

Mark visits pioneering spinal charity

A CITY MP has visited a pioneering national charity to celebrate a recent grant win.

Mark Lancaster went to see the Oldbrook-based Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) following their win of Â£5,600 from the Big Lottery Fund.

Mr Lancaster attended the opening of the state-of-the-art facility in 2005 and was delighted to meet once again with Executive Director Paul Smith.

SIA work in ten Spinal Injury Centres across England, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as in District General Hospitals and provide lifelong support to help individuals and their families rebuild their lives after paralysis. Around one thousand people suffer a spinal cord injury each year.

The SIA, which was named one of The Times' charities of the year in 2010, won its most recent grant to develop an online Health Care Support Tool Kit, which will also establish a network of volunteers to directly support and provide advocacy spinal cord injured people accessing health care funding.

Mr Smith was particularly keen to speak to Mr Lancaster about the centre's aim to improve the quality of paralysed people's lives, which includes helping them to return to work.

Mr Lancaster has pledged to lobby Government colleagues over the potential impacts to welfare and health and social care on charities which provide complex, specialised care, such as the SIA.

He said: "Paul Smith is an inspiring man and Milton Keynes is lucky to have a place like the SIA based in the city. Any one of us could one day need the specialised support of this charity, and therefore I think it is right that we continue to spread the word about the excellent work they do for many thousands of people."