

Independence Inclusion Recovery



Birchwood
Highland

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Caithness Support Service
Annual Report
2008/09

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One of the most significant achievements of this year has to be the high grading awarded to the service by the Care Commission following an inspection in March 2009.

The service was graded 6 – Excellent for 5 out of the 6 quality statements the remaining one graded at 5 Very Good. This means that the overall themes have been graded at 6, 6, and 5 (the third overall theme is rounded down). All staff and people who use the service are delighted and proud of such a high achievement.

We are all determined to continue to work to a high standard and to maintain or improve on these grades.



At this year's staff awards the team was nominated for an award by someone who uses the service. Two staff members achieved recognition for their outstanding contribution this year. The team did a spot of entertainment at the ceremony; a colleague said, "It will be remembered for many years to come".

Training

This year has seen an increase in the participation in training events involving people who use the service, regular staff and relief workers. One worker said, *"Since joining the Birchwood Highland team in Caithness, I believe my training needs have been fully met. It is nice to work for a company that allows time for training as well as providing 'up to date' training. All the courses have been of a high standard and I enjoyed the fact that training takes place in a combined group of staff and people who use the service and their carers. In my experience this is a unique method and we all benefit from each others perspective"*.

Another staff member said, *"The sharing of experiences makes the training far more meaningful"*.

People who use our service have also found the joint training beneficial, one individual said, *"Doing training helps me get out of the house to socialise and meet other members. I get certificates in case I can work in the future"*.





Some of the training and seminars attended this year includes:

- o Recruitment and selection
- o Recovery training
- o Working with drug and alcohol users
- o Minute taking training
- o Ten essential shared capabilities
- o Supporting Highland carers

as well as mandatory training and refreshers on legislation etc.

This year saw the introduction of the ASDAN life-skills award for people who use the service. Similar to an SVQ, candidates gather evidence from day to day tasks in order to demonstrate competence in different aspects of independent living. For example using public transport could provide evidence through photos, bus ticket, witness statement etc. Although only 3 of the people supported by the service enrolled to do the award, the advantages so far have proved to be so positive we hope that more people will take up the option. Staff say about the award *“It helps to provide more structure to the support sessions which is advantageous, it also helps to reinforce the skills that people already have”*.

An ASDAN candidate said about the award. *“It gives me a sense of achievement and helps with my confidence”*.

All change

In September 2008 the Caithness service moved its office base to more suitable premises in the Wellington Centre on the Airport Industrial estate. This move has been positive all round as the building is shared by the Wellington Enterprises horticultural project and the training and guidance unit TAG, giving people the opportunity for volunteering and training.

Activities

Mental Health Week 2008 saw Birchwood Highland hosting a photographic competition and exhibition in association with the national anti-stigma campaign “see me”. The winners for each category received a voucher for £50.

Mental Health Week was celebrated with a trip to the local bowling alley; ten-pin bowling always seems to be a popular activity.

Involving people

People who use the service have been more involved this year through joint training events, helping the service through consultation to generate a self-evaluation of the service as part of the Care Commission inspection process and rating. Attending ‘friends of Birchwood Highland’ meetings, a forum open to people who use the service, their carers, staff and volunteers with the aim of keeping people informed about opportunities, events

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and activities, gaining feedback on different aspects of the service, sharing ideas and supporting each other.

People were also consulted on the introduction of a new format of support plan that is more meaningful to the individual. It was decided to call it a personal plan as it has been designed to be much more about the person, their strengths abilities and ambitions.

Feedback on this new format has been very positive, *“The format is much more person centred and reflects the aims of the organisation to be working with people towards recovery, to be more socially included in their community and to be more independent”.*

Staffing

There have also been some staffing changes this year including the recruitment of relief support workers.

Achievements

Support worker Joan Coghill successfully completed her Scottish Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Health and Social Care.

Cycle run

On Friday 26th September, staff from the Caithness service were joined by company directors and representatives from Highland Breast Care to welcome a group of cyclists at John O' Groats.

The cyclists were welcomed by a lone piper with claps and cheers from the welcoming group at the end of a very long journey, having cycled from Lands End via 5 countries the riders raised a significant amount of money for both charities. Well done.



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