

## Charity worker receives British Empire Medal for services to Belfast hospital

Thursday 1 October, 2015

The work of Sam Malcolmson, a charity worker and volunteer from County Antrim, was recognised at a ceremony on 17 September, where he was presented with the British Empire Medal for services to Musgrave Park Hospital.

Sam was nominated for the Queen's 2015 Birthday Honours list for his support of individuals and families affected by spinal cord injury through his role as a Peer Support Officer for the Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) and voluntary help in the ward, assisting with art therapy and making displays for patients' work. In receiving the honour, Sam said,

*"When the letter first came in April, notifying me of the honour, I was in complete shock and it took a while to sink in. The news didn't go public until June, but everyone was really pleased for me. I am very proud and received the medal, not just for myself but for everyone who supports spinal cord injured people in Musgrave Park Hospital."*

Sam's nomination for the Queen's Birthday honours list came from his long term colleague, Johanna Bell, the Volunteer Coordinator at Musgrave Park Hospital who recruited Sam 10 years ago. Johanna nominated Sam after receiving an email about the Birthday Honours list and felt that Sam really stood out as being exceptional,

*"Sam really is an unsung hero who threw himself into helping others after his spinal cord injury, both as a volunteer and for his work for SIA. He spends so much time in the ward helping spinal cord injured people adapt to their disability and motivating them to get involved with sports or art or social groups. We're all so proud of him."*

Sam, who became spinal cord injured following a fall in 2003, has been working for the SIA for almost eight years, giving practical and emotional support to spinal cord injured people and their families, as well as training and information to staff on the spinal cord injuries ward.

SIA's Chief Executive Officer, Sue Browning comments, "SIA is immensely proud of Sam and his achievements. He is a credit to the charity, always going the extra mile to help spinal cord injured people and their families to rebuild their lives and to live an independent life after injury. He thoroughly deserves the recognition he has received."

Sam attended the presentation ceremony at Hillsborough Castle where he received his British Empire Medal from County Antrim's Lord Lieutenant Joan Christie. His colleague Johanna and two of his family members attended the ceremony as his guests. Sam has also been invited to attend the Royal Garden Party next summer.

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