



Independence
Inclusion
Recovery

Annual Report

Inverness Support Service

2007/08

Birchwood Highland
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Annual Report for Inverness Support Service 2007/2008

INTRODUCTION

At the end of March 2008 Inverness Support Service had 35 people receiving a housing support service. One person also received a home care service.

The people we support receive anything from 1 hour to 13 hours a week, but the hours can increase or reduce depending on the person's needs.

During the year, six people left the service. Of those, two moved to residential/nursing care as their physical health had deteriorated, and the other four moved on and become independent of the service. Two of the six leavers had entered and left within the year.

It is interesting to reflect on this movement and encouraging that people are moving on to greater independence, inclusion and recovery.

SERVICE DELIVERY

During the year the service has responded to requests for an evening service, with our staff working until 9pm. This enables people who are working or attending other daytime activities to receive a service that suits them.

ACTIVITIES



Throughout the year, service users have had opportunities to join in a variety of activities.

The Service Users Group, facilitated by Sue Fraser then by Nigel Sandeman, met weekly on Thursday mornings either at the Spectrum or another venue in town. People enjoyed the friendship and taking part in activities such as craft work, planning and going on outings such as a boat trip on loch Ness, a picnic at Ness Islands etc. Three people attended the group regularly, while others

joined in for some of the activities. However it never became well attended; service users did not feel comfortable taking on the responsibility of office bearers, although they felt they benefited from the experience. For example Sharon said *“Taking the notes of the meetings helped me with my writing and gave me confidence.”*

John said *“I enjoyed going to the group and the friendship from others but it was a pity not more people came.”*

The Thursday morning group disbanded at the end of



February when the lottery funding for the project finished, but most of those who attended also attend the Wednesday evening group.

The Wednesday evening group has been running since August and has looked at issues like electrical safety, recycling, identity fraud, food safety, healthy eating etc.

James enjoys going to this group he said, *“I like meeting people and sharing ideas and getting tips on things.”*



Coming from discussion at the Wednesday group there have been talks and training from:

1. The police, who talked about personal safety. One person who attended said *“It was really useful to be reminded that I should not open my door until I know who is there and I should check their identity.”*

2. The Fire and Rescue Service, who offered to do safety checks on people’s homes for free. Someone who attended said *“It was really useful and when they did my home check they gave me a safe deep fat fryer and new smoke detectors.”*



We celebrated our 20th anniversary in June 2007 with a walk to the Cloutie Well at Culloden, followed by a barbeque at 30 Woodlands Court, which used to be the office when Birchwood Highland started. Kenny, who now lives there, said, *“I was very happy to host the BBQ and enjoyed meeting everyone. The food was good too.”*



Service users and staff arranged a very successful car boot sale in June, which raised £277 for the Service Users’ Development Funds. The Service Users Group designed the fliers and posters at their Thursday morning group.

TRAINING AND WORK

Two service users attended Inverness College, one studying English literature, the other accountancy.

Five people do some voluntary work and two are in paid jobs. One is in regular full time work, the other works part time in the kitchen at Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre, and was sorry to leave when the job changed. Barry said *“I really enjoyed my work and*

missed it when I left. I think I should look for something else.” Staff are supporting him to look at different options.

One gentleman does several voluntary jobs, one for the Salvation Army and another escorting people to and from The Mackenzie Day Centre. James said *“It keeps me busy and gets me out of the house and I feel good about giving something back to my community.”*

Joint training offered by Birchwood Highland included interviewing skills; several service users participated and have since been involved in interviewing and selecting staff. John said *“I was a bit nervous at first but I have now been involved in some interviews and feel more confident. I like being involved.”*



Staff and service users also attended the one day Recovery Conference for the Highlands and Islands organized by Birchwood Highland in March 2008.

Staff specific training has included mandatory training, such as Moving and Handling and Dealing with Challenging Behaviour. Other courses have included ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training).

Managers and Team Leaders have attended Recovery Training which they are cascading to all staff.

Two support staff are working towards SVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care.

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK ACTIVITIES

Staff and service users were involved in the holistic theme for mental health week which included:

1. A visit to Inverness Aquadome to find out what was on offer and how to join the Highlife scheme, which several people have since joined, enabling them to use facilities such as swimming pool, exercise equipment etc.
2. One afternoon was spent in town giving people leaflets and information on befriending following a healthy lunch at the Spectrum Centre.
3. An afternoon of relaxation and a chance to sample some massage and Reiki techniques. Everyone attending really enjoyed this and thought it was really good to end the week with the relaxation. The therapist said John was particularly good at the neck and shoulder and hand massage.



CELEBRATIONS

The service user group organised a Halloween party, which looked like really good fun. Some very scary looking people attended!

Another more formal affair was the Christmas lunch, a joint effort between staff and service users. We all enjoyed the good company and good food, again organised by the Service Users' Group.



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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