

# Focus on: Rehab's Acquired Brain Injury Services in the UK



*Pictured above: Dr David Sollis (left), London and South East Regional Manager, Rehab UK, and Mark Harper MP (right), UK Shadow Minister for Disabled People, at a brain injury seminar organised by Rehab UK in London's City Hall.*

**A** **QUIRED BRAIN INJURY** (ABI) is the term given to any injury to the brain sustained during a person's life. The Rehab Group provides a range of services for people with a brain injury and has developed a network of services across Ireland and the UK. In the UK, Rehab's ABI services are

provided by Rehab UK in England and Momentum in Scotland.

## Rehab UK

Rehab UK operates three brain injury centres – in Birmingham, London and Newcastle – and has just acquired a new service in Northumberland (*see page 6*). They provide a range of services

to support and assist people and their families to deal with the consequences of acquired brain injuries which can include loss of co-ordination, poor memory, difficulty in concentrating and poor planning and organisational skills.

Rehab UK is widely recognised as being at the forefront of providing

unique ABI-specific services. In March, as part of the UK's Brain Injury Week, Rehab UK organised a brain injury seminar to showcase its services to local businesses and people working in education. At the seminar in London's City Hall, Mark Harper MP, UK Shadow Minister for Disabled People, said, "For those people who have a severe injury, it's important that the government finds ways to support organisations like Rehab UK that provide specialist help, without changing the essential things that make the charity what it is."

Rehab UK's latest innovation is the Community Solutions programme, which brings rehabilitation services to people in their own home. Research shows that community-based outreach rehabilitation can improve personal care skills, cognitive functioning, self-organisation and psychological well-being. The individualised programme was developed to assist clients before, during or after vocational rehabilitation and aims to promote their independence within the local community and improve health, well-being and quality of life for each person.

## Momentum

Momentum is one of the leading providers of rehabilitation and training services in Scotland, having pioneered the UK's first specialist service to help people with traumatic brain injury to return to work in 1993. It provides specialist brain injury rehabilitation programmes in Grampian, Glasgow, North Ayrshire and the Borders.

Through a focus on what each individual can achieve and by supporting them as they return to work, Momentum's services assist people with a brain injury to live independently and to move towards employment or further training. One of the people who has benefited from this service is Tom Patterson.

## Tom's Story

In December 1999, Patterson was returning from mountain climbing in the Southern Highlands when his car skidded out of control and crashed into a tree. After a six-week-long coma he had to deal with the effects of a massive head injury which completely transformed his life.

Patterson was 37, married with two children and had been a training director for the prestigious Rainbow Room hairdressing salon in Glasgow but when he came out of his coma he wasn't able to walk or talk properly.

He was referred to Momentum's Pathways service based in Ayrshire Central Hospital in Irvine. It provides specialist training and support for adults with a brain injury who wish to return to work or to go on to further education. Patterson attended one-to-one meetings and group sessions which assisted him in further developing his confidence and communication, problem-solving and teamwork skills. He also received job coaching and undertook a voluntary work placement with the British Heart Foundation where he worked for six months before taking up a full-time college course. Patterson credits Momentum with helping him to get his life back on track.

"Momentum helped put structure back into my life. The impact has been life-changing and I don't feel alone any more. As one window closes, another opens. I was in a prestigious job and lost everything but this gave me even more drive. By having rehabilitation, I realised I wanted to help other people because I have a vast amount of life experience and people open up to me."

Patterson has now set up his own business called Mind Body

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Connections and is working as a coach and therapist, helping other people achieve their goals and reach their potential. With his life now moving in a more positive direction, he is looking forward to his future. "I enjoy life every day and am now fulfilling my potential". ■



*Pictured above:* Former Momentum client Tom Patterson.