

SPINAL NEWS

SUMMER 2025



**Our Powerboat Niamh,
back on the water and ready to go!**

COLOPLAST NURSE LED CLINIC

With our Specialist Nurse Debbie



Could you benefit from our

FREE Intermittent Self Catheterisation (ISC) reviews?

- ? Have you been on antibiotics for a UTI more than twice in the past 12 months?
- ? Do you suffer with irritation or pain around the point of insertion?
- ? Do you suffer with increased frequency, urgency and/or urinary incontinence?

To arrange your **clinic appointment** on the **first Tuesday of every month in Dun Laoghaire** or to arrange a **virtual consultation (phone or online)** with our experienced nurse, please contact our clinical coordinator:

Phone: 01 9190192 or Email: nurseteam@coloplast.com

Please contact us to enquire about regional clinics in Drogheda, Cork and Waterford

Clinic Location:

G3 The Pottery, Bakers Point, Pottery Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin





WELCOME

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Welcome to our summer edition of Spinal News

What fabulous weather we are getting now, I hope you are all enjoying it.

Our activities programme has commenced for 2025 by launching our powerboat Niamh in Dun Laoghaire. Trips on this fully accessible boat are available to any SII member and their families who would like a trip up the Liffey or around Dalkey Island with fish & chips afterwards. Just call 016532180 or email info@spinalinjuries.ie. In fact, for any service or programme listed in this magazine please use these contact details to find out more.

We all know that continuous education for people with a spinal cord injury is essential. Last year SII made videos of all the NRH educational booklets presented by NRH staff and they are permanently available on both www.spinalinjuries.ie and www.nrh.ie. This year the NRH has launched a new neurogenic bowel video presented by Advanced Nurse Practitioner Paula Keane. You can read all about this new initiative on Page 6.

Our legal partners have all given us advice on various related legal subjects and you can read them throughout the magazine or do contact them directly if you need further advice.

Finally, as you are all aware we are only 40% funded by the state and need to fundraise €1m annually to continue providing services. There are plenty of ways you can get involved by attending some of our events or taking part in our exciting Cambodia challenge and yet again if you would like further information please contact us.

We are always here for you so please do not hesitate to contact us no matter how small the issue.

Here's hoping the sun keeps shining for the remainder of the summer!

Best wishes

Fiona Bolger CEO

STRATEGY 2025 - 2030



Vision

To provide on-going personalised support services for people with a spinal cord injury, their families and carers, empowering them all to live independent and fulfilling lives at home, for as long as they need us.



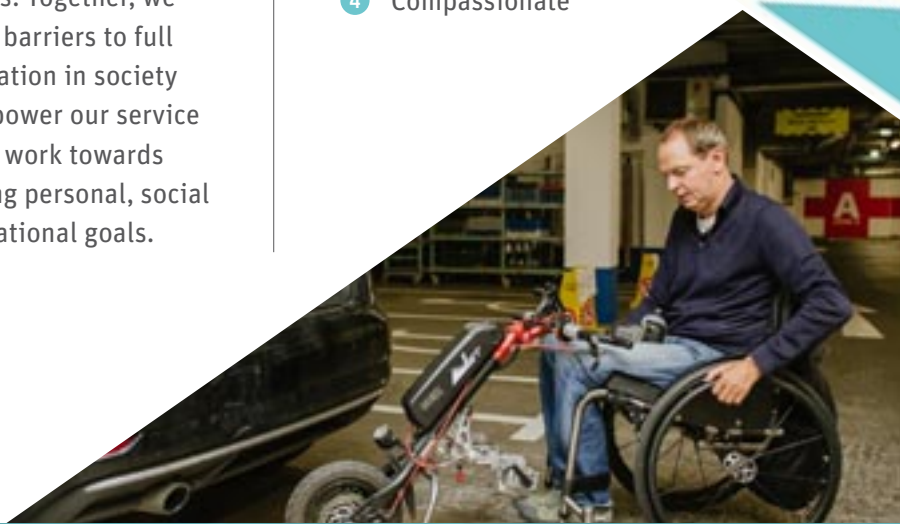
Mission

Our mission is to engage with people with a spinal cord injury, along with their family members. Together, we address barriers to full participation in society and empower our service users to work towards achieving personal, social and vocational goals.



Our Values

- 1 Empowering
- 2 Reliable
- 3 Informed
- 4 Compassionate



Context Key components

01

HSE & NRH
Patient Pathway

Discharge Home

Community



**Spinal Cord
System of Care**

02

Research



**Evidence
Based**

03

Demographics



**Age, Gender &
Location Profile**

04

HSE &
Fundraising



Funding

Strategic Objectives

To provide **quality and relevant support**, information and advice meeting the needs of people with a SCI, their families and carers, professionals and the wider community.

To communicate effectively with stakeholders, to **raise awareness** and to **improve public awareness** of SCI and to advocate for the rights of those with a SCI, their families and carers.

To present **relevant training and education** services to people with a SCI, their families, carers and healthcare professionals.

To **support people** with a SCI by **raising the funds** necessary to ensure the funding requirements and long-term sustainability of SII.

To **operate an innovative progressive organisation** which meets with all regulatory requirements in the areas of financial management, human resources and governance.

Vision 2030

The Four Pillars of Spinal Injuries Ireland

Engagement & Development

- Service Provision
- Programme development
- Research

Commercial & Events

- Fundraising
- Digitalisation
- Communications

Governance

- Finance
- Legal
- Business Operations
- Compliance

Purpose & Impact

- Why do you believe you can make a difference?
- Who do you want to create impact for?
- What do you want to achieve?
- How will you achieve it?
- How will you measure it?

NRH NEUROGENIC BOWEL EDUCATION

Neurogenic bowel care is one of those topics that people don't want to talk about - but for people living with spinal cord injuries, it's a daily reality. Managing bowel and bladder function is often at the forefront of concerns, impacting both physical health and overall quality of life.

Recognising this, the **National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH)** has launched a **new patient-focused video** to help individuals with spinal cord injuries navigate neurogenic bowel care. The video provides practical guidance, aiming to reduce discomfort and prevent complications, while also offering reassurance that these challenges can be managed effectively.

A special shout-out to **Paula Keane, Advanced Nurse Practitioner**, who was one of the main people behind the development of this video. Many of our service users will know Paula for her unwavering dedication and expertise, and this resource is the result of years of work and commitment to improving care for those with spinal cord injuries.

John Lynch, Programme Manager of the Spinal Cord System of Care at the NRH, spoke about the newly launched Neurogenic Bowel Care video, highlighting its importance for those living with spinal cord injuries.

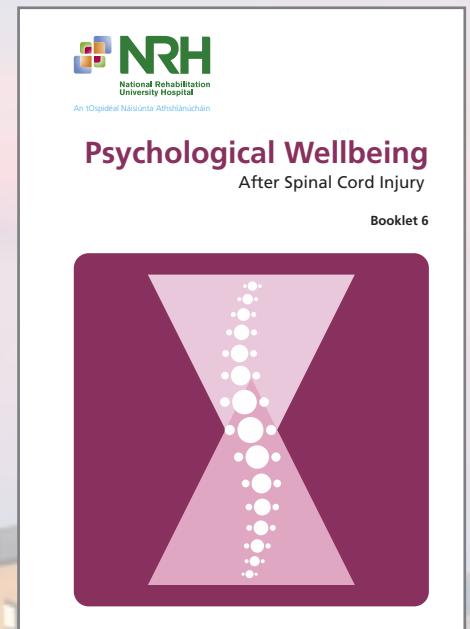
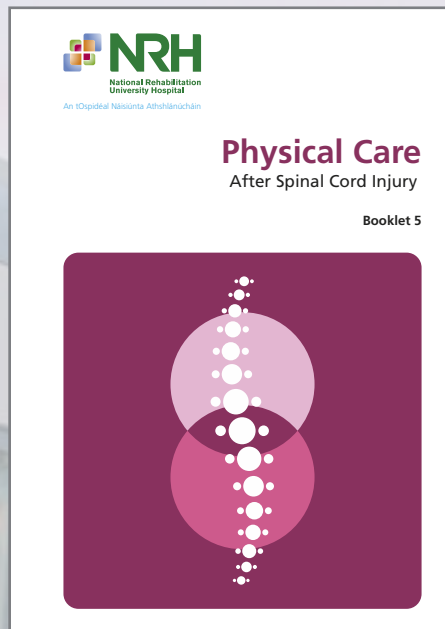
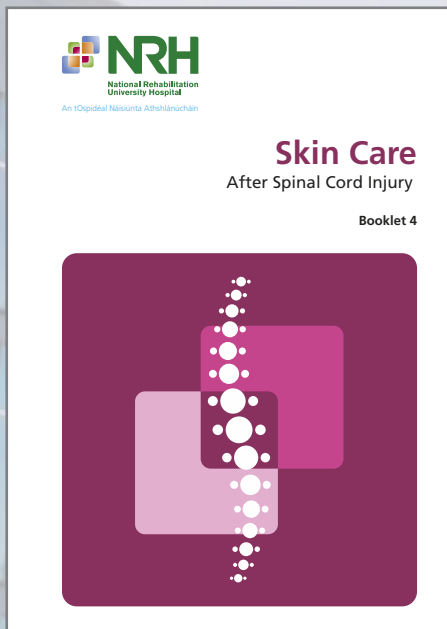
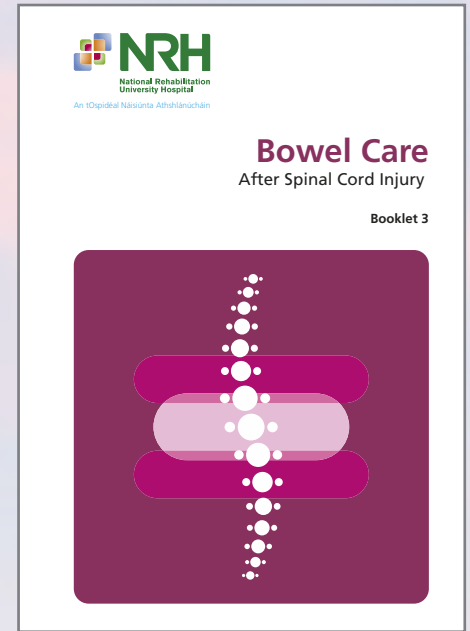
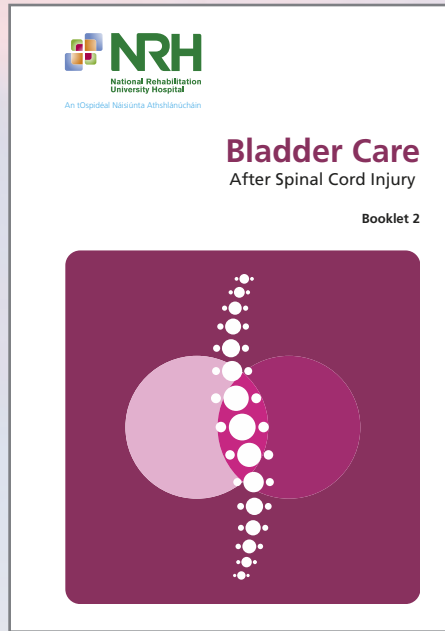
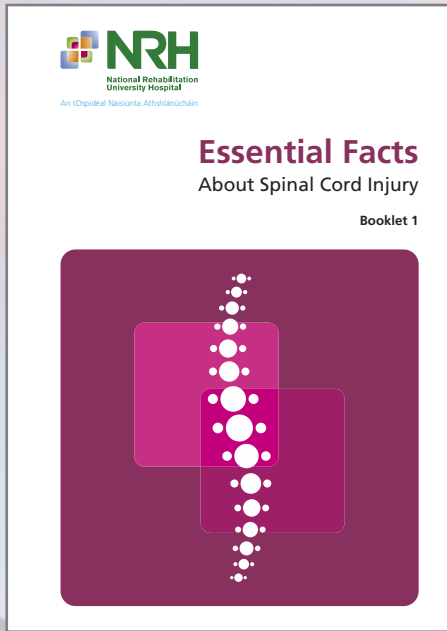
"Neurogenic bowel care remains one of the biggest factors impacting quality of life for people with spinal cord injury, significantly affecting independence and confidence. Understanding how this process works is critically important, and I'm delighted with this new video, which will make this information much more accessible and easier to understand. Knowledge is power, and supporting education is a crucial part of rehabilitation after a spinal cord injury. This video aims to empower people moving forward on their journey with spinal cord injury."

This initiative is part of a broader effort to ensure that people with spinal cord injuries, their families, and care providers have access to the right information and support. While it may not be the easiest subject to discuss, having the right tools and knowledge can make all the difference.

For more details, you can find the video on the NRH website here:
www.nrh.ie/patients-and-families/education-for-patients-families/

NRH EDUCATIONAL BOOKLETS AND VIDEOS

Last year Spinal Injuries Ireland produced online videos on the NRH Information Booklets. You can access these videos on www.spinalinjuries.ie or on the NRH website



NRH Group Session:

The NRH out-patient department team plan to hold a group for individuals with a diagnosis of Hereditary Spastic Paraparesis (HSP) on September 1st 2025.

If you have this diagnosis, and would like to obtain additional information please contact Myriam Hamel (Senior Occupational Therapist) at myriam.hamel@nrh.ie

GEMMA AND JACK



We're proud to showcase our colleagues Gemma Willis and Jack Shannon Cole, who continue to visit the NRH Spinal wards in their roles as peer support and advocacy officers. Their lived experience and compassionate presence offer invaluable encouragement and connection to patients on their own journeys. Their involvement is a powerful reminder of the impact that peer support can have in fostering support while an inpatient as well as preparation for moving home and living in community settings. [To link in with our peers contact info@spinalinjuries.ie](mailto:info@spinalinjuries.ie)

INCLUSION GAMES 2025 MALAHIDE YACHT CLUB

Spinal Injuries Ireland is proud to support the Watersports Inclusion Games, taking place in Malahide on the 5th and 6th of July. This award-winning event is designed to make watersports accessible to people of all abilities, offering activities like sailing, kayaking, paddleboarding, and powerboating.

Our dedicated volunteers will be on hand throughout the weekend, with our powerboat, helping to make the experience even more engaging on the water.

With a strong focus on inclusion, the Games provide a fantastic opportunity for people with limited mobility to try out new sports, connect with others, and enjoy the benefits of being out on the water. We're excited to be part of this incredible event and look forward to seeing many of you there!

You can find more details about the Watersports Inclusion Games at this link:
<https://www.sailing.ie/Events/Watersports-Inclusion-Games>.



POWERBOAT TRIPS



SII is expanding its powerboat trips from the Marina in Dún Laoghaire out into the Bay, now available on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, weather permitting. This initiative offers service users the chance to get out on the water and enjoy a safe and comfortable boating experience with the support of trained volunteers.

Our RIB is fully equipped to accommodate people living with SCI, including wheelchair users ensuring an enjoyable and accessible trip. Whether it's an opportunity to take in the coastal views or simply spend time on the water, these outings provide a unique experience in a supportive environment.

Spaces are available for community members who would like to join. For further details or to express interest, please contact our team at info@spinalinjuries.ie.

MONDELLO

Mondello Rally Experience is back! We're offering two more dates to our 2025 programme for people to experience the adrenaline rush of the rally circuit: July 28th.

Held at Mondello Park, Ireland's premier motorsport venue, this unique event gives our service users the chance to take on the twists and turns of a professional rally track. While you won't be behind the wheel, you'll experience every thrilling moment as a passenger with a trained rally driver, ensuring maximum excitement in a safe, controlled environment.

And don't just take our word for it—past participants have hailed Mondello as a *“brilliant day out and an experience I didn't think I would ever have after my injury.”* Others have called it *“great fun”* and *“very much enjoyed”*

Beyond the track itself, it's the personal touches that make all the difference. As one attendee put it, “The personal touch of calling me made sure I was at the event—this is something to definitely look at for other service users.” The success of Mondello Park has inspired ideas for how we can continue pooling interests and bringing people together for more exciting experiences.



With our team on-site throughout the day, ensuring everything runs smoothly, this is a chance to push limits, feel the power of the track, and embrace the excitement of motorsport in a safe and welcoming environment. “A credit to the team at SII and the team at Mondello Park,” the event continues to prove that adventure is always within reach.

Availability is limited, and places have already been booked, but if you'd like more information, please contact one of our Outreach team at info@spinalinjuries.ie.

For more details on Mondello Park's motorsport events, you can check out their official website at: www.mondellopark.ie or email us at: info@spinalinjuries.ie

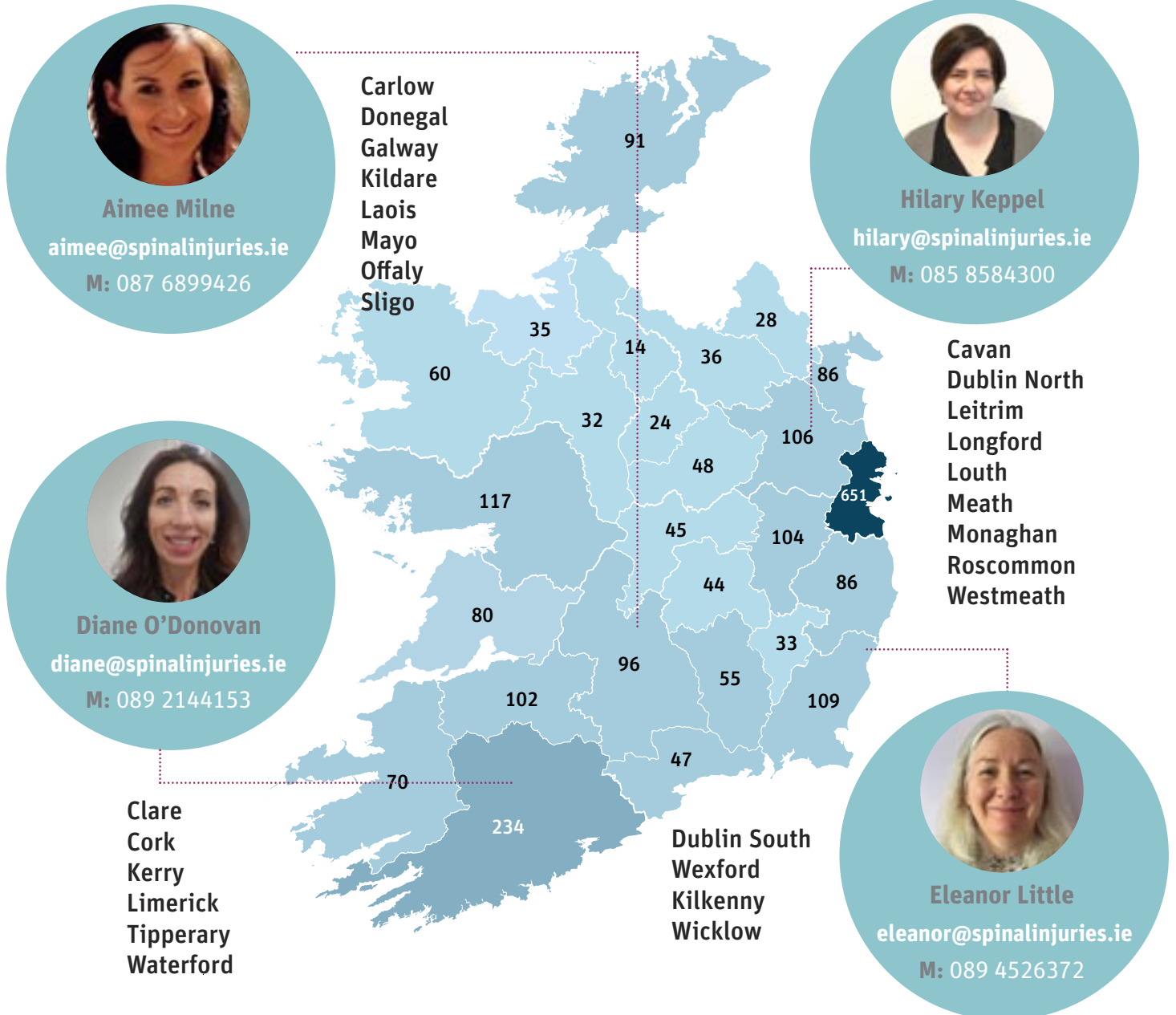
COMMUNITY OUTREACH AREAS FOR CONTACTING

NRH Outreach Team: Contact recent discharges within 4 weeks post discharge. Introduction & referral to COO regional area.



Head of Services
Bairbre O'Sullivan
Bairbre@spinalinjuries.ie

Service users per county as of 1st April 2025



Peer Officers services nationwide:



Gemma Willis
gemma@spinalinjuries.ie
M: 087 7915582



Jack Shannon-Cole
jack@spinalinjuries.ie
M: 089 431 9033

DONEGAL ROADSHOW – THURSDAY 24TH APRIL



Meet the Team!

Our Spring/Summer meetups have started! Come and have a cup of tea, meet our Community Outreach Team and have a chat with our nurse colleagues from Coloplast.

Donegal	24th April 12-2pm	Radisson Blu Letterkenny
Limerick	29th May 2pm-4pm	Castletroy
Mayo	5th June 12-2pm	Breaffy House Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Cavan	26th June 12-2pm	Hotel Kilmore, Cavan

Kilkenny	September 18th	12-2pm	Newpark Hotel
Cork Office	September 29th	12-2pm	SII Cork
Westmeath	October 16th	12-2pm	Location to be confirmed
Dublin Nth	November 13th	12-2pm	City North Hotel
Dublin St	December 20th	12-2pm	SII Resource Centre
Killarney	December 4th	12-2pm	Killarney Oaks



Care to Comfort was born from the idea of providing a service that not only allowed people to sleep in luxurious comfort in their own homes but to do so with as much ease and independence as possible.

Founded in 2011 by two lifelong friends, Yvonne Cassidy and Martin Deasy, Care to Comfort was established with the shared goal of reaching as many people as possible who were currently using or searching for a specialised bed for their home. They specifically wanted to give their customers the chance to see that there were more options available than a standard hospital bed and that having a bed that provides them with additional support didn't need to be at the cost of design and comfort. Yvonne and Martin are especially proud that their beds provide this support without the clinical coldness of their beds feeling like a piece of medical equipment.

After extensive individual careers, Yvonne, and Martin, took their combined experience of being in customer facing industries and strove to create a new company

that did more than provide a product. They recognised the importance of the customer experience and put this at the centre of the ethos of their company. They were adamant that their customers found the experience of buying one of their beds as straightforward and seamless as possible, it wasn't just their beds they wanted the customer to feel supported by but also by the team at Care to Comfort too.

Originally, Yvonne and Martin had envisioned their market to be primarily the elderly. However, as the company has grown, so too has their customer base. Many of their customers have conditions such as Parkinson's, MS, Motor Neuron, and spinal injuries. Care to Comfort's electric adjustable beds all have the function of 'head-raising' and 'feet-raising', as standard, and they also offer the extra function of 'vertical-lift' which in the situation where their clients need attention in the bed, the bed base is 'raised vertically', so the carer (or carers) do not need to bend and strain their backs to provide assistance.

In an effort to broaden the service they provide, Care to Comfort undertook considerable research and obtained detailed customer feedback, and then in 2019, they created and launched its 'Split Bed'. This range of dual control; electric adjustable beds look like a regular bed, but it has the additional function of a clasp that opens on the foot-board which allows the bed to split (or separate). Along with the vertical-lift function, this feature allows carer's access to both sides of one half of the bed. Once the carer's have finished their work, the bed can be very easily put back into its original look, allowing the person requiring assistance and their partner the comfort to sleep side by side in a unified bed.



Care to Comfort are also sole agents in Ireland for Rotobed

RotoBed® aims to deliver the world's best rotating bed. With the care bed RotoBed®Free and the newly developed RotoBed®Home for users in their own homes, it takes less than a minute for the user to get from lying down to standing up. For the user, this means a daily life with less pain, higher quality of life and more freedom and dignity. The nursing staff of people with a RotoBed® will also achieve a better working environment, less stressful work positions and more efficient transfers. The new generation of rotative beds will go to a height as low as 32 cm above the floor – and holding a maximum user weight of 190 kg they are suitable for both overweight and tall or small users. People suffering from conditions such as dementia, Parkinson's and sclerosis may also benefit from a RotoBed®

In the 13 years since the company was established, Care to Comfort has continued to grow to meet the needs of their customers and will continue to do so into the future. Yvonne and Martin recognise that there are unique and individual requirements for each of their customers and like their beds, they will adapt to ensure they provide this to the highest standard possible. To date Care to Comfort have won many awards for our services and products, and are very proud of their 5 star reviews.

Contact details.

www.caretocomfort.ie

Yvonne Cassidy 0858756156
yvonne@caretocomfort.ie

Martin Deasy 0864112270
martin@caretocomfort.ie

Angkor Wat Adventure

**24th October –
2nd November**

**Cambodia
Siem Reap
& the Angkor
Temples**

**Join us
for the accessible
adventure of
a lifetime**

Golf Classic

Date
22/5/25

Location
Milltown
Golf Club

Time
14.00
Shotgun
Start

Ticket Cost
€800 per
fourball

**Followed by dinner
and prize giving**

Cauda Equina Syndrome

Information & Support Seminar

Admission free to SII Service Users
Radisson Blu hotel, Athlone

Thursday 21st August from 12.30pm to 5pm



To book, contact:



01-653 2180



hilary@spinalinjuries.ie

Spinal Injuries Ireland Presents:

A Seminar for Those Living with Cauda Equina Syndrome

Sponsored by Lavelle Partners Solicitors



On August 21st, Spinal Injuries Ireland will be hosting a warm and welcoming get-together at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Athlone for anyone living with Cauda Equina Syndrome (CES)—along with their family and friends.

This unique event will bring people together to share experiences, find support, and gain expert insights on managing life with CES. Guests will enjoy a relaxed lunch and conversation, followed by a series of informative and practical workshops covering:

- ✓ **Pain Management & Relaxation Techniques**
- ✓ **Bowel & Bladder Management**
- ✓ **Legal Rights & Resources**



● **Meet Our Guest Speaker: Niamh Walsh**

We are delighted to welcome Niamh Walsh, psychotherapist and coach, who will be leading the Pain Management session. With personal experience in chronic pain recovery and professional expertise in psychotherapy and executive coaching, Niamh is passionate about helping people navigate the challenges of chronic pain. A Board member of Chronic Pain Ireland, Niamh's academic and professional background includes: MA in Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy (The Tivoli Institute) Professional Diploma in Business & Executive Coaching (UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School) Over 20 years' experience in senior roles across marketing, communications, e-learning, and training



● **Expert Legal Insights from Lavelle Partners Solicitors**

We are pleased to have Avril Scally, Partner at Lavelle Partners Solicitors, joining us to speak about legal rights and resources for people living with Cauda Equina Syndrome.

● **Specialist Support from Paula Keane, ANP**

We are also delighted to welcome Paula Keane, Advanced Nurse Practitioner from the NRH, who will be available to meet with attendees, offering specialist guidance and expertise.

● **Expert Support from Coloplast Nurses**

Healthcare professionals will be on hand, including Coloplast nurses, who will be available to offer advice, answer questions, and demonstrate products.

Make a Night of It!

For those traveling from further afield, there is an option to stay overnight and enjoy a two-course dinner with fellow attendees. B&B & Dinner Pricing:

Single Room – €187.50
Double/Twin Room (per person sharing) – €117.50

Overnight stays and dinner bookings should be made directly with the hotel. Guests should mention Spinal Injuries Ireland's event to be included in the block booking price arrangement.

Join Us! Book Your Spot Today

This free event is a fantastic opportunity to connect with others who truly understand the realities of CES - while receiving expert guidance on healthcare and legal matters. Contact info@spinalinjuries.ie for more details.

A Day In My Wheels

Soon to be CPD Accredited!



A Day in My Wheels has grown to be an important initiative for two main reasons, firstly as an ally and advocacy builder and secondly, as a fantastic fundraising platform to help us fund our services for the SCI community.

We leave each session knowing that the participants have changed their way of thinking about accessibility and SCI. They learn about the challenges members of the SCI community face both the visible and hidden. They hear from our SII Ambassadors with the lived experience. And they get a chance to spend time in a wheelchair to glimpse what challenges our community face each day.

The A Day in My Wheels format is usually a two hour session and consists of a talk about SCI and the challenges associated, we then give participants an experience in a wheelchair to give them a small glimpse of the accessibility challenges faced. Finally, we have a Q&A chat which provides an open and honest platform for discussing the lived experience.

Since our last issue of Spinal News we have lead several successful sessions with some great companies.

Our fantastic supporters, Coloplast, took part in a session of A Day in My Wheels in November. Although they are very well informed on SCI, they wanted to expand their knowledge, not only of SCI but also of the accessibility challenges. It was an educational session with both sides learning a little bit more on the day from each other!

We had the pleasure in December of working with Microsoft. We spoke to 80 people who attended in person and online with about 25 people taking part in the wheelchair experience. The format was slightly different and included a panel discussion with Tim Horgan, who works in Microsoft and is walking with a SCI and Jack Shannon Cole, SII's Peer and Advocacy Officer, two different perspectives on having a SCI.

It was really informative and important to highlight the challenges that go with each.

We were also invited to speak to Orix Aviation in December, we ran a smaller version of A Day in My Wheels where we have speaker attend to tell their story. We had Fergus Farrell, former Connaught rugby player and entrepreneur, a fantastic SII Ambassador, who is walking with a SCI. Fergus spoke about his life before, and leading up to his injury, his rehab afterward and how life has changed for him since.

We've made some great progress working with construction companies. We are adapting our A Day in My Wheels offering to have a safety at work element, helping us engage with construction companies and contractors. We were kindly hosted on-site by Sisk Builders and Vantage in Grange Castle. Lester Cassidy, another brilliant SII Ambassador spoke about his injury which he acquired while on a construction site. His insight into safety and what might be done to avoid future accidents was invaluable.

Also this year SII got a unique opportunity and was chosen as one of IAPI's (Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland) charities of the year. This means we got to run A Day in My Wheels for 100 young professionals in the advertising industry during a talk in TUD. As part of this session we were also briefing these young professionals so that they could come up with unique and different advertising ideas for SII on how to promote the SCI community and A Day in My Wheels. We had an amazing day with some highly engaged people in the room.

The more companies, organisations and communities we speak to and run A Day in My Wheels with, the more allies and advocates for accessibility and support for SCI there are. If you know of any companies or groups that would like to host their own session please get in touch with Oisín Fahy oisin@spinalinjuries.ie

Spinal Injury Claims: A Step-by-Step Guide

By Avril Scally, Head of Medical Negligence and Avril Carroll,
Solicitor at Lavelle Partners LLP



Following a spinal cord injury (SCI), there is often uncertainty about where to start with making a claim.

A step-by-step process of what's involved in making a SCI claim and relevant timeframes are outlined.

What Causes Spinal Injuries?

Spinal injuries are sometimes caused by physical impact to your body that results in damage to the back or neck, which can be life changing.

Some of the main causes include: road traffic collisions, workplace accidents, accidents abroad, slips, trips and falls, defective products, sports injuries, criminal injuries, medical or surgical errors, delayed or missed diagnosis.

The consequences can vary depending on severity. If someone else is at fault, you might have a compensation claim. To secure compensation, you must prove liability and establish fault.

If you've experienced a SCI due to an accident or medical error that wasn't your fault, Lavelle Partners can help.

What is Involved in Taking a Spinal Injuries Claim?

A specialist Solicitor from our Medical Negligence team will discuss your injuries, advise if you have a claim and outline the next steps.

This might include gathering evidence, such as:

- Medical records and treatment documents
- Financial records
- Witness statements
- CCTV footage
- HSE/internal reports (if available)

You can also claim on behalf of a loved one who is incapacitated or has passed away. Our team can advise on how to proceed.

How long do I have to make a SCI Claim?

You generally have two years from the date of the negligent treatment or when you became aware of it - this is the "date of knowledge."

Exceptions include cases involving children, where the two years begins on their 18th birthday. No limit applies to those lacking mental capacity.

The earlier you contact us, the better. We'll advise you clearly from the outset.

How long does a Spinal Injury Claim take?

The duration depends on your recovery, as a final medical prognosis may take 18 months to two years.

It's important to address future care, equipment, accommodation, and finances early. Trusted legal advice protects your long-term interests.

What should I include in my Spinal Injury claim?

SCI often involve substantial care needs. Many people cannot return to work as before.

Loss of income and adapting a home can be financially and emotionally draining. Compensation can help alleviate these burdens.

How much compensation will I receive?

Compensation is generally divided into two categories:

General Damages – For pain, suffering, and the effect on quality of life.

Special Damages – For financial losses, such as:

- Past losses (expenses already incurred)
- Future losses (anticipated future costs)

Passed and future losses may include:

- Adapted accommodation
- Personal care assistance
- Medical treatment and therapy
- Specialist equipment
- Transportation
- Loss of earnings

Why Choose Lavelle Partners?

SCI claims are complex. Early expert legal support is vital.

At Lavelle Partners, our dedicated team of specialist SCI Solicitors can support you through every step of the process. With over 35 years of experience in complex Medical Negligence and Personal Injury cases, we're committed to the best possible outcomes for our clients.

Contact: T: +353 1 644 5800 | E: law@lavellepartners.ie
| W: LavellePartners.ie

FUNDRAISING NEWS



Spring Lunch

Over 330 people gathered in the Intercontinental Hotel, Ballsbridge on Saturday, April 5th for Spinal Injuries Ireland's Spring Lunch. This annual event has been running for 16 years and is always a huge addition to the Spring social calendar.

Philip Quinlan, Event Manager with Spinal Injuries Ireland organised the event along with committee members Lizzie Burke, Caitriona Ryan and Emmett Kilduff. The guest speaker was the inspirational Kieran Fitzgerald, who is a board member and received a standing ovation after his address. He urged the guests to dig deep as Spinal Injuries Ireland needs to fundraise almost €1million annually to provide vital services to its 2,500 plus service users.

The auction on the day was incredibly well supported and conducted by Eamon O'Connor from Adams who proved to be extremely effective in encouraging bids and maximising the revenue from fantastic lots such as a cask of Powerscourt Whiskey which sold for an amazing €11,500 and a 6 nations lunch for 8 people in the Cow Pub and Kitchen with tickets and an Ireland jersey which sold for €4,000.

Fiona Bolger, Spinal Injuries Ireland CEO said "We are extremely grateful to everyone who attended the event, donated prizes and gave so generously. SII has survived and thrived over the last 30 years thanks to the ring of support from donors, sponsors, business partners, service users, families, and our colleagues in the NRH." The event raised an amazing €100,000, so a huge thank you to everyone who supported this year. It's an enormous help.



Accessible Greenway Cycle

Join us for our third annual Greenway Cycle on Saturday September 13th as we cycle 46kms from Dungarvan to Waterford along this stunning Greenway. The Waterford Greenway, also known locally as the Déise Greenway, is a route on a former railway track in County Waterford, used for cycling and hiking. It opened in March 2017, on what was originally the Mallow/Waterford railway line.

It features 11 bridges, three viaducts and a 400-metre tunnel and runs between the city of Waterford, Mount Congreve, Kilmeaden, Kilmacthomas, and Dungarvan, and passes along part of the Copper Coast.

At 46 km, it is Ireland's longest greenway. The Waterford and Suir Valley Railway shares the route along the banks of River Suir. Offering mild gradients courtesy of its initial beginning as a railway line.

After an afternoon of cycling, participants will be brought by bus back to Dungarvan where they'll enjoy an overnight stay in the Park Hotel Dungarvan where dinner, bed and breakfast is provided.

The Park is a favourite with both locals and visitors from afar, when it comes to hotels in Dungarvan, and has a number of accessible rooms. It also has a newly refurbished leisure centre with 20m swimming pool, sauna & steam room.



London lunch

Our London lunch will take place on Saturday September 20th in the beautiful surrounds of the Queen's Club which is a private sporting club in Barons Court, West Kensington, London, England. The club hosts the annual Queen's Club Championships men's grass court lawn tennis tournament. The lunch is held in the President's room which is on the top floor of the famous club house with a prosecco drinks reception on the sunny balcony looking out over the 28 courts. The guests then move inside for a 3 course Lunch including wine. We will be having a raffle and auction following the guest speaker. It really is a memorable event over the fabulously manicured courts.

To reserve your place email info@spinalinjuries.ie



Cork Jazz Ball 2025

Save the Date! Saturday 25th October. Join us for an evening of Jazz in Rochestown Park Hotel in Cork. The evening kicks off with a drinks reception at 6.30pm followed by dinner at 7.30pm, after which guests can dance the night away to live jazz. **To reserve your place email info@spinalinjuries.ie**



LEGAL SERVICES FOR SPINAL INJURIES IRELAND SERVICE USERS

We at Augustus Cullen Law are very proud to be a supporter of Spinal Injuries Ireland for a long number of years. It was a pleasure for us to join the Spinal Injuries Ireland Business Membership programme last year to assist such a worthy cause and to offer our expertise to SII's service users. Augustus Cullen Law has a longstanding reputation nationally as a leading medical negligence and catastrophic injuries law firm so we can offer decades of expertise in those areas of practice, which of course frequently involve claims relating to spinal injuries. However, we do not just practice in the areas of medical negligence and personal injury litigation. We are a full-service law firm offering advice across a wide range of legal services. With offices in Wicklow, Dublin and Gorey, servicing clients from all corners of the country, we are perfectly placed to advise on the full spectrum of legal issues in which people who have suffered spinal injuries may require assistance.

Spinal injury claims & compensation in Ireland

The medical negligence and personal injury teams at Augustus Cullen Law have vast experience in dealing with spinal injury claims. Our commitment lies in fearlessly advocating for deserving cases, no matter how complex or challenging they may be. Our aim is to bring about real change for individuals who have sustained spinal injuries due to inadequacies in the healthcare system or as a result of avoidable accidents. Our top priority is to ensure that you receive the support and compensation you deserve. Our expert solicitors will advocate for fair compensation to cover all of your needs, enabling you to live the most comfortable and independent life available to you.

Conveyancing / Property Law

Our Conveyancing department is highly reputed for its experience and competence. Our team caters to first-time buyers, experienced property investors and everyone in between. We understand how stressful property transactions can be which is why we aim to ensure the most seamless and hassle-free transaction possible. Our Team has extensive experience acting in property transactions for clients with catastrophic injuries which require liaising with various experts such as occupational therapists, accessibility consultants and architects to ensure the property is fit for purpose.

Wills and Trusts

Our Wills, Probate & Estate Management department has

a long tradition of providing a sensitive, confidential and professional service. We specialise in providing estate planning and wealth preservation / asset protection services to individuals and their families. We can, in conjunction with financial experts, also advise on the establishment of Trusts as necessary for the efficient management of compensation payments.

Employment Law

Augustus Cullen Law's employment team provide specialist and cost-effective advice on all aspects of workplace legal issues, both contentious and non-contentious in nature, for employees. Our solicitors can advise you on a range of issues, including discrimination, harassment, unfair dismissal and more. We understand how overwhelming it can be when your livelihood is at risk. Our goal is to secure the best possible outcome tailored to your circumstances. We are committed to safeguarding your rights and ensuring you receive any compensation to which you are entitled. If your aim is to return to work, we will handle matters in a way that minimises harm to your relationship with your employer.

Family Law

We adopt a practical and client focused approach to negotiating family law settlements and in circumstances where agreement cannot be reached and litigation becomes necessary, we provide Court representation and guide our clients at every step of the process. Our family law team will discuss all of your options with you so that you can make an informed decision before embarking on any particular course of action, to include mediation, collaborative law, negotiation and litigation.

Conclusion

Augustus Cullen Law is dedicated to providing comprehensive legal services to individuals who have suffered spinal injuries. Our longstanding support for Spinal Injuries Ireland and our expertise in medical negligence and personal injury litigation underscore our commitment to advocating for those in need. With a wide range of legal services and a team of experienced solicitors, we strive to ensure that our clients receive the support and compensation they deserve, enabling them to live comfortable and independent lives. Whether it's navigating complex spinal injury claims, handling property transactions, or offering sensitive advice on wills and trusts, Augustus Cullen Law is here to guide you every step of the way.

If you or a relative have sustained a spinal cord injury, and you have questions about your legal entitlements, I would be glad to assist you with free and confidential legal advice. You can contact me via email at neil.kidd@acslsolicitors.ie or visit our website at www.acslsolicitors.ie.

LOVELY COMPLIMENTS THROUGH OUR ONLINE SURVEYS

When asked if people could provide an example of a specific task or activity that has become easier due to having received assistive technology through the SII HSE National Lottery Grant Aid, 100% positive responses were received. Here are some examples:

"I can see who is at my door without opening it. Removing intense fear of being vulnerable. Also the Google hub now allows me start my smart home which will allow me control the environment from my wheelchair"

"I don't have to keep getting into the wheelchair to answer the door ..."

"I can see and hear who is at door, and don't need to open if I choose not to ..."

"I can see and communicate to people at the front door from my wheelchair ..."

Tablets and Laptops

"I have contact with family and friends online and do online courses"

"Reminders and alerts are a great help"

"I feel safer with the camera door bell and I'm able to access so much with my iPad"

"When I finish my part time art class I can then go on and do an online course in the hopes to becoming an art therapist. I also am a single mother of three kids with additional needs so this is a help not just for me but my family too thank you so much"

"I had deferred my degree due to my injury ... now with the tablet I am able to finish"

"I am ordering my shopping online and getting my prescription delivered. Thanks very much for your help ..."

"I am unable to hold my hand up to my ear to take long calls or listen to music, now I have headphones it's made my life easier"

"my new laptop has made life considerably easier, nice and lightweight with a good battery, doesn't take 5 minutes to start up like old one, very happy with it"

SPINALART RELAUNCH LIVE CLASSES APRIL



SpinalArt Workshops are back online, bringing creativity and connection to service users once again! With over 40 people registered for the recent sessions, it's fantastic to see many new faces joining in and exploring their artistic side for the first time.

With spring in the air, Susan has been leading participants in filling their art journals with flowers, embracing the season with vibrant colours and fresh

inspiration. Whether you're a seasoned artist or just picking up a paintbrush for the first time, these workshops offer a welcoming space to express yourself, connect with others, and enjoy the therapeutic benefits of art.

We look forward to seeing more wonderful creations as SpinalArt continues to flourish and blossom!

MONGOL RALLY



The Mongol Rally is one of the most exciting and challenging events in the world. The challenge? Get a car that's AT LEAST 15 years old, has LESS than 1.2ltr engine, and generally is a car you might otherwise scrap! Then take that car, and drive it all the way from Prague, in Czechia to... Mongolia! 7,000km!

Sounds a bit crazy, right? Well, that's exactly what some amazing and dedicated supporters are doing this July in support of Spinal Injuries Ireland. Fergal Keane, Jimmy Flynn, Paul Reilly, and Cian Reilly will set off on this journey in two Nissan Micras circa 2000.

This isn't just a quick trip to the shops, like these cars were originally intended. The team and their trusty steeds will traverse through Czechia, Germany, the mountains of Austria, across Romania, meeting the Black Sea in Bulgaria, down into Turkey where the landscape will change each day, up into Georgia, across into Kazakhstan where they will cover almost 3,000km to get to the other side, and finally they will reach the finish line in Mongolia!

This is a once in a lifetime trip for the team, a test of what they are made of, but they didn't want to do it just for themselves, they wanted to raise funds and awareness for Spinal Injuries Ireland. From now until they leave in early July and while they are travelling, they will be aiming to raise as much funds as possible for SII's services.

We'll keep you updated along the way. Make sure you are following our social media channels to see them on their journey! If you'd like to find out more, or how to support the team, please get in touch at info@spinalinjuries.ie



Business Member Partnerships

One of the ways Spinal Injuries Ireland gets support to continue providing services is through partnering with businesses and organisations who contribute a donation to be a Business Member. You will see articles from our business members throughout this magazine. We will only ever partner with businesses that provide a service or product that directly benefits people with SCI.

Have you used a product or service from a company that you found helpful or useful in your life with a SCI? Get in touch and let us know.

When a company partners with us, there is the potential for partnership discounts for our service users.

By suggesting a product or service, we may be able to negotiate a group discount for our service users, or we might be able to get product trials that would otherwise be unavailable to individuals.

Reach out to oisin@spinalinjuries.ie or info@spinalinjuries.ie if you have a company in mind.

WAKE N'SKI

Wake N Ski is back this May, bringing the thrill of waterskiing and wakeboarding to Meath! Taking place on the 14th, 21st, and 28th of May, this event is specially adapted for people with spinal cord injuries, ensuring that everyone can experience the excitement of getting out on the water.

Held at a purpose-built lake in Summerhill, Co. Meath, Wake N Ski provides a safe and welcoming environment for both beginners and experienced participants. The SII Team will be onsite throughout the sessions to make sure everything runs smoothly, offering guidance and support to those taking part.

With high banks protecting the lake from wind and a training bar on the boat to assist newcomers, Wake N Ski is designed to make watersports accessible and enjoyable for all. Whether you're looking to try something new or get back into the sport, this is the perfect opportunity to dive in.

For further information, or if you would like to take part, contact one of the team on info@spinalinjuries.ie



OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS

Each year we have a number of business partners that help support our work at Spinal Injuries Ireland.

Each year we have a number of business partners that help support our work at Spinal Injuries Ireland. We always aim to work with businesses that will not only support our work but also make sense to our service users. All our business partners make sense in being part of our community as they provide services that help support people with SCI. Each year we strive to renew our current partnerships and bring new members into the fold. Our business partners are there as they have committed to being honest and true to our service users whenever they are providing their goods or services. We currently have three sections of business partners and will be continuing to expand these into the future. Legal Practice, Financial Advisors, and Care Providers.

Legal Practice business partners. Consulting a legal firm is something we recommend to all our service users, whether it be for questions around a potential compensation claim or for general legal advice post-injury. Our four legal firm partners provide personal injury counsel nationwide, in particular, each one has understanding, knowledge, and experience in Spinal Cord Injury cases. All four of our legal practice partners are experts in the field. They are well placed to give support and advice, given the uniqueness that each case usually has.

Our Legal Practice Partners are O'Brien Lynam Solicitors (OBL), Lavelle Partners LLP Augustus Cullen Law LLP, and Coleman Legal LLP.

O'Brien Lynam Solicitors have considerable litigation experience includes catastrophic personal injuries, professional indemnity, property and material damage, public liability, employers' liability and product liability.

Offices: Dublin

Tel: +353 1 634 5884

Email: Jack O'Brien jobrien@obl.ie

Website: <https://obl.ie/team/jack-obrien/>



Lavelle Partners LLP are an award-winning law firm with renowned expertise in spinal and personal injuries, based in Dublin and Galway. They have worked with many clients who have suffered serious spinal injuries, successfully bringing claims on their behalf where it was due to negligence by another party. Their team, headed by Avril Scally, understand the implications of spinal injuries for the person affected and their family.

Offices: Dublin and Galway

Tel: 01 644 5800

**Email: Avril Scally
ascally@lavellepartners.ie**

**Website:
<https://www.lavellepartners.ie/personal/personal-injury/spinal-injuries/>**



Augustus Cullen Law Augustus Cullen Law LLP's commitment lies in fearlessly advocating for deserving cases, no matter how complex or challenging they may be. Their aim is to bring about real change for individuals who have sustained spinal injuries as a result of avoidable accidents. Their top priority is to ensure that you receive the support and compensation you deserve.

Tel: +353 404 67412

Email:
info@acslsolicitors.ie

Website: <https://acslsolicitors.ie/practice-area/medical-negligence/spinal-injury-claims/>



Coleman Legal Coleman Legal LLP specialize in personal injury, and multi-party action cases in Ireland, working tirelessly to help their clients achieve justice. They aim to meet both prospective and existing clients needs in a professional, engaging and friendly manner with a clear objective to give quality legal advice, and reach a positive outcome.

Offices: Dublin

Tel: (01) 531 3800

Email: info@colemanlegal.ie

Website: <https://colemanlegalpartners.ie/spinal-injury-claim/>



Financial Advisor

GillenMarkets is an independent investment advisory firm offering investment advisory services for personal, pension and corporate monies. Uniquely, the company also offers investment training courses for those who would like to learn more about the principles of sound investing, and a subscription-based newsletter/website service for those who would prefer to do the investing for themselves.

Contact details:

Tel: 012871400

Email:
info@gillenmarkets.com

Website:
www.gillenmarkets.com



Assistive Technology Business Partners.

This section of our partners offer more varying and wider range of services. We will be working to expand this section and create new sections in the coming year. Our Care Provider Partners are companies that provide direct equipment or technology that make life easier, more comfortable and convenient. At the moment this ranges from smart technology around the home to ways to help you sleep better at night.

Our Assistive Tech Provider Partners are Ideal Technology and Care to Comfort.

Care to Comfort provide custom, made to order, Electric Adjustable Beds which provide adjustment to any position you might need. They are a fully Irish owned company and strive for the best quality products.

Tel: +353 (0)1 295 9000

Email: care@caretocomfort.ie

Website: www.caretocomfort.ie



Ideal Technology is a distributor and installer of Assistive Technology, Intruder Alarm, CCTV, Access Control, Nursecall, and Home Automation Systems. Systems are designed to suit individuals needs. The systems may include control of door opening, curtain/blind control, light and heating, control of entertainment, computer access, smartphone access, control of iPad and tablets and much more.

Tel: +353 86 255 9508

Email: info@idealtechnology.ie

Website: www.idealtechnology.ie



Do you know a company that provides a beneficial product or service to people with Spinal Cord Injuries? Please get in touch. Our business partners help us fund our services and we, in turn, help introduce them to our service users. We will only ever work with companies that provide a positive and beneficial product to our service users.

Reach out to Oisin Fahy at oisin@spinalinjuries.ie

LOSS OF CONSORTIUM- THE PERSONAL COST OF LOSS OF INTIMACY AFTER AN ACCIDENT

What is Loss of Consortium?

Loss of Consortium is defined as “a legal claim that a spouse can make when their partner's injuries, caused by someone else's negligence, negatively impact the marital relationship “.

This is an issue not often spoken about, but a very real and serious consequence of a spinal cord injury. Loss or reduction of sexual function following on from a spinal injury is quite often a very serious loss. In the aftermath of an accident, one experiences many changes to everyday life. Independence, mobility, continence, self-care – all that we may have taken for granted before, have now been impaired. What may often be forgotten, is the impact on relationships that serious injuries have. The loss or limitation of an intimate relationship, whether that is emotional and/or sexual, creates an enormous strain for all involved. Of course, for the

person having sustained the injury, the loss or impairment of the intimacy of a relationship, including sexual intimacy, is devastating.

Loss of Consortium may of course arise in a number of different scenarios. Those who have suffered an injury may not necessarily be in a position to litigate against a person that is responsible for the injury. However, where the injury occurs due to the possible negligence of another party, litigation may be pursued.

The impact on marital and/or intimate relationships is a serious matter. This can be a very real and serious consequence of spinal injury. It is also an issue that should not be pushed aside or diminished. The loss of intimacy and companionship, be it emotional or sexual, or both, must be recognised.

For the partner of a person that has suffered an injury that has impacted on the relationship, they too have suffered a very serious loss. They have suffered a catastrophic interference with their relationship, including their sexual intimacy. Mutual support may no longer be possible. The performance of daily tasks may no longer be possible. A relationship is shifted forever in the aftermath of a serious and permanent injury.

Time Limits

A claim for Loss of Consortium must be initiated within two years of the date of the accident. Currently, only a legally married spouse will recover under for Loss of Consortium in the Irish Courts.

Previous cases

In 2015, the High Court in Ireland recognised the loss of marital relationship following a serious brain injury. That case was *Andaloc v. Iarnród Eireann* [2014] IEHC 637.

The plaintiff in the case was the wife of a gentleman who had suffered serious personal injuries as a result of negligence and breach of duty on the part of the defendant. She alleged that the devastation caused by the injuries sustained had led to the ultimate breakdown of their marriage. The Court stated that for a plaintiff to be entitled to damages, there must be:

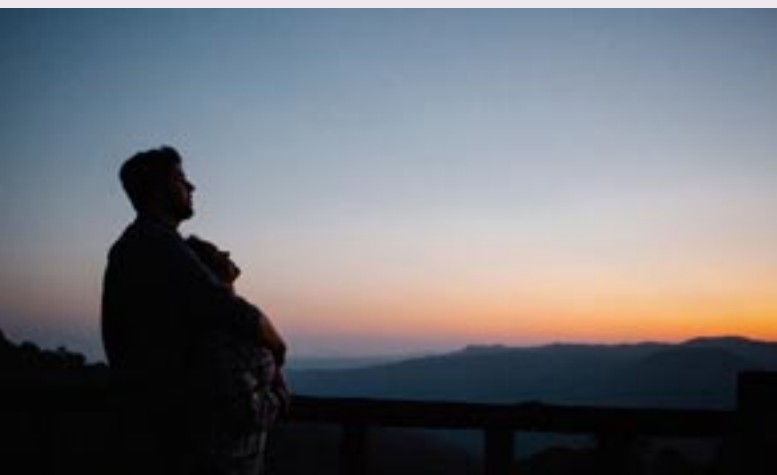
- A valid, real and subsisting marriage at all times relevant to the claim
- Negligence or breach of duty by the defendants causing injury to her spouse

- Total or partial loss of the ordinary incidents of an ongoing marital relationship consequent to that injury
- A causal link between the wrongful act of the defendant and the loss.
Mrs. Andaloc was successful in her case.

Compensation can never make up for the loss to a relationship that may be suffered as a result of a serious and permanent injury. However, if you have suffered a loss due to the negligence of another, it is advisable to seek advice from a solicitor.

Susan Hannon

Head of Legal Services
Coleman Legal LLP
s.hannon@colemanlegal.ie
colemanlegalpartners.ie



SERVICES

Peer Catch Ups

Join us for an online chat with others with lived experience of spinal cord injury. These zooms allow people to share their stories in a safe space with others who understand and can offer support in a meaningful way. These online sessions take place every 3 months; details can be found on our events page for the peer support catch up relevant to you. There's no pressure to have your camera on, or speak at all if you would prefer to just listen in. If you have a question and don't want to ask it directly you can email it in beforehand. Recent zoom catch ups have discussed flying for the first time since injury, accessible hotels, primary medical certificate information, bowel and bladder information, pressure mapping, insurance, research, exercise to name but a few topics!

"The group chats are so useful; there's a camaraderie there, it simply makes you feel like you are not alone."
C, Dublin

Peer Support

If you would prefer to speak one on one with someone with lived experience of spinal cord injury, please speak with your community outreach officer to be referred to the peer support service. We can aim to match you with a trained peer support volunteer who has lived with their spinal cord injury for quite a while and is equipped to share their experiences and answer your questions. We understand that the best support for people with spinal cord injuries comes from their peers and have recently finished training with some more people who are well equipped to speak with anyone who is seeking support.

"This was my first contact with someone who I felt really understood what I was going through. It was great to speak in plain English about what my life could look like. That first phone call gave me a boost and put my mind at ease." M, Tipperary

NRH Pizza night

SII continue to facilitate a monthly pizza evening in the NRH for patients on the spinal floor. It happens on the 3rd Monday of every month and is always a lovely social event for patients and any family members who happen to be visiting at the time. SII staff and peer support volunteers are on hand to chat with anyone who attends. *"I don't even like pizza, but it was good to go for the chat!"* Past NRH patient

Counselling

We offer funded counselling services for people who have sustained spinal cord injuries and their families. Our psychotherapy team specializes in trauma therapy and can offer counselling on an individual, couple or family basis. Sessions can be done online, over the phone or in person depending on what suits the person.



"Mary helped me learn we can make little changes and to be able to view all the possibilities going forward with my life as a disabled person." S, Donegal

"Even after talking to her just once I felt really good. I got to be honest and open, and I felt validated." E, Louth

Pain management course

Chronic Pain Ireland recently facilitated another online 5 week course focussing on the self-management of chronic pain. Participants explored ways to both manage their condition and cope better. The course offered a special kind of flexible interactive experience in which questions, feedback, discussion and mutual support were an important part of the process. Participants shared the lived daily experience of chronic pain and looked at introducing self-managed tools to improve day to day life. Throughout the 5-week INTERACTIVE course all key ideas of self-management were explored, including understanding pain, the relationship between pain and stress, improving sleep and relaxation skills, improving sleep and understanding emotions. Our winter course runs from 17th Nov – 15th Dec, Mondays 2-4pm. If you are interested, please email hilary@spinalinjuries.ie for more details.

"The course is amazing. Phil has a wonderful way with people and explaining and discussing the topics. I think the things I've learned I will use daily. I found it all extremely helpful and thoroughly enjoyed it." J, Clare

"The course taught me how pain works and gave me useful tools to deal with my pain." N, Waterford

To get in touch with us

please scan the QR code below or email
info@spinalinjuries.ie



SCAN HERE

If you would like to donate and sign up to our monthly
raffle draw please scan the QR code below
or visit **spinalinjuries.ie/raffle**



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