireland.

The charity also hopes to create a fitness centre which can cater for those with disabilities but also the general public/kids/elderly so that people can exercise side by side while being supervised by a trained professional.

In conjunction with this centre, the charity want to have an EKSO exoskeleton available for public use to allow wheelchair users, ranging from those with mild muscle weakness to those with severe spinal cord injuries, to walk again whilst using the machine.

The fundraising sports day, which will take place on July 15, will run from 2pm to 6pm.

There will be wheelchair basketball on the day, along with wheelchair hurling, Boccia, athletics, football for all, badminton, and a fun walk for people of different mobilities. There will also be wheelchair accessible toilets and changing areas including a hoist and changing table if required on the day.

Refreshments and some light entertainment will be available on the day too.

Sonia McGarvey, an Occupational Therapist and mother to Noirin McGarvey who has a spinal cord injury, said she is really looking forward to the day.

Sonia, who is organising the sports day, said: "The ethos will very much be to broaden horizons and push boundaries as well as raising much needed funds to purchase an exoskeleton. We look forward to seeing everyone on the day."

For more information on the sports event email [mccgarveysonia@gmail.com](mailto:mccgarveysonia@gmail.com)





## SIIS PEER SUPPORT SERVICE

### Paul Fitzhenry was diagnosed with Guillain-Barre Syndrome last year but found great support in SIIs Peer Mentor Support programme

In August 2016, Paul Fitzhenry (52) developed a spinal cord injury from a rare auto immune disease called Guillain-Barre syndrome.

Paul, who lives in Co. Clare and is married with children, explained that his initial onset began with a tingling sensation in his left foot and within two weeks it developed into both of his feet and calves. As the weeks progressed and Paul began to notice further deterioration he decided to go to hospital in mid-October and it was there that he was told he had Guillain-Barre syndrome.

While in hospital, Paul's condition deteriorated to the point where the numbness he was experiencing spread up from his legs to the left and right side of his body. It got to a point at one stage where he couldn't breathe and his arms and legs were paralysed.

"Sensory-wise I lost a lot. My face dropped, I had numbness in my tongue and I had constantly watering eyes. All my muscle structure inside my chest wall and my stomach just dropped down and it gave me this wonderful belly at the front. I have to work hard to bring all of that back up again. I have months of exercise ahead of me but thankfully, motor-wise I lost nothing."

Since October 2016, Paul has been an in-patient in University Hospital Limerick, Mid-Western Regional Hospital in Ennis, and more recently at the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) in Dun Laoghaire.

While a patient at the NRH, Paul met Glenn Gray from Spinal Injuries Ireland (SII) who regularly visits the hospital wards to tell people about the help they can receive from SII.



Glenn advised Paul that he could take part in the Monday night Peer Support group in the NRH.

Paul began attending the Monday night Peer Support group where he met other patients who also had Guillain-Barre syndrome along with other spinal cord injuries.

"It was great when I went to the first peer support meeting. I met a few of the other patients with spinal cord injuries and we just chatted and swapped stories. We all had different things going on but it was great to chat."

Paul met his peer support mentor, Sandra Loftus, a few weeks later at one of the Peer Support group meetings in the NRH. Sandra also suffers from Guillain-Barre syndrome and she came in to give a talk and meet Paul.

"Sandra's Guillain-Barre attacked her motor-neurone system and I'm glad I lost sensory and not motor because to me her story is far more difficult than mine. I count my blessings for everything I have. She came along and she had a different angle on what it could've been like for me but thankfully it wasn't. I have huge admiration for her because you'd never know she had Guillain-Barre. She walks normally, she talks normally, she's fine, not a bother. Whereas if I talk for too long I drop into a lisp and I have to pull my face back in. But I have huge admiration for what she went through and where she is now."

"Having Guillain-Barre is a big thing and it's something you have for life so to know that I have Glenn and Sandra from SII to go to for support is great. It really is so important. From my point of view, I know absolutely nothing about Guillain-Barre so to know that I can pick up the phone or drop SII an email about it is priceless. It's a great comfort to be able to pick up the phone and say 'This is going on in my world, can you help me?'"

"It may not even be a medical issue. It may be a work-related problem or I might want to sort out starting a course or something. To know that you have somebody to talk to that has been there, done it, and got the t-shirt, is huge. Some people prefer to talk to a priest but to know that there's somebody in the same boat as you is amazing. And they can throw the positivity on something that you can't see the positivity on. To me, that is massive."

Paul was discharged from the NRH on Thursday 23rd February 2017 and he said he is looking forward to getting back to family life and work life again following his four month battle in hospital with Guillain-Barre syndrome.





## BAGIT 2017

SII would like to thank the amazing BagIT charity designer handbag auction committee for all their hard work. An amazing €9,000 was raised on the day in aid of SII.



## SPRING LUNCH

The Spring Lunch, which took place at the Intercontinental Hotel, Dublin on May 27, raised a massive €40,000 for SII. Massive thanks to the committee members and all who attended on the day for their great support.





## VHI WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON

Well done to all our amazing volunteers who trained hard for weeks in advance of the race and who raised funds for SII. It was a great day!



## The Irish Specialists in Electric Adjustable Beds

Excellent for people with spinal cord injuries, easy to adjust for transferring, and allows for a great night's sleep.



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## Are your self-limiting beliefs holding you back?

When I visit my doctor for a routine check up, she checks my blood pressure, listens to my chest and perhaps will take some blood tests. When I met up with my personal trainer initially he started by measuring my resting heart rate, BMI and weight to establish my level of fitness.

So, what about 'mental fitness'? Are you mentally fit?

You do not have to be physically able in order to be mentally fit. In fact, many people would say that their mental fitness actually increased following a serious physical illness or accident.

The three main areas of mental fitness are;

- Self-motivation and confidence
- Self-discipline and habits
- Self-resilience

For the purposes of this article I am going to focus on self-resilience.

Resilience is your ability to recover quickly from setback and disappointment.

Resilience is like any other fitness in that you need to practice it regularly so that it is there when you need it.

For all of you as service users of Spinal Injuries Ireland, each one of you in your own personal and individual way have faced life trauma, you have had to make significant lifestyle adjustments.

While there are many things that you can no longer do, you are adjusting to your life. You get up every day, you are adapting.

Each one of you is resilient.

### Self-limiting beliefs

There are certain things that we can all look at to help us get back into the driving seat of our own lives even more.

One major factor, which we all have to some degree, is self-limiting beliefs.

We all have self-limiting beliefs; these connect us with the world around us. We get these from a number of sources, our parents, our role models, our education, our culture, organization or group, our experience, our pain memory and our emerging self-awareness.

The problem with these self-limiting beliefs, however, is that we often are not aware of their presence and therefore fail to recognise them for what they are – Roadblocks that hold us back!

Here are some examples:

- I'm not the type to be self-motivated
- I'm a procrastinator
- I should be better able to cope/manage my pain
- I must be doing something wrong
- I can't get organised
- I'm not confident enough

For each belief, you subconsciously create mental rules that govern your behavior.

To gain a better understanding of who you are, and to fully reclaim your full power again, it is helpful to start by eliminating the four things that you are not:

- Your past circumstances  
(Try recalling 1-3 things that have held you back until today)
- Your present circumstances  
(Name 1-3 things that are holding you up right now)
- Other people's opinions  
(Identify 1-3 limiting beliefs that you have accepted from someone else)
- Your own inner critic  
(List 1-3 things that you often tell yourself, which are limiting in essence)

Many of us who experience chronic pain can relate to an experience or event, which has triggered our pain. This is known as 'Pain memory.' We believe that if we do this again it will almost certainly bring on a 'flare-up' of our pain.

### Does this resonate with you?

The idea here is not to make you feel bad; the purpose here is to increase your awareness.

There are times when our limiting beliefs keep us from harm and are worth keeping, however many of us err on the side of perceived safety.

Next time the event or experience presents itself, just see what happens first. Is it the thought: 'I can't, just in case'?

What if you changed that thought to something like: 'I'm doing this and I'm really going to enjoy it'!

Henry Ford, the great motor industrialist once said: 'Whether you believe you can or whether you believe you cannot, you are right.'

We act in accordance with our beliefs. We defend them, so we need to ensure our beliefs serve our best interests.

### SCI research

A research study was carried out in 2014 in the States to find out how people with spinal cord injuries (SCI) define resilience and what factors contribute to their resilience.

They found that one novel theme emerged, a large cohort of the participants had a huge desire to become a role model or inspire others.

Think of how a tiny plant shoot manages to grow through concrete layers, this is resilience.

However the resilience within you is no less amazing, for in spite of all the odds and everything that you have gone through - you are here right now, reading my article, still wanting to know more.

I ask each one of you to believe your health and your life can be better. It doesn't happen overnight, but it can and will happen.

Have you ever walked into a dark room while still wearing sunglasses?

You can't see anything at first and fumble around trying to figure out where you are. This is the same as embracing your world.

Your vision becomes so dark at times that you may miss all of the wonderful things right there before you.

Take my challenge now, lift those shades off, have a good look around and embrace life!



Eileen Hopkins is a Pain Management Coach and a Registered General & Sick Children's Nurse. She holds a Diploma in Personal & Business Coaching and a QQI Level 6 Award in Life & Workplace Coaching. For more information on Eileen see [www.saolcoaching.com](http://www.saolcoaching.com)



# Meet BRAD

- Gregarious 52 year old, fun loving gentleman
- Media technology consultant
- Enjoys DJing with vinyl and can “scratch just like Grandmaster Flash”

“I can boogie with the best of them!”



Brad Francis  
SpeediCath® Compact Set User

## BRAD'S LIFE CHANGED AT 29...

“I was 29, happily married, great career – incredibly happy. And then my life changed. I went from being an independent, fun loving guy – to all of a sudden being **vulnerable and needing help**.”

## AND THEN HE FOUND SPEEDICATH COMPACT AT AN EXHIBITION...

“Oh my god – it's fantastic!

The first thing I noticed is they came in this compact little box – usually my catheters come in great big boxes.”

For more information on our SpeediCath range and other continence solutions -

Go to [www.coloplast.ie/spinalnews](http://www.coloplast.ie/spinalnews) - where you can find the right one for you and request a free sample. Alternatively please call us on **1800 409 502** where you can speak to one of our advisors.

## BRAD TOOK A WHILE TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE CONCEPT OF ISC...

“I found previous catheters messy and difficult to use – so I chose not to catheterise at all. I would frequently have episodes where I would wet myself. Social occasions, parties.”

**It was really pretty embarrassing.**

## BRAD NOW FEELS THAT SPEEDICATH COMPACT HAS CHANGED HIS LIFE FOR THE BETTER...

“It really promotes confidence.

The freedom to catheterise while out at a bar, or a friend's house, or at home is amazing!”

Visit us on





## Regional meetings have been running in 13 different locations around the country for the past few years

The purpose of the SII regional meetings is for our clients to come together and listen to a speaker on a topic of interest and have the opportunity to chat to each other afterwards in a relaxed and informal environment.

For the remainder of 2017, we will also continue to hold more informal, social meet ups where the idea is just to meet and chat, with maybe a small activity thrown in for good measure.

The schedule for the regional meetings and social meet ups for the remainder of 2017 is as follows:

### SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 5th Donegal 2-4pm, (IWA Letterkenny)

Tuesday 12th Galway, 7-9pm, (The Westwood Hotel)

Wednesday 13th Wexford Time TBC (Maldron Hotel)

Thursday 14th Waterford Time TBC (Viking hotel)

Tuesday 19th September Time TBC (Dublin SII Resource Centre)

Tuesday 19th Mayo, 6.30 – 8.30pm, TBC

Wednesday 20th Cork 1-3pm (Nemo Rangers)

Wednesday 20th Louth Time TBC (Crown Plaza)

Tuesday 26th Kerry 2-4pm (Killarney TBC)

Thursday 28th Limerick 11am -1pm (IWA Roxboro Limerick)

Friday 29th Carrick on Shannon, Time TBC (Landmark hotel)

### OCTOBER

Friday 6th 1:30pm-3:30pm (Portlaoise National Learning Network)

### NOVEMBER

Tuesday 28th Kerry 6-8pm (Tralee Rose hotel)

Tuesday 28th 2-4pm, (IWA Letterkenny)

### DECEMBER

Tuesday 5th Wexford Time TBC (Maldron Hotel)

Tuesday 5th Galway, 7-9pm, (The Westwood Hotel)

Thursday 6th Waterford Time TBC (Viking hotel)

Wednesday 6th Cork 6-8pm (Nemo Rangers)

Thursday 7th Limerick 6-8pm (Maldron Hotel Limerick)

Friday 8th Portlaoise 1:30pm-3:30pm (Portlaoise National Learning Network)

Tuesday 12th Mayo, 6.30 – 8.30pm, TBC

Tuesday 12th Time TBC (Dublin SII Resource Centre)

Wednesday 13th Louth Time TBC (Crown Plaza)

Friday 15th Carrick on Shannon, Time TBC (Landmark hotel)

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