

Press Release



Supported by



For Immediate Release

Dublin (Ireland) - 23 May 2023

HSE Recommends Expansion of An Saol's *Life and Living with a severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI) Service*

A highly encouraging HSE report supported by an international expert panel found that the An Saol Foundation's Pilot Project (2020-2022) demonstrated *"the need for and value of providing a service for people with sABI, which supports their rights to health and wellbeing, facilitates their habilitation and supports the needs of family members who are usually key carers for and supporters of them"*.

In his review and recommendations, Professor Malcom MacLachlan, Clinical Lead for Disability, National Clinical Programme for People with Disability (NCPD), said: *"The An Saol model of service is distinctive and innovative and does not have a direct parallel elsewhere"*.

He added: *"This model should be strengthened and developed further allowing Irish disability services to play a leading role internationally in developing innovative day-services for people with sABI"*.

Referring to the situation of families affected by a sABI, the report says: *A paradigm shift should change the pervasive nihilism that continues to complicate patient management, family adjustment, medicolegal issues and healthcare policy.*

Minister for Disability, Anne Rabbitte, T.D., welcomed the report and said: *"The An Saol Foundation National Centre for sABI promotes and supports the human rights, health and wellness, activities and technologies, as well as opportunities for the family members of those affected by a devastating ABI. This is such a vital service for people and one I'm greatly supportive of. I am committed to working with An Saol, the HSE and families to*

ensure a purpose-built home for the Foundation's National Centre for sABI can be developed, and that we see such services become more accessible nationwide."

Reinhard Schäler, the CEO of the An Saol Foundation, said: *"We have created, with the support of the HSE and the foresight of the Department, an opportunity for those affected by a severe Acquired Brain Injury to be integrated in society, to live their lives to the fullest, and to participate in meaningful activities - like every other citizen. Through the operation of our National sABI Centre, Ireland is demonstrating to the world that Life and Living with a severe Acquired Brain Injury is possible.*

Contact Information (Press only)

Reinhard Schäler, Founder & CEO, An Saol Foundation

Tel. 087 6736 414

Reinhard.Schaler@ansaol.ie

About severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI)

In the context of the work of the An Saol Foundation, a person with a *severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI)* is typically someone with a severe physical, communicative, and a cognitive disability. They require lifelong full-time support to live a healthy and meaningful life.

About the An Saol Foundation Project

The An Saol Foundation Project was established in response to a lack of continuing services in the Republic of Ireland for people with severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI). It came about as a result of a personal plea by the Schaler family after their son Pádraig suffered a traumatic brain injury. The Foundation won support for the establishment of a service to support a small number of people with severe disability following a neurological injury.

The An Saol Centre's mission statement highlights a "programme for those with a disability caused by a severe sABI, i.e. one that severely affects movement, communication, or cognition, who require life-long specialised services to make life and living with their sABI possible". It will afford every opportunity to people with sABI to live their life with dignity and respect, to continue to improve, to regain as much independence and self-determination as possible, and for their injuries to heal.