



PRESS RELEASE:::PRESS RELEASE :::PRESS RELEASE:::

SHONA ROBISON MSP OPENS THE HIGHLAND'S FIRST MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY CENTRE

On Tuesday 18th March 2008, Shona Robison MSP, Minister for Public Health will officially open the Highland's first Recovery Centre for individuals with mental ill health in Muirfield Lane, Inverness.

The former Birchwood House, now known as Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre, was opened in 1994 and initially housed up to 20 service users from the former Craig Dunain Hospital in a residential home.

Extensive investment by Birchwood Highland in the building over the past year has seen the conversion of a number of the single rooms into flats and studio apartments, new extensions built onto the property and all facilities upgraded to reflect accommodation more appropriate to support the provision of modern mental health rehabilitation services in the 21st century. With the added facility of a much needed crisis service/safe house for individuals experiencing a short-term crisis and needing to be moved to a safe place, Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre can now accommodate up to 23 service users.

The changes to the building have been hugely beneficial in creating a more relaxed, stimulating and modern environment in which individuals can relearn key living and social skills in preparation for them moving on to their own home in the community. They also underpin the key change in the focus of the work with services users at the Recovery Centre, with a much greater emphasis on a more intensive rehabilitation experience and a focus on the concept of mental health recovery, building an individual's self-esteem and confidence in their abilities, setting goals for the future and placing the emphasis firmly on the quality and fullness of the life an individual might wish to lead, despite the continued presence of their mental ill health.

INDEPENDENCE INCLUSION RECOVERY

REGISTERED OFFICE: 27 HUNTLY STREET, INVERNESS IV3 5PR: SCOTTISH CHARITY NUMBER SC 003198
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE REGISTERED IN SCOTLAND 105400

CHAIRMAN: MR JOHN PALMER

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: MR. PETER CATTANACH



John Palmer, Chairman of Birchwood Highland said:

“ the work that is being undertaken at the Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre is innovative and reflects the needs of modern mental health services in the Highlands.

We have been working very closely with our health and social care partners and will continue to do so to ensure that we offer a much needed community resource as a step in between hospital and community living.

As a company, Birchwood Highland fully embraces the concept of mental health recovery. We see it as essential that individuals experiencing mental ill health are provided with the opportunity to rebuild their lives and regain their self-respect and confidence in their abilities to a level where they again start believing in their own ability to achieve their goals in life. We believe that through this approach, we can make a significant difference to an individual’s chances of successfully moving onto and living a full life in their local community.

Crucial to an individual’s recovery, however, is having other people in their lives believing in them and encouraging them to meet their goals, and whilst our staff do this and continue to do so when our service users move into their own homes in the community, friendship and companionship are also crucial. We, therefore, very much welcome applications from people interested in working with service users in a befriending capacity or as a volunteer in our Recovery Centre or throughout our company as a whole.

We are currently consulting on how to best utilise and run our crisis service at the Recovery Centre. This is a valuable resource for the Highlands that has been talked about for many years and we are extremely happy to have been able to provide the facility for this. We would envisage having the full service in operation by the early summer.”

Peter Cattanach, Chief Executive of Birchwood Highland said:

Staff have worked extremely hard over the past 18 months to get to where we are now at Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre. We look forward to the official opening of the Centre as an opportunity to celebrate with service users, carers, staff and local partners and stakeholders and mark the great achievements that have been made to date.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS



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1. Birchwood Highland was founded in 1987 as a Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. Our staff design and deliver individual support and care plans with people who may have mental ill health, dementia, learning disabilities, or problems with addiction. Birchwood House was opened in 1994 and initially housed up to 20 service users from the former Craig Dunain Hospital in a residential home.
2. Following a number of years planning and setting a new vision for mental health provision in the Highlands, based on the latest thinking and fully incorporating the recovery concept in mental health, we embarked on a major building programme at Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre in July 2007. We will also be providing on this site the first Safe House/crisis flat for service users in a crisis in the Highlands.
3. More information on the development of the Highland Recovery Centre and other services provided by Birchwood Highland can be found on our website: www.birchwoodhighland.org.uk We are happy to provide more information on our company and this development at any time.

The 'recovery' concept in mental health is gaining more wide appreciation in Scotland, the Scottish Recovery Network being a key player in this. In the Highlands, Birchwood Highland are leading the way in developing and promoting this concept and in association with policy and partner organisations have arranged for the first Conference on Recovery in the Highlands to take place at the Aviemore Highland Resort on the 20th March 2008. Recovery is the basis of all the support we provide to service users throughout the Highlands.

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