

Birchwood Highland Housing Support Service

Working with people in their own homes who may have mental health conditions, dementia, learning disabilities or problems with addiction.



Lochaber Team

Head Office: 5 Wells Street, Inverness, IV3 5JT

Tel: 01463 236507

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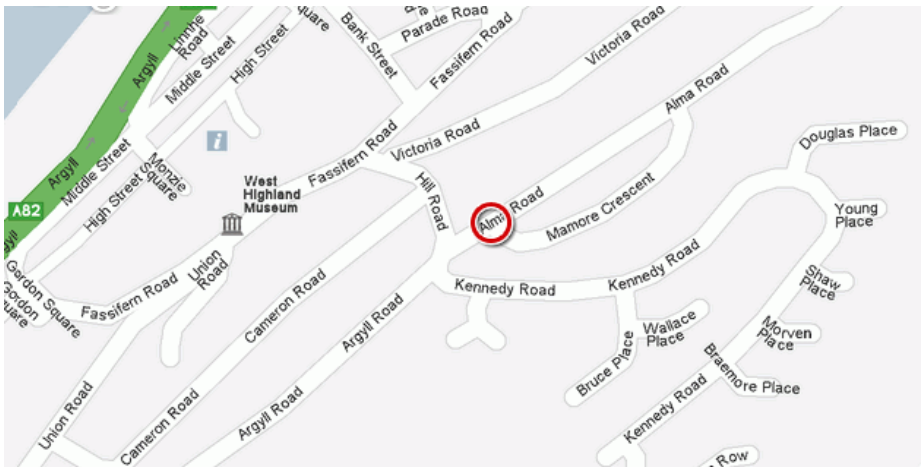
www.birchwoodhighland.org.uk

Lochaber Housing Support Team

Birchwood Highland has many years of experience in working with people who have a severe and enduring mental illness. Most of the people we work with in Lochaber have a mental health problem, and we do our best to help them experience the feelings of independence and inclusion, and work towards recovery.

Birchwood Highland's Lochaber team is based at Flat 5, Meall na Mara, Alma Road, Fort William, PH33 6HD. Their telephone number is 01397 700 944.

This is where to find us:



Applying for services

When someone wants and needs our service, it is usually the local Community Health Service who will let us know.

We don't have our own special referral form, but we expect you or the organisation making the referral to give us "single shared assessment" documentation. This will help us get started in planning the support that is needed. Sometimes we have vacant accommodation in houses we lease from Lochaber Housing Association and we will support a person in one of these properties

and help them towards more independence and a house of their own. Often a person will already have their own permanent or temporary accommodation and we will provide support for them there too.

As everyone's circumstances are different, a financial assessment must be made to see what contributions, if any, should be made towards the cost of the service we provide.

The applicant's Care Manager is responsible for carrying out the assessment and will advise of any contributions that need to be made.

If you did not wish to be the subject of a financial assessment, you would not be refused a service, but you would be required to pay the full cost.

The service does not commence until the applicant agrees to pay, where relevant, the contribution identified.

If a person is in receipt of Direct Payments they can contract with us to provide the service they have been assessed as needing. Please contact Birchwood Highland's local Service Manager (page 16) for further information.

Meall na Mara 'hill (lump or knoll) of the sea'.



Meall na Mara apartments were officially opened in March 2006. There are six self-contained flats. With the support of our team, who operate from what was formerly Flat 5, residents are able to experience living in and running a flat.

All the people in Meall na Mara flats have their names on the Highland Council housing list, so that when they are ready they can move on to their own tenancy, and that may be with our continuing support.

Monitoring and reviewing the service

The service you receive will be discussed and agreed with you, and we will support you to set and work towards achieving your goals.

Birchwood Highland will review the support with you after 6 weeks - then every 6 months, or sooner if you ask for a review or if your needs change.

Birchwood Highland has different methods of gathering information to evaluate the service we provide, and you will be asked for your opinions as part of that. It's important to us that you give us honest feedback so that we can make improvements, so we will probably ask you to tell us what you think either by questionnaire or in a group forum.

How to end the service

If you want to stop receiving a service from us you should speak to Birchwood Highland's Service Manager (see page 16) or your Care Manager if you have one. We would always try to work with you to reduce and end the service in a planned way, and would welcome your feedback on the service received.

What support workers do

Our support workers aim to build supportive, trusting relationships with those they support and care for. They monitor the person's welfare and help with daily living.

You will find examples of the kinds of support that we provide on the following pages.



Enabling access to services



Support workers advise and guide people on how to access services such as:

- CAB
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Housing organisations
- Voluntary groups
- Self-help groups
- Social activities
- Training and employment

Personal appearance and hygiene

When necessary, support workers may prompt or remind a person to attend to their personal hygiene, appearance or laundry.



Social links



Support workers will also encourage people to maintain and develop their links with family and the community.

Interests and hobbies



Support workers can offer you encouragement to try out new activities, and look out for social events and community groups that suit your interests. We provide a befriending service, and would try to find a befriender for someone who expressed an interest in this.

We have a local service user group that meets weekly. The group gets involved in training, social activities, fundraising and away days. Please contact the Service Manager for details.

Safety and security in the home



Support workers can arrange fire safety talks and training from the local Crime Prevention Team. They will offer householders support and guidance on how to deal with unwanted visitors appropriately, and what to do if they are faced with a problem. They will also promote the practice of asking visitors for ID.

Home maintenance



Support workers help householders to recognise repairs and faults, and to report them to the landlord (this includes private landlords, housing associations and local authorities).

They will guide householders on their rights and responsibilities, as well as their landlords' rights and responsibilities.

They will advise on the safe usage of electricity, fire safety and security, for example locking doors and closing windows, and can arrange awareness sessions with the Community Fire Safety Officer.

They will support you to select firms or services, and advise how to get quotes for work to be done.

They will also encourage householders to deal with their bills and correspondence.

**Using
domestic
equipment
safely and
economically**



This can include

- Reading and following manufacturers' instructions
- Filling in and returning guarantees
- Regulating heating appliances and systems through the seasons.

From minor repairs to housing emergencies



Support Workers will assist householders if they need to report faults and repairs to the landlord, or to contact the appropriate repair services.

They will also offer support when dealing with minor repairs, and give contact numbers for emergencies outside working hours.

Arranging adaptations to meet the needs of people with disabilities



Support workers will provide advice and information on sourcing and installing equipment.

They will arrange an assessment via the Care Manager should the person need specialist services, such as additional homecare.

They can also arrange for the person to see advocacy or specialist services.

Life skills training



Here are some examples of the support that we can provide:

- Reminding to check contents of fridge and cupboards for expiry dates etc
- Assisting with food shopping
- Reminding of bin collection days
- Prompting need for maintenance of garden/outside area
- Support and guidance with carrying out household chores
- Disposing of rubbish in recycling containers
- How to turn off water in the event of flooding
- Changing light bulbs safely and ensuring adequate light
- Helping with cooking skills

- Guidance and information on what's available in the community, relating to interests, hobbies, groups etc.
- Supporting people to make links in the community
- Giving support and guidance on keeping well mentally and physically, for example support to do WRAP - Wellness Recovery Action Plan - which is a personalised plan that keeps you well.

Claiming benefits



Filling in forms, contacting Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and replying to letters are often far from straightforward. Support workers can help, but sometimes they have to refer the person for specialist help from CAB or DWP.

Engaging with professionals



Support workers will remind and prompt people to keep their appointments with the GP, dentist, chiropodist, hospital consultant and other authorities such as housing officials, social workers and solicitors.

They will help people prepare for appointments, so that they are clear on what they want to say. They will also accompany the person at the appointment if they need that support. This includes appointments with advocacy services, if required.

Personal budgeting and debt counselling



The sort of things we can help with are:

- Setting up direct debits
- Managing savings
- Buying savings stamps for rent, TV license, electricity, telephone
- Budgeting for food, clothes, furniture, renewals, repairs and other items
- Dealing with debt by using specialist services, eg CAB, debt counselling etc.

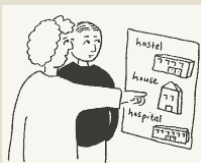
Dealing with relationships and neighbour disputes



Being a good neighbour can mean not making excessive noise, and keeping the garden to a reasonable standard of tidiness. Support workers will help householders if they experience difficult situations, eg by informing the local authority of anti-social behaviour.

Support workers can also support people in rebuilding relationships with family members.

Resettlement



Support workers can advise on all stages of relocation, eg

- Removal
- Tenant and landlord responsibility
- Arranging utilities (gas, electricity)
- Furnishings
- Tenancy or occupancy agreements - advising on independent advice (advocacy service etc) prior to signing.

Moving to accommodation where there's less support



Support workers can assist and advise people who are moving from hospital to the community, or from residential care to the community.

Shopping



We can offer support and advice on:

- Healthy eating
- Cooking
- Purchasing furniture or new household equipment
- Accompanying the person, if needed for support
- Helping out if unwell.

Responding to emergency alarm calls



We support people to be in charge of their own emergency plans, and how to take the appropriate action

If a person is suffering from ill health, the support worker will direct them to the relevant service, for example their GP, NHS 24, ambulance service, social worker.

Taking medication safely



Support workers help people with their medication. This could mean prompting and reminding them with:

- Following prescribers' instructions
- Filling dossett boxes
- Re-ordering and collecting medication, and
- making or keeping appointments

Housing Support staff will not be able to administer medications.

About Birchwood Highland

Birchwood Highland is a modern charitable company. Our staff design and deliver individual support and care plans. Most people we work with have a major mental illness. Some may have a form of dementia, a learning disability or problems with addiction.

We work with people where they are living - in Caithness, Easter Ross, Inverness, Lochaber and other areas of the Highlands and surrounds.

Some people stay in our recovery centre in Inverness and move on from there to more independent living.

Birchwood Highland supports the concept of recovery in mental health and we practise person-centered work.

Using our expertise and knowledge we seek to influence decision makers about standards, practices, policies and legislation, both locally and in Scotland.

As a Voluntary Organisation we have a role to be innovative and to try out new ways of working and to learn from that.

As a Company and an employer we offer good work experience and training opportunities and aim to achieve the highest standards.

As a Charity we promote the welfare of service users with a view to maximising and maintaining their independence and choice.

Birchwood Highland Housing Support Service is registered with the Care Commission to provide Housing Support services across Highland.

Birchwood Highland’s mission is to:

improve the quality of life of people with mental health issues and complex needs by promoting Recovery, Inclusion and Independence.

We believe that individuals with mental ill health can recover. By “recovery” we mean being able to move on from a position where a person’s mental ill health can dictate their quality of life and dependency upon the services that support them, to living independently, with the confidence in themselves and the support networks around them to make choices about the type of life they wish to lead. Their choices could include further education, training, employment opportunities, participating in and contributing to their local communities.

Lochaber Housing Support Team's aims and objectives

Our team works to the overall aims and objectives of Birchwood Highland. We also have specific aims and objectives for the service we provide in Lochaber.

Lochaber Housing Support Team aims to make a significant difference to the lives of individuals by providing a holistic, personcentred approach in service delivery.

The objectives of the Lochaber Team are:

- To improve a person's ability to participate in the community;
- To reduce his or her feelings of isolation;
- To raise people's awareness of recovery;
- To provide opportunities that will increase a person's (or people's) knowledge and understanding;
- To promote healthier lifestyles;
- To increase opportunities for holidays with support.

Contact details

Lochaber Housing Support Team

Flat 5, Meall na Mara

Alma Road

Fort William

PH33 6HD

Tel 01397 700 944

Service Manager: Shona MacGillivray

Email: shona.macgillivray@birchwoodhighland.org.uk

Team Leader: Johnan Cameron

Email: johnan.cameron@birchwoodhighland.org.uk

Head Office

5 Wells Street

Inverness

IV3 5JT

Telephone: 01463 236 507

Email: info@birchwoodhighland.org.uk

www.birchwoodhighland.org.uk

REGISTERED OFFICE: 27 HUNTLY STREET, INVERNESS, IV3 5PR
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE REGISTERED IN SCOTLAND 105400

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