



Birchwood Highland

# Caithness Support Service



# Annual Report 2009/2010

A Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Scotland 105400

Registered Office Address: 27 Huntly Street, Inverness, IV3 5PR

Registered Charity No: SC003198

[www.birchwoodhighland.org.uk](http://www.birchwoodhighland.org.uk)

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# Caithness Support Service



Independence  
Inclusion  
Recovery

## Annual Report 2009/2010

This year has seen the Caithness Support Service continue to operate at capacity with an increase in referrals from other agencies. The service is currently providing support to 16 individuals in the Caithness area.

The 'Friends of Birchwood' has now become an established group, thanks to a core of members' dedication to see the group achieving its aims of supporting each other, sharing experiences and ideas and broadening the horizons for the group and individuals.

One member said about the Friends of Birchwood "*I get out and meet new people, we learn from each other, it is very worthwhile*".

Activities this year included an outing to the Laidhay Croft Museum to mark Mental Health Week, a successful Christmas lunch and a representative attending the Service User Group annual general meeting in Inverness.

Friends of Birchwood started its own

newsletter in December 2009 with the aim of ensuring that people who are not actively involved can be kept informed about what the group is doing and of other things going on with the group. It is also a useful format for informing people of forthcoming events, training sessions and other items of interest.

There have been a good number of in-house training sessions this year that have been well attended by staff, Friends of Birchwood members and other professionals. Training subjects have included sessions on the Ten Essential Shared Capabilities, First Aid and the Mental Health Act (Scotland) 2007.

In October 2009 the Caithness service once again hosted the "See Me" photographic competition with an exhibition held in the Caithness Horizons in Thurso. The winning entry selected by one of the people who use the service was "Phil on the hill" (photo on back page).

Due to a successful application to the Postcode Lottery Fund we were able to purchase 3 new bicycles and in December we launched the cycling group, enabling people who do not own their own bike to come along and join in. The group is tailored to the ability of people attending



Friends of Birchwood meeting



Outing to Laidhay Croft Museum

and will hopefully contribute to improving physical and mental health.

The Scottish Recovery Network held a Recovery Road show in Thurso. Birchwood Highland was well represented with a good number of staff and people who use the service. One staff member said, *“It is good to have this sort of event here in Caithness, I am pleased to work for Birchwood Highland and we were able to show that we work in a recovery focused way and that we are a part of the Highland Recovery Network”*.

The results of this year’s questionnaires seeking the views of the people who use the service were extremely encouraging as they demonstrate that a significant percentage of people felt that things had improved for them over the past year. 7 people said that they had achieved specific goals over the year, 5 of them specifically stating this as a result of the support from Birchwood Highland. Comments included: *“I achieved my ASDAN life skills award with support from Birchwood”*.

*“Birchwood helped me to move home”*.

Staff from the Caithness service took part in a Wellness Recovery Action Planning workshop, enabling them to start to use WRAP for themselves and to have an insight into how this self-management

tool can be used to benefit the people we support.

One staff member went on to successfully complete the WRAP facilitators training course, which will make WRAP available to all staff and the people who receive support from Birchwood, as well as the wider community.

Several people took the opportunity to have their energy usage and efficiency assessed by Caithness Home Energy Advice. This involved joint visits with staff and some people qualified for a rebate of £50. Power down devices and low energy bulbs were also given out.

Following attendance at a local volunteer recruitment day hosted by the Caithness Voluntary Group the service has been able to recruit a new volunteer to complement the existing team.

Home safety checks were also carried out by staff from the Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue service, teaching people how to keep safe in their homes, including advice on things like keeping doors closed and regular testing of smoke detectors.

The Caithness team were again nominated for the team award at this year’s staff awards ceremony, but the award went to

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one of the other teams.

All of the Birchwood Highland housing support services were awarded top grades following this year's inspection by the Care Commission.

## Contact Details

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