



Independence
Inclusion
Recovery

Annual Report

Easter Ross Support Service

2007/08

Birchwood Highland
Easter Ross Support Service
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*Ask me what is most important in the world.
Let me tell you.
It is people! It is people! It is people!*

A Maori Proverb

Some people may remember this proverb from the in-house training on social inclusion. The theme of this Annual Report will be the people in touch with the Easter Ross Service.

The people we support

In the last year the Easter Ross Service provided housing support to 26 individuals (5 of whom also received care at home seven days a week). The staff team has supported people living in Alness and Invergordon as well as Tain in the north and Dingwall and Conon-Bridge in the south.



“Birchwood delivers a good service. I get on alright with them. I can't live without them. They're off their heads. We have a good laugh.”

“The support I get from Birchwood means every thing to me. Everyone is so friendly. I get down with my health sometimes. I know Birchwood is always there for me. It's a great feeling knowing someone is always at the other end of the phone.



The Friday Drop-in based at Joss St Hall, Invergordon has become a regular fixture. For some it provides an opportunity for companionship, with the chance to chat with friends over a cup of tea. For Birchwood it has become another way of

consulting people on the service provided. As facilitator, Kathleen MacFarlane along with other staff gathered ideas and suggestions as to what sort of indoor and outdoor activities people wanted to get involved in. Among the highlights was the barbecue held at Dornoch Lochans to mark Birchwood's 20th Anniversary in 2007. Guest speakers were invited to meet with service users at the Drop-in and over the last year they have included our local councillor, the Fire Safety Officer and Care Commission Inspection Officer.

Successful fundraising events such as the Bingo night in July and the baking and bottle stall at the Invergordon Highland Games have helped to fund the travel and catering for trips out. Thanks are due to the Rosskeen Free Church for the use of their minibus.



"I do enjoy being the Facilitator for the Drop In and I hope it continues for many years, because not only would the service users miss it, so would I".

"I was very impressed by the bug man".

"We had a great time and enjoyed the Christmas Lunch at Shandwick".

"The Pet Sanctuary in Muir of Ord was very good".

"It's normally good camaraderie".



The People who provide support

Over the last year the staff team has grown to include a number of new relief staff and this has had a major impact on the continuity of support. As valued members of the team, relief staff have opportunities for training and supervision.



"I thoroughly enjoyed the training and learned a lot."

Sheila, Relief Support Worker

"I found training informative and interesting, it was helpful in my job. I like supervision because I can discuss any concerns I may have with service users and staff".

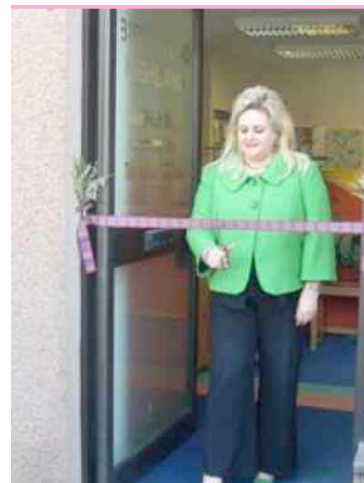
Mary, Relief Support Worker

In the last year Lorna has been working as a volunteer receptionist in the service office in Invergordon. Lorna's role includes answering the phone, inputting data onto the computer, typing, filing and very importantly she provides a warm friendly welcome to office visitors. Lorna is an established member of the staff team and joins the team on fundraising events, social occasions, training and even dressed up as a man for our Grease Show.

Official Opening of the Easter Ross Office

As part of our business plan objectives to raise the profile locally of the Easter Ross Service, we held a formal opening of our office in October 2007 (although we had actually been using it for the last two years!)

Local Councillor Maxine Smith (opposite) did the honours, releasing the ribbon crossing the door with a cut from her gold coloured scissors and later cutting into the specially prepared cake fit for the occasion.



Peer Support Training and Recovery



Peer support training was perhaps the most significant opportunity that Stephen Dunphy as Manager and Lynn Keith as Senior Support Worker took advantage of in the last year.

"One impact of the training on myself has caused me to question the relationships we have as staff with service users. We perhaps need to become more aware of the power of relationships which are based on respect and shared experience – whether in our working or personal lives."



"I found it incredibly rewarding.....medical models of care will be taken over by the sense that recovery is possible if people are allowed the freedom and space to live their own lives. Hope is essential if we are to be role models for recovery. I have been trying to use the recovery approach since the training and the results have been interesting, definitely the way to go."

Shared Training

One outcome from the peer support training has been the regular meeting of service users and staff to look at common training topics and share experience.

In the last year the subjects have included Recruitment and Selection of Staff, The Mental Health Act, Role of the Care Commission.

Lachlan MacLeod found this a positive experience:

"I have quite positive thoughts about being involved in training with Birchwood staff in the past and in the future. It was quite interesting to see the film about the new Mental Health Act, training with experts and previous patients like Debbie."



Other training undertaken by the team included the Support Worker Forum in June 2007, ASIST Suicide Prevention training in November 2007, and Inclusion in December 2007

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.

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