

Independence Inclusion Recovery



Birchwood  
Highland

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Birchwood Highland  
Recovery Centre  
Annual Report 2008/09

Birchwood Highland  
A Company Limited by Guarantee in Scotland 105400  
Registered Charity No SC003198

# Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre Annual Report 2008/2009

This last year has been a time of development for staff and service users and marks the first full year of operating as Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre (BHRC)

As a service, we have tried to give real expression to our purpose of promoting independence, inclusion and recovery.

Staff and service users were asked to comment on their experiences in the last 12 months and describe what recovery means for them.



## Independence

Gary moved into one of the self-contained flats in December 2008 and is clear about the benefit he has experienced:

*"I think Birchwood has given me confidence to become more independent and develop new skills. The relationships I have with staff have been important in giving me confidence to try new things and take responsibility for my affairs like budgeting, shopping, looking for jobs and keeping active."*

Gary was too shy to have his photo taken.

After just 8 months in BHRC, Steven was delighted to get the offer of a flat from the Council and quickly set about making the place ready to move into.

*"It was great to get the chance of a flat in Inverness and I really thought I was ready to live more independently. Living in a flat at BHRC was a great help and the staff support helped me to get into a routine of looking after things."*



## Inclusion

Service user involvement in the running of BHRC has grown in the last year. There was a great deal of participation in completing the self assessment paperwork prior to our annual inspection by the Care Commission. Overall we achieved a Care Commission grading of 'Very Good' in all inspection themes.

Liz works as a Support Worker and has taken a lead role in supporting regular meetings of service users.

*"I feel that my role is about helping others realise their potential. I strongly believe in the importance of user involvement and have been facilitating a users group which meets every few weeks. This group gives service users an opportunity to be involved in decision making processes and empowers them to speak out on matters that they feel strongly about. This level of involvement enables people to build confidence, knowing that their individual views will be listened to and acted upon, and ultimately may help them on their route to recovery."*



During the year we received a grant of £250 from Moray Firth Radio towards improvements in the garden. Liz, Angela, Stephen and wee Liz completed the Thistle Challenge and raised the sum of £500 for the Service User Development Fund.

Connecting service users with opportunities in the community for leisure, recreation, education and employment has been an important area for development in the last year. As Support Worker, Jenny has assisted people to access the facilities of the local leisure centre.

*"I've really enjoyed supporting service users to attend the gym and swimming pool. It's great to see people's confidence grow and get fit at the same time."*

David tried his hand at archery last year during a taster session at the Annual General Meeting of the Service Users Association in Invergordon, and decided he wanted to do more.

*"I joined Inverness Field Archery Club and practise as often as I can. Roddy - Support Worker - accompanies me to club nights at the leisure centre in the winter months. During the spring and summer we use an outdoor target area in the woods that belongs to the club. I hope to enter competitions soon."*

In the last year three volunteers were recruited and trained as Befrienders to share their leisure time with individual service users and help access social opportunities in the community. Megan has been a regular visitor as a Befriender and finds her role very satisfying.

*"Volunteering at Birchwood Highland has been a particularly valuable experience for me as a student. I have gained a much greater understanding and broader perspective on the journey of recovery. Recovery, I believe, is not simply eliminating certain obstacles, but finding the most effective ways of coping whilst maintaining a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle."*

As a support worker with many years experience, Janet has helped people discover the great outdoors - near and far - through her involvement in the walking group.

*"Over the past 12 months Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre has become a lot busier and at times hectic, but a lot more active. Service Users have organised and participated in a walking group. They have used mainly forestry, canal and city walks and this has encouraged service users to lead a healthy lifestyle. Some purchases of waterproof clothing and boots were made as our Scottish weather is*



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*not always cloud-free sky and sunshine. It has been known to rain at times!!!”*

Ian has been working in the garden during the last year and has recently joined up with some other people to begin the hard work of creating a vegetable garden with pathways and seating areas for quiet relaxation.

*“I’ve been working with the garden group for a few months. I have a friendly relationship with my supervisor Tom. I get a lot of satisfaction from it. It’s a chance to be involved in something different and a reason to get up in the morning. Even though it’s heavy work – it is relaxing. I’ve had various jobs such as using the pick axe, shifting barrows of earth and stone, and cement mixing.”*

## Recovery

Linsey is one of the most experienced Staff Nurses working within BHRC and has seen a lot of change leading to us becoming a recovery centre.

*“In the year since the building work ended and Birchwood House became Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre, I have observed and experienced many developments. The accommodation and use of the grounds have improved immensely and continues to. There has been a significant bedding-in period which has seen familiar faces (staff and service users alike) come and go; our practice evolve steadily; increased use of IT by both staff and service users. Some great project ideas (which you’ll be reading about in this report) have come forward from service users and staff – I even got involved in some cycling activities myself. There is a new energy within the staff team. The Person Centred Approach that the company actively strived towards is rightly more evident. I feel with continued focus on inclusion and further training, moving from medical/nursing models towards person centred recovery models, we can be truly proud of our work within the Recovery Centre.”*

As a Relief Support Worker, Chris is coming to terms with the variety of roles played by staff and has earned a high reputation for producing a full Scottish breakfast.

*“Recovery to me is people being enabled to live in the community, living life as full and complete as possible. At BHRC every facet, skill and interest is encouraged in the pursuit of this end. That includes service users and employees whatever their job title.”*



Pearl –

*“I have been at the Recovery Centre for six months and I started doing relaxation two months ago. I have found it a good way to unwind. I especially like the end of the session when your whole body is relaxed and you just listen to the music.”*

Shona –

*“As a staff nurse at BHRC, I undertook training from a relaxation therapist. This equipped me with the skills and confidence to begin regular relaxation sessions within the recovery centre. I have found this to be a great skill to be able to provide to service users who appear to benefit from the sessions.”*

Ann –

*“Working at The Recovery Centre is completely different from working in the hospital environment as it is more orientated to social care than medical. However having knowledge / training in both has proved beneficial in my capacity of Staff Nurse as well as for the service users that the Recovery Centre support. Getting to know the service users well is something that motivates me personally and allows me to find out what makes them ‘tick’ which then enables me to work towards suggesting various things which (if I’ve worked it out right!) motivates them to get involved in aspects of daily life and become more independent. Many challenges face those in the Recovery Centre (service users and staff alike!). However working through these is something yet again that motivates me. In a few words “I love it!”*

Claire -

*“I think the staff here are well motivated, happy to be doing their job. They never promise something that doesn’t happen, for example, so and so will help you with this later on, but it doesn’t materialise. The atmosphere here is very relaxed and calm. Birchwood has its rules of conduct but it manages to enforce them without being regimental. I think that Birchwood is genuinely dedicated to getting people better and not just providing comfort for people going through a bad patch.”*



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As Senior Support Worker, Lilian has the challenging task of making up the staff rota each month and has clear ideas about recovery.

*“Recovery to me means being able to support people to have meaningful lives, supporting people to live the lives that they aspire to, to regain control of the way they wish to live their lives. The simple things that we all take for granted like friends, family, coming and going and not having to justify ourselves are things that people may not have in their lives when they have been in services for some time. To allow people to share their thoughts and fears and to work with that person as an individual. I don’t think recovery only comes in one size. It’s like my favourite shop in town – they have things for every shape and size ... one size does not fit all.*”



As Support Worker, Roddy has used his many skills to improve the service at BHRC and has often been accompanied to work by his two huskie dogs Arctic and Alaska.

*“The huskies have been a serious hit with staff and service users. Pet therapy has proved to help heart and lung function, promote physical activity and reduce anxiety. Dogs can provide loyal companionship during periods of loneliness. With so much paws for thought, it’s not a case of why would a recovery centre want pets, why would not be without them, when the advantages can be so easily seen.”*

## Respite Service - outcomes

There has been increasing use of the respite / short term care service in the last twelve months. Three of the 22 contract places have been nominated for short term care. In consultation with users of the service and staff, the following outcomes were drafted:

- People using the service at BHRC return home feeling stronger and more able to cope with their daily living situation.
- People are motivated, more confident and hopeful in beginning to plan their future and consider using the recovery focused service in the longer term,
- People are better informed about healthy lifestyle choices in relation to diet, smoking, physical activity and stress management.
- Users and their carers feel supported and reassured by



a service that they can plan to make use of at different times throughout the year.

Bill has used the short term care service on several occasions in the last year and knows the benefits to himself.

*“The benefits to me are enormous. I enjoy meeting people. I can relax for a week knowing the people around me have an understanding of my situation.”*

Ben has had two short stays of one week in the last six months and was consulted on drafting outcomes of the service.

*“I feel safe here. The staff are friendly and don't give me any hazzle or pressure. I didn't think one of the outcomes applied to me but then I realised that during this last week I have made a plan to gut a lot of rubbish out of my house when I get back. I've let things go a bit at home over the years. I'm going to make my home more comfortable.”*

### Training

Staff training and development has remained a priority in this last year. Sue Stone Team Leader went back to serious study when she committed herself to doing an OU course entitled 'Challenging Ideas in Mental Health'.

*“The course really emphasised the holistic approach. It was quite intense and very interesting. My one reservation was that the training materials and text did not have a Scottish orientation. However I really enjoyed the course and await the outcome of the final exam.”*

Other training undertaken by staff included -

- Both Senior Support Workers doing the SVQ Medication Unit,
- Team Leaders began the Professional Development Award at Inverness College and
- three staff registered to do SVQs.

The shift pattern in the Recovery Centre includes a monthly training session and this has been used to raise staff awareness of Advocacy, Care Programme Approach and visits to other Mental Health resources in the community, National Care Standards and the role of the Care Commission.



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