



Birchwood Highland Housing Support Services

Lochaber Team

Working with people in their own homes who may have mental health problems, dementia, learning disabilities, problems with addiction.



Registered Office: 27 Huntly Street, Inverness, IV3 5PR
A Company Limited by Guarantee

Registered in Scotland 105400
Scottish Charity Number SC003198

www.birchwoodhighland.org.uk

Lochaber Team

Birchwood Highland has many years of experience in working with people who have a severe and enduring mental illness. Most of the people we work with in Lochaber have a mental health problem, and we do our best to help them experience the feelings of **independence** and **inclusion**, and work towards **recovery**.

Birchwood Highland's Lochaber team is based at Lochaber College, An Aird, Fort William, PH33 6AN.

This is where to find us:



Applying for services

When someone wants and needs our service, it is usually the local Community Health Service who will let us know.

We don't have our own special referral form, but we expect the person or organisation making the referral to give us "single shared assessment" documentation. This will help us to get started in planning the support that is needed. Sometimes we have vacant accommodation in houses we lease from Lochaber Housing Association and we will support a person in one of these properties and help them towards more independence and a house of their own.

Often a person will already have their own permanent or temporary accommodation and we will provide support for them there too.

As everyone's financial circumstances are different, a financial assessment must be made to see what contributions, if any, should be made towards the cost of our service. The person's Care Manager is responsible for carrying out the assessment and will advise of any contributions that need to be made.

If someone does not wish to be the subject of a financial assessment, they would not be refused a service, but would be required to pay the full cost.

The service will not commence until the person applying for support agrees to pay, where relevant, the contribution identified.

All people using our services are informed that they have the choice of ending the services provided, should they so choose.

Meall na Mara

Meall na Mara apartments were officially opened in March 2006. There are seven self-contained flats. With the support of our team, residents are able to experience living in and running a flat.

All the people in Meall na Mara flats have their names on the Highland Council list, so that when they are ready they can move on to their own tenancy, and that may be with our continuing support.



Meall na Mara: *'hill (lump or knoll) of the sea'*.

What support workers do

Our support workers aim to build supportive, trusting relationships with those they support and care for. They monitor the person's welfare and offer emotional support in times of crisis.

Enabling access to services



Support workers advise and guide people on how to access services such as

- ◆ CAB,
- ◆ Department for Work and Pensions,
- ◆ Housing organisations,
- ◆ Voluntary groups,
- ◆ Self-help groups,
- ◆ Social activities,
- ◆ Training and employment.

Personal appearance and hygiene



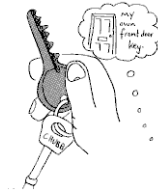
When necessary, support workers may prompt or remind a person to attend to their personal hygiene, appearance or laundry.

Social Links



Support workers will also encourage people to maintain and develop their links with family and the community.

Security in the home



Support workers can arrange training from the local Crime Prevention Team. They will offer householders support and guidance on how to deal with unwanted visitors appropriately, and what to do if they are faced with a problem. They will also promote the practice of asking visitors for ID.

Maintenance and safety of the home



Support workers help householders to recognise repairs and faults, and also to report them to the landlord.

They will guide householders on their rights and responsibilities, as well as their landlords' rights and responsibilities.

They will advise householders on the safe usage of electricity, fire safety and security, for example locking doors and closing windows, and can arrange awareness sessions with the Community Fire Safety Officer.

They will support you to select firms or services, and advise how to get quotes for work to be done.

They will also encourage householders to deal with their bills and correspondence.

Using domestic equipment safely and economically



This can include

- ◆ Reading and following manufacturers' instructions
- ◆ Filling in and returning guarantees
- ◆ Regulating heating appliances and systems through the seasons.

From minor repairs to housing emergencies



Support Workers will assist householders if they need to report faults and repairs to the landlord, or to contact the appropriate repair services.

They will also offer support when dealing with minor repairs, and with housing emergencies during and outside working hours.

Life skills training



Here are some examples of the support that we can provide:

- ◆ Reminding to check contents of fridge and cupboards for expiry dates etc
- ◆ Assisting with food shopping, ensuring appropriate items selected
- ◆ Reminding of bin collection days
- ◆ Prompting need for maintenance of garden/outside area
- ◆ Support and guidance with carrying out household chores
- ◆ Disposing of rubbish in appropriate containers
- ◆ How to turn off water in the event of flooding
- ◆ Changing light bulbs safely and ensuring adequate light
- ◆ Helping with cooking skills
- ◆ Guidance and information on what's available in the community, relating to interests, hobbies, groups etc
- ◆ Offering an opportunity to gain an academic qualification in Life Skills, which embraces the development of independent skills.

Taking medication safely



Support workers help people with their medication. This could mean prompting and reminding them with

- ◆ Following prescriber's instructions
- ◆ Filling dossett boxes
- ◆ Re-ordering and collecting medication, and
- ◆ Making or keeping appointments.

Engaging with professionals



Support workers will remind and prompt people to keep their appointments with healthcare and other professionals, such as the GP, dentist, chiroprapist, hospital consultant, housing officials, social workers and solicitors.

They will help people prepare for appointments, so that they are clear on what they want to say. They will also accompany the person at the appointment if they need that support.

Arranging adaptations to meet the needs of people with disabilities



Support workers will provide advice and information on sourcing and installing equipment.

They will arrange an assessment via the care manager should the person need specialist services, such as additional homecare .

They can also arrange for the person to see advocacy or specialist services.

Personal budgeting and debt counselling



The sort of things we can help with are:

- ◆ Setting up direct debits
- ◆ Buying saving stamps for rent, TV license, electricity, telephone
- ◆ Budgeting for food, clothes, furniture, renewals, repairs and other items
- ◆ Dealing with debt by using specialist services, eg CAB, debt counselling etc.

Dealing with relationships and neighbour disputes



Being a good neighbour can mean not making excessive noise, and keeping the garden to a reasonable standard of tidiness. Support workers will help householders if they experience difficult situations, eg by informing the local authority of anti-social behaviour

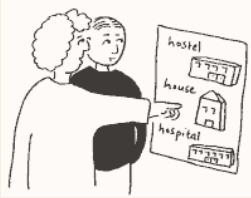
Support workers can also support people in rebuilding relationships with family members, and offer them the opportunity to become a member of the Service User Association.

Claiming benefits



Filling in forms, contacting the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), replying to letters are often far from straightforward. Support workers can help, but sometimes they may have to refer the person for specialist help from CAB or DWP.

Resettlement



Support workers can advise on all stages of relocation, eg

- ◆ Removal
- ◆ Tenant and landlord responsibility
- ◆ Arranging utilities (gas, electricity)
- ◆ Furnishings
- ◆ Tenancy or occupancy agreements – advising on independent advice (advocacy service etc) prior to signing.

Moving to accommodation where there's less support



Support workers can assist and advise people who are moving from hospital to the community, or from residential care to the community.

Shopping



We can offer support and advice on:

- ◆ Healthy eating
- ◆ Cooking
- ◆ Purchasing furniture or new household equipment
- ◆ Accompanying the person, if needed for support
- ◆ Helping out if unwell.

Contacting medical services



If a person is suffering from ill health, the support worker will direct them to contact the relevant service, for example their GP, NHS 24, ambulance service, social worker.

Lochaber Housing Support Team's Aims and Objectives

Our team works to the overall aims and objectives of Birchwood Highland. We also have specific aims and objectives for the service we provide in Lochaber.

The Lochaber Housing Support team aims to make a significant difference to the lives of individuals by providing a holistic, person-centred approach in service delivery.

The objectives of the Lochaber team are:

- ◆ To improve a person's ability to participate in the community
- ◆ To reduce his or her feelings of isolation
- ◆ To raise people's awareness of recovery
- ◆ To provide opportunities that will increase a person's (or people's) knowledge and understanding
- ◆ To promote healthier lifestyles
- ◆ To increase opportunities for holidays with support.

About Birchwood Highland

Birchwood Highland is a modern charitable company. Our staff design and deliver individual support and care plans. Most people we work with have a major mental illness. Some may have a form of dementia, a learning disability or problems with addiction.

We work with people where they are living – in Caithness, Easter Ross, Inverness, Lochaber and other areas of the Highlands and surrounds.

Some people live in our recovery centre in Inverness and move on from there to more independent living.

Birchwood Highland supports the concept of recovery in mental health and we practise person-centered work.

Using our expertise and knowledge we seek to influence decision makers about standards, practices, policies and legislation, both locally and in Scotland.

As a Voluntary Organisation we have a role to be innovative and to try out new ways of working and to learn from that.

As a Company and an employer we offer good work experience and training opportunities and aim to achieve the highest standards.

As a Charity we promote the welfare of people who use our services with a view to maximizing and maintaining their independence and choice.

Birchwood Highland Housing Support Service is registered with the Care Commission to provide Housing Support services across Highland.

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