



Independence
Inclusion
Recovery

Annual Report

Caithness Support Service

2007/08

Birchwood Highland
Caithness Support Service
Wellington Centre
Airport Industrial Estate
WICK
Caithness
KW1 4QS
Tel 01955 605700

Annual Report for Caithness Support Service 2007/2008

This year has been an exciting year for the Caithness service, building on the strengths and achievements of the previous year.



The year saw various fundraising activities, starting with a stall at the Caithness county show in July. Supported by our chief executive we helped raise the profile of Birchwood Highland in Caithness.

This was followed by Mental Health week in October when staff and service users joined forces with members and staff from the Caithness Mental Health Support Group in a 10 Kilometre sponsored walk around Wick. Not only did this event raise money but we also promoted good mental health and awareness.



Service users and staff had a bowling competition again to celebrate positive mental health and raise awareness. This event did not go entirely to plan as the 'gremlins' caused first one lane, then a second to brake down resulting in no scores being recorded. This did not dampen spirits though as everyone enjoyed the afternoon especially as we got the game for free.

In November the Caithness service hosted a lunch for service users and partner organisations. Those who did come enjoyed fantastic food and good company.

To round off the year we had a stall at the Christmas market in Wick with tremendous support from service user Steven who said, "*I'm more than happy to help out as Birchwood have done a lot for me*".

Achievements

Congratulations go to Support worker Julie Bews for achieving her SVQ level 3, and to Service Manager Trevor Walker for achieving his Registered Managers Award and SVQ level 4 in Care.

The Caithness team was recognised at the Company's annual staff awards ceremony, and volunteer Marjorie Macadie also received an award.



Service User involvement

This year saw the start of the Caithness service user group. There is a core group of people who attend regularly and get involved in all sorts of activities including going out for lunch, having discussions on current topics and contributing to the service by providing feedback and opinion. 3 service users attended the service user association AGM at the Great Glen Water Park near Fort Augustus. The event included out-door activities such as archery and canoeing, although it was a long journey from Caithness one service user said, "*it was well worth it*".



Service users are also involved in helping to produce a DVD for prospective service users. One service user said about the local group "*it gives me something useful to do*".

Training

Staff, service users and our volunteer have attended a significant amount of training this year. In addition to mandatory training the following training has been attended:



Introduction to the values of inclusion
Dual diagnosis
Motivational interviewing
ASIST applied suicide intervention skills training

Awareness sessions have also been attended on:
CPA care programme approach
Disclosure Scotland
Suicide talks

A four-day training on peer support working was attended and subsequently cascaded to the rest of the Caithness team by service manager Trevor Walker.

Birchwood Highland hosted its first conference on recovery in Aviemore in March 2008 attended by a support worker and service user from Caithness. Of particular note was the moving story from Graham Morgan and the inspiring talk by William Ellis.

In summary

The Caithness service has gone from strength to strength this year, becoming more 'recovery' focused by focusing on individuals' strengths and supporting people to be more 'included' within their local community. For example one individual whom came out of hospital after a lengthy admission and had never before lived alone is now successfully re established in the community with a high degree of independence and now attends his local gym 3 times per week.

This year's survey of our service users and carers revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the service; one area of development for the forthcoming year is to ensure service users have equal opportunity for training.

Birchwood Highland

Birchwood Highland is a progressive organisation with charitable status, whose aim is to support people through mental ill health towards recovery.

Operating from bases in Inverness, Easter Ross, Caithness and Lochaber, Birchwood Highland's housing support teams help people manage in their own homes and provide personal care where necessary, seven days a week. Birchwood Highland has also set up the Highland's first Recovery Centre at Muirfield Lane, Inverness, which opened in March 2008.

Contact details

Head Office
5 Wells Street
Inverness, IV3 5JT
Tel 01463 236507

Inverness Support Service
Upper Floor
5 Wells Street
Inverness, IV3 5JT
Tel 01463 241009

Easter Ross Support Service
108b High Street
Invergordon, IV18 0DR
Tel 01349 853153

Caithness Support Service
Wellington Centre
Airport Industrial Estate
Wick, KW1 4QS
Tel 0955 605700

Lochaber Support Service
Lochaber College
An Aird
Fort William, PH33 6AN
Tel 01397 704723

Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre
Muirfield Lane
Inverness, IV2 4AX
Tel 01463 716600

Website www.birchwoodhighland.org.uk

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