



Birchwood Highland

Lochaber 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

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Independence
Inclusion
Recovery

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Over the past year Birchwood Highland Lochaber Service continues to make every effort in promoting recovery within the area. We have invested time and money into innovative training for both staff and those who use the service. Currently, the service offers proactive, tailor made support to 26 individuals living in the Lochaber area and we are looking to expand further afield.

Paying for support - a new option

One of the major changes facing the service over the coming months will be the introduction of Self Directed Support as promoted by the Highland Council, whereby we hope to be able to offer an extensive range of services to individuals that take up this stream of funding.

Lochaber Service User Group

The Service User Group, established two

years ago, continues to grow, becoming more self-sufficient, with less support required from the team. The group has a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and now take their own minutes.

The group has been very active in fund raising over the past year. Events included: Bag packing in Morrison's; Prize bingo, where many local businesses were very generous with donations; Baxters 5k fun run; table top sales and car boot sales. Some of the money raised went towards BBQ's, Mini bus hire, Mugs and football strips for the 'Birchwood United' team. John Brooks, Editor of the Blogaber Views, the service user led newsletter said *"It's really good fun, it's really interesting pulling everything together and seeing the end result, and it's good to see everything that we do"*.

Promoting active lifestyles

We continue to encourage an active lifestyle not only with individuals who use the service but within the staff team as well by inviting different agencies / professionals along to team meetings, service group meetings and to joint training. An example of this was when we invited the Red Cross to come and give First Aid training to both staff and service users, which resulted in two members



of staff and two service users going on to complete the Train the Trainer for the First Aid and now jointly deliver the training internally. Denise Allan, Service User said *“I really enjoyed the training, we all got certificates at the end of the day”*. As well as training, we have several outlets for physical exercise including, cycling, walking and not forgetting our very own Birchwood United football team which plays each week, the team is often joined by others outwith the service which offers a range of opportunities. Partrick McGrail, Goalkeeper for Birchwood United said *“I feel like the Celtic goalkeeper when I’m playing, I let all the goals in!”*

Investing in training

We pride ourselves on the level of training we offer to staff and service users; each contracted support worker has or is working towards SVQ level 3 in Health and Social Care, Management is trained to SVQ level 4 and both the Teamleader and Manager are currently undertaking the PDA in Care Management which will enable them to register with the SSSC when the register opens later in the year. In addition to academic qualifications other opportunities for personal development were met through Strada’s Train the Trainer

programme in the summer which enabled two members of staff to learn the skills involved with planning and delivering a training session; and also through WRAP – Wellness Recovery Action Planning, a self management tool, focussing on recovery, where the company took the initiative to train 8 members of staff as WRAP Facilitators and take WRAP to the Highlands. It is planned that once all staff are trained, facilitators will go out and offer training to others next year. The money we continue to invest in training ensures that the people who use the service are getting the best support available.

Working with the wider community

Working with other organisations always plays a big part in our year. This year we were approached by Conaglen Estate to work in the gardens. Michael McLellan said on working with the flowers *“I like the scent, the way the flowers look and how they capture the senses”*. The service user group also took part in an environmental survey up Glen Nevis working with the Nevis Partnership, Piers Trussel, Volunteer and Service User said *“He got a good feeling from the Ranger Service, and feels that anything to improve and maintaining the countryside walks is a good thing”*. Another opportunity

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with the Police was a training day on Bicycle Safety, Brian commented *“It was quite good, I didn’t realise you could use the air pump at the garage”*. A few of us also went up to Inverness for a ceildh during Mental Health Week, in aid of raising money for the Recovery Centre Group, Simon Green shared these thoughts *“There was a dinner of soup, haggis, neeps and tatties and a band of fiddlers for the ceildh, I danced the Gay Gordons, the Canadian Barn Dance and Strip the Willow. I thoroughly enjoyed it, it was good fun and will go again next year”*.

Promoting recovery

At our last Care Commission inspection, we were ecstatic to receive a Grade 6, which is the highest grade offered by the Care Commission. Over the next year we will endeavour to maintain that standard whilst continuing to pursue new and innovative ways to promote Recovery. We have recently applied for funding to create a Community Garden up at Meall na Mara, creating a Social Enterprise venture. We hope to grow vegetables and supply local cafes with the produce and any money raised will go back into the project.

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