

## **BIRCHWOOD HIGHLAND LAUNCHES PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION TO MARK MENTAL HEALTH WEEK**

Over **37** people in **Inverness area** have submitted photography for an exhibition being launched by **Birchwood Highland** to mark Mental Health Week (6-12 October 2008).

The exhibition will take place in **Eastgate Centre, Falcon Square entrance from 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> October** and is part of a nationwide photography initiative being coordinated by 'see me', the Scottish mental health anti-stigma campaign.

The images on display will represent local people's creative interpretation of two themes: 'Mentally Positive' – illustrating positive mental health and recovery; and 'Through Thick and Thin' – portraying the support that people experiencing mental health problems receive from family and friends.

One in four Scots will experience mental health problems (1) and support from family and friends is the single most important factor in recovery (2). **Birchwood Highland** is therefore hosting the exhibition to help demonstrate how simple it is to give positive support to friends, relatives and colleagues with mental illness.

Acting 'see me' Campaign Director Suzie Vestri said: 'Everyone has mental health and we all rely on our friends and families, or activities we enjoy, to keep us mentally healthy. This photo exhibition is a chance for all of us to see some great creative photography as well as perhaps sparking our own thoughts about the need to look after our own mental wellbeing.'

Anyone attending the exhibition will have the opportunity to vote for their favourite picture. The image with the most public votes, regardless of the category, will be put through to a national final to compete with entries from across Scotland to win a day's tuition with a professional photographer.

The team at **Birchwood Highland** will also choose a winner for each category, which will be entered into the national final, to be hosted on 'see me' website in November. The three local winners will all receive a £50 photography voucher.

ENDS

**For more information please call Rebecca Charles or Katrina Muir at Smarts on 0131 561 0401/ 07855 331 779.**

### **Notes to Editors**

**(1) Well? What Do You Think? (2006)** The Third National Scottish Survey of Public Attitudes to Mental Health, Mental Well-being and Mental Health Problems (1216 respondents)

**(2) Fairer Future (2007)** National survey about the way in which stigma affects those with mental ill-health and the people who support them including friends, family and carers (1200 respondents)

**About 'see me':**

- The 'see me' anti-stigma campaign is run by an alliance of five Scottish mental health organisations: Highland Users Group (HUG), National Schizophrenia Fellowship (Scotland), Penumbra, Royal College of Psychiatrists (Scottish Division) and Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH).
- 'see me' is funded by the Scottish Government.
- The 'see me' campaign features a programme of events and local and national initiatives to reduce the stigma faced by people with mental health problems throughout Scotland.
- The 'see me' website [www.seemescotland.org](http://www.seemescotland.org) acts as a signpost site for those seeking information on stigma, mental health problems and support services in Scotland.