



**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE SHLIGIGH
SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL**

Sligo.

**Christmas Greetings
from the Cathaoirleach &
Chief Executive of Sligo County Council**

On behalf of the Elected Members and staff of Sligo County Council,
we wish you a happy, safe and peaceful Christmas.



Councillor Michael Clarke
Cathaoirleach



Martin Lydon
Chief Executive

**Beannachtaí Nollag ó Chathaoirleach
agus Príomhfheidhmeannach
Chomhairle Contae Shligigh**

Thar ceann chomhaltai tofa agus foireann Chomhairle Contae Shligigh,
guímid Nollaig faoi shéan agus faoi mhaise ort.



An Cllr. Michael Clarke
Cathaoirleach



Martin Lydon
Príomhfheidhmeannach



ATU Neuroplasticity Research Group and PhD Postgraduate Research Student Fiona Doherty receives the inaugural Neurology Support Centre/ATU, Sligo Research Bursary. Pictured are: Dr Edel Mc Sharry (Head of School of Nursing Health Science & Disability Studies), Ms Ciara Mc Bride (Director Neuroplasticity Research Group), Mr Eamon Mc Partlin (Director Neurology Support Centre), Dr John Bartlett (Head of Research ATU Sligo), Dr Kevin Murphy (Consultant Neurologist Sligo University Hospital), Mr David Roberts (Director Neuroplasticity Research Group), Mr Fergal Broder (Director Neurology Support Centre), Mr Paul Powell (Software Development ATU Sligo), Ms Fiona Doherty (Research Bursary Recipient), Ms Bernadette Crilly (Director of Services Neurology Support Centre), Dr Kenneth Monaghan (Director Neuroplasticity Research Group). Pic: James Connolly.

Inaugural NSC research bursary awarded to ATU's Neuroplasticity Research department

THE Neuroplasticity Research Group (NRG) at Atlantic Technological University (ATU) Sligo have been awarded a Research Bursary from the Neurology Support Centre (NSC). PhD student Fiona Doherty is the recipient of the inaugural Neurology Support Centre/ATU research bursary.

The Bursary will be jointly funded by the Neurology Support Centre and the Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and will allow a student to undertake a 2 year research project at ATU in an agreed area of neurological research.

This will be conducted in collaboration with ATU and Sligo University Hospital.

The Neurology Support Centre was founded in 2013 by Declan Walsh in response to his wife Natalie's (Murphy) diagnosis with Multiple Sclerosis, and ultimately PML, which has resulted in her requiring 24-hour hospital care.

Declan's determination and drive in the face of this very personal tragedy led to the establishment of the charity. Declan and his wife Natalie's father secured the initial funding for the centre through their persistent lobbying of drug company Elan for several years. Declan passed away last year after a short illness, at the young age of 51, but he has left a wonderful legacy to the people of the North West.

Natalie was a pharmacologist by profession, with a strong

research background, and had been involved with the establishment of the Research and Education Foundation at Sligo University Hospital, and also lectured in the School of Science at ATU Sligo.

She was passionate about developing strong links between the hospital and the ATU, believing that the combination of clinical and academic expertise could stimulate the development of a vibrant research community in the North West.

Natalie's academic and career background has underpinned an emphasis on research at the Neurology Support Centre, and the NSC is delighted to be now launching this Bursary at ATU Sligo.

The centre's member support services include peer support groups, counselling, reflexology, art therapy and mindfulness.

The centre has an accessible van to facilitate transport to the centre, or for medical appointments, etc.

They also have a very strong and active advocacy group led by members to promote their needs both locally, regionally and nationally.

In addition, they support the Neurology Department in SUH and have funded salaries of specialist neurology staff which has had a direct impact on treatment and waiting lists for neurology patients in the Northwest.

The Neuroplasticity Research Group (NRG), was es-

tablished in 2014 by Dr Kenneth Monaghan, and Mr David Roberts (ATU, Sligo).

The NRG was responsible for securing more than €1.5 million direct research & development funding resulting in more than 30 published research papers, with presentations at more than 40 international conferences. The NSC has been successful in UK/International patents for the 'Mirror Strengthening Device' & 'Mechatronic Remote Physiotherapy System (MRPS)', which received €400k Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation funding and is also currently developing several innovative prototypes for neurological and orthopaedic conditions.

The research group consists of a team of 8 MSc/PhD registered postgraduates and 14 staff researchers determined to focus on innovative digital rehabilitation technology that can be carried out in a patient's own home.

Dr Monaghan is a former editor of Physiotherapy Practice & Research International peer-reviewed journal, and a current Editorial Board member and has established an extensive collaboration of National and International Neurology experts with his NRG.

The group's first 3 PhD Postgraduates graduated in November 2019 and are currently starting some new trials for stroke patients and recruiting for clinical trials.



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