

Independence Inclusion Recovery



Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre



Annual Report 2010/2011



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“**Blooming marvellous**” has been said by a number of people this last year as they look around the garden in the spring and summer and see the beauty developing outside in the garden of Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre (BHRC).

This annual report provides a good chance to reflect on how service users and staff have used opportunities to develop themselves and benefit from a more focussed recovery service.

Independence

Leanne is one of five people who have moved on into their own tenancies in the last year and is clear about how the Recovery Centre helped. *“I found it useful with lots of things such as finding voluntary work, cooking for myself again and looking after my room - things I wasn't doing before. Work experience as a hotel chamber maid helped me realise I really wanted to go back to nursery nursing (which I'm qualified in) and I am now using my qualification as a part time nursery nurse.”*

There is still much to be done to assist people into employment opportunities. In the last year we worked with a local hotel to provide work experience for two people. A local cafe provides work experience for another person to gain skills in serving customers and working with the till. We have established a link with 'Highland Works' - a Highland Council project to assist people who are remote from work experience to prepare for employment.

As Domestic Support staff, Hazel and Louise have developed their role to promote independence by providing practical advice and assistance to service users to help with housework routines and skills. Hazel has had several meetings with small groups of people to look at handy household hints and the need to be aware of hazards in the home. *“The handy household hints meetings are meant to be sociable and relaxed for service users and give them an opportunity to learn the correct and safe use of vacuum cleaners etc, cleaning materials and the importance of doing things regularly.”*



Leanne



Hazel and Neil



Louise and Isabel

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Inclusion

Helping people connect with and be part of their local community may greatly assist the recovery of individuals. As one of four volunteers recruited recently, Shirley enjoys the opportunity to share her time with someone who may otherwise have felt isolated. *“I’ve been a befriender with Birchwood Highland since November 2010. I did some training, and enjoy spending time with my Befriender.”*

“We meet regularly, and go shopping or out for lunch. I also take my Befriender to hairdressing appointments. We get on well together and have a lot of fun.”

“I enjoy being part of Birchwood Highland, and feel I am learning at the same time. It makes me feel good knowing that I am of help to someone, and I feel that my Befriender is learning to trust me.”

As an organisation Befrienders Highland has had an informal link with Birchwood Highland for many years. As a result of our developing a closer working relationship, we are very grateful to Befrienders Highland for their recruitment, training and support of four other volunteers who are in the process of being matched with service users at BHRC. It is hoped that these new relationships will continue after people have moved into their own tenancies and help them connect with their local community.

Recovery

This last year has seen Birchwood Highland give great priority to developing staff awareness of recovery principles and Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP). The Recovery Centre is fortunate in having two staff who this year trained as WRAP facilitators. Anne and Lesley know from personal experience the value of using WRAP as a self management tool for taking control of their own wellbeing and are passionate in promoting its use. As Anne reflected - *“I recognised that many of the principles of WRAP were similar to those that helped me manage my wellbeing many years ago. These principles changed my life and I am delighted to have the opportunity to support others in learning about WRAP.”*



Shirley



Anne and Lesley

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Lesley and Zac



Simon



L-R Peter, Michael, Andrew, Ken,
Nick, Neil =
Birchwood United

As a co-facilitator Lesley is equally outspoken about the potential power of WRAP to change lives. *“I’ve found WRAP to be a very effective tool in my personal life, in particular when it comes to taking responsibility for my own wellbeing. It’s easy to overlook what you can do for yourself when you’re not feeling too good and WRAP keeps you focussed.”*

Although not for everyone, Anne and Lesley are pleased that six service users have completed their training, and it is evident that for some, WRAP has had a significant and positive impact on their road to recovery. Zac admits to being cynical when he first heard about WRAP. *“The way Lesley explained it to me changed my mind. It has helped me to keep motivated. It makes me look back to see if I can help myself.”*

Promoting Recovery through Physical Activity

Staff and service users have remained committed to encouraging participation in a range of physical activities that can improve all round health.

Walking - earlier in the year Linsey, Norman and Sarah Jane trained as Walk Leaders.

Cycling - a small group of service users completed a cycle skills course and Sarah Jane was pleased to have been a participant. *“It had been some time since I had been on a bike. The cycle skills course gave me the confidence to try going out on the road on my own and I have really began to enjoy cycling again.”* Simon has always preferred cycling to walking and makes regular use of the bikes at the Recovery Centre.

Football - has proved so popular that we bought football strips and formed an informal group of 5-7 people who enjoy a kick-about and have played three friendly matches against our competitors in Fort William. Neil has been a regular member of the training and playing group. *“Yes, it’s really great. I enjoy playing with the others and I think it has helped my fitness. I wish I could play more often.”*

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Abriachan Community Woodland has continued as a very popular venue for a group of individuals who love the outdoors and the chance to walk in the woods above the shores of Loch Ness. Ken explained why it is his No 1 activity. *“Cooking outdoors, learning to light a fire, making a shelter out of wood and making a garden bench as well as just walking and exploring the forest are the things I enjoy the most.”* As a result of this experience Ken hopes to begin a course with the Forestry Commission later in the year.

Staff Development and Training

In the last year Jenny achieved her SVQ 111 in Social Care and Andrew and Lori are progressing towards the same end. Lori is well aware of how doing the SVQ has benefited herself. *“Through doing SVQ my knowledge has developed, especially about legislation and Care Standards relating to adult care. I value the information that I have learnt greatly as it has given me a greater understanding of why I do what I do and how it affects service users. The more work I do with my SVQ the more I enjoy it.”*

Janet and Lilian in their role as Senior Support Workers successfully completed a Professional Development Award in Staff Supervision through Inverness College. Although a little rusty at writing essays, Janet found the course very interesting. *“The course covered many aspects including staff supervision, the National Care Standards and how we communicate with staff and service users.”*

Despite her own doubts about being able to apply herself to the course, Lilian passed both units and received fantastic feedback from the College. *“I found undertaking the PDA to be very enjoyable and informative and has helped me to develop in my role of supervisor.”*

As one of two Team Leaders studying to complete the Professional Development Award for managers in care services, Angela was glad to reach the end of the course and pass some challenging assignments. *“The course was based upon my working practice and provided an opportunity to reflect on how I carry out my role of team leader and look at ways of improving my practice.”*



At Abriachan



Lori



Lilian and Janet



Angela with Damian

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Fundraising ceilidh



Graeme



Hazel and Bill

Fund Raising and Grants

A very enjoyable ceilidh arranged by a working group of service users and staff was held in January and raised over £900 which was used to help fund the Abriachan project.

We are very grateful to the Trustees of the Robertson Trust for a further grant of £15,000 and the generosity of the organisers of the Highland Cross for making a grant of £30,000. Both sums are being used to continue to develop the use of the building as well as meet the cost of essential repairs. For example, a new walk-in shower has been created from a largely unused storage room, improvements to the soft furnishings of the single rooms has been achieved and plans are in place to create two separate rooms with showers from the space occupied by the present double flat.

Sharing our Learning

Feedback from Inverness College and the Highland Campus of Stirling University has underlined the value of the learning opportunities gained by Social Care and Nursing Students from their placement at Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre. As the most recent student of Social Care, Graeme has appreciated the learning opportunities available from his contact with the individuals who live and work at BHRC. *"I have had the chance to learn from a staff group from a wide range of backgrounds and have really enjoyed the social contact with service users and the support role I've played. My fellow students are envious of the support and learning opportunities I have received."*

Short Term / Respite Service

The Respite Service has been promoted more than ever to Community Mental Health Teams in the last year and as a result the number of users of this service has risen from 26 in 2009/10 to 56 users in 2010/11.

Neil has used the respite service for a few years and looks forward to the opportunity for a break.

"I particularly enjoy the staff support and company of other people. Everything was very good. It helps my mental well being a lot."

Bill has made several visits to the Recovery Centre to use the respite service and values the opportunity for a change of environment and having his meals provided.

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