

Independence Inclusion Recovery



Birchwood
Highland

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Inverness Support Service
Annual Report
2008/09

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Staff have been motivated and excited about recovery and have attended seminars and training on working in a recovery focused way during the year so this is reflected in our Annual Report.



A quote from Routes to Recovery

“Feeling more in control encouraged people to try new things out and to do things even if they might go wrong. They also recognised that everyone makes mistakes and bad choices and that is okay. People felt it was important to be allowed to take calculated risk with something and go for it”.

This is a message that we must all remember when we support people to develop and manage their own recovery and encourage positive risk taking.

During the year we have supported thirty-six people with between two and thirteen hours of support a week to move forward with their own recovery. People have to move forward at their own pace and support workers can help best by enabling people to access information and services, giving choices and respecting that everyone has different strengths and weaknesses.

During the year three people have left the service and moved on, one to residential care and two who are independent of a housing support service.

John’s journey this year has taken him from being isolated, feeling low, lonely and depressed to being active, confident and able to take on training opportunities and voluntary work.

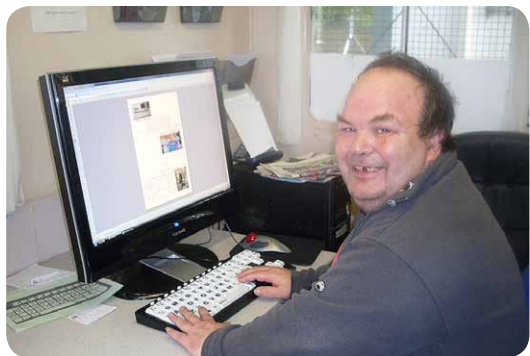


“With the support of Birchwood staff I have been to the Job-centre and have had experience of working on a farm, passed my tests for operators licence for fork-lifts and have been on a 6 week course with Ross County Football Club.

“The people who have helped me are Birchwood staff and Inverness Jobcentre, if it wasn’t for them I don’t know where I would be now.”

John entered our service in April 2008, receiving ten hours support a week which is now down to five hours a week.

The importance of feeling connected and valued is echoed by another





John who says:

“During the last year I have attended a church group for prayer meetings and have made some new friends. I also go to various lunch clubs and have enjoyed going to shows and Nairn Highland Games. Sometimes I have to push myself but feel it’s important to get out and about.”

John is a 71 year old man who receives four hours a week of housing support from us.

Training and development

Training and development is equally important for service users and staff to enable us to be more knowledgeable and build skills that we can share and use to support others. Throughout the year we have had training on inclusion, recovery, vulnerable adults and drug and alcohol issues.

Staff and service users agree that the most meaningful is the recovery focused training that includes staff and service users. Here are some quotes from recovery training:

“Learning from each other and especially from people’s real life experience makes things easier to understand.”

“It takes a lot of courage for people to share difficult experiences but it does help others to feel encouraged and give others hope.”

Support workers have enabled service users to take up opportunities in training and personal development eg:

- We have renewed links with the Jobcentre and they have helped us to access funding for training courses for service users, eg. John’s forklift courses and ASDANS.

- Two service users are working on their ASDANS and one is working with a job coach from the SHIRLIE project to find suitable work.
- Michael - a service user - started a computer course which he said he enjoyed very much and has learnt how to email his support worker!

Michael said:

“A year ago I was feeling low and was cutting myself but I haven’t done that in the last year and now feel its better to talk.

“I have had a good year, high points include a Christmas meal with other service users and staff and taking part in a sponsored walk which raised a total of £415. I am looking forward to doing it again.”

Michael receives nine hours of support a week.

Sharon said she feels her confidence has grown over the year.

She said:

“Because of time with my support worker I’m using the telephone more often by myself to deal with business matters and learning to cook more different foods.

“I have done one unit of my ASDAN course and I think more people should do this because it gets you out of the house to find out information about what’s happening in your local area.”

Sharon receives two and a half hours of support a week.

Three service users are in paid employment, four are in voluntary jobs, two are attending college, one has been on training courses linked to the Jobcentre and another on an independent training course.

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One service user comes to the office once a week to help others learn guitar.

Raising Funds

The service users group has raised over £800 through a sponsored walk, car boot sale and raffle, although there are only three or four who attend regularly everyone helps with fundraising. Activities organised by the group include crazy golf, bowling or sometimes just a walk, eg. around the Islands or to Kessock nature reserve ending up at a service user's house for coffee. Some of the funds raised were used to pay for part of the Christmas meal and the Halloween party. Mental Health Week was celebrated with a trip to the local bowling alley; ten-pin bowling always seems to be a popular activity.



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