



Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year

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WELCOME

Hi everyone and welcome to the second edition of the Gowrie Care newsletter. There was a lot of good feedback about the first edition so we've just tried to keep it along the same lines giving a mixture of different articles. Some about what's going on at different projects and some about how people are feeling.

Thanks to everyone who contributed and agreed to have their photos in the newsletter especially everyone at Bruntfield, St John's Hill and Visiting Support.

As always any comments, feedback or suggestions for future editions are most welcome. You can either address things to Rebecca Muir, Hillcrest Housing Association, FREEPOST, NAT22732, Dundee, DD1 1BR or speak to your support workers and they'll pass anything onto me. If you're writing in or posting anything it's a freepost address so you don't need to put on a stamp.

It would be really good to hear from anyone that's been writing poetry or short stories or have recipes they'd like to share. Have you found any useful organisations or support groups that you think might be useful for other people in similar situations reading this newsletter? Anything at all, just get in touch!

Happy Reading!

Rebecca

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Service Users Interview for Staff

A View on an Interview.

When I was asked if I, as a service user, would participate in the interview process to appoint a new support worker, I was very nervous about doing it. When I first came into the service I never imagined I would be asked to do something like this, but on reflection I thought it might be a good thing to do. Over the years the service has provided me with great support and help and I actually felt quite pleased that I was asked to help.

I, another service user and two support workers conducted the informal part of the interview while other staff members did the more formal part. I was asked to compile a couple of questions that I would like to ask the candidates. We interviewed five people in total. The main thing I asked myself while listening to the candidates was how easy it would be for me, as a service user to work with this person.

It was very interesting to see and compare the different personalities of the candidates, but I found that by asking myself the above questions I knew who I would pick for the job.

After the informal and formal interviews, both sets of interviewers got together and talked about the suitability of each candidate. I felt that my thoughts and opinions were well received by staff members. I was pleased when everyone agreed on whom to offer the job to.

We then had a lovely lunch together. It was very interesting to see another side to how part of the service operates and was very pleased that I overcame my nervousness and took part.

By Gerard G

Gowrie Interviews

It's a bold idea to have service users themselves, and also existing support workers, participate in the interview process to select a candidate for a support worker job, but a good one, I think. It makes sense that the people who will eventually have to work with the successful candidate should have some input to the decision of who that person will be. I imagine it also makes interesting reflection for the existing support workers involved.

Somewhere along the way, it must have been explained to me what my role in these interviews was going to be but I don't think I've ever been on the interviewer's side of the table before and, somehow, I didn't actually catch on to the idea until minutes before the interviews actually started. As a service user, I'm used to being on the 'client' side of the relationship and was surprised to find that, at the interview I'd agreed to attend, I would be one of the interviewers, rather than the interviewee.

On reflection, it's surprising this isn't more common, certainly to the extent that I would, at least, have heard of such a thing before and I, for one, could have done with a little more preparation. I think it would have been helpful, before meeting the candidates, to have seen the application packs and job descriptions they were applying to. I also think it might have been useful to have had some more details about the applicants themselves other than just their names. If we'd had that, I might have recognised that one of the candidates was already familiar to me and, in the interest of fairness, excused myself from that interview in advance, instead of just when he stepped into the office.

Comparing notes from our 'lay' interviews with the primary ones, it was heartening and reassuring that our assessments were almost in complete agreement. Even though the unenviable job of making the final choice was still going to be made by the 'big boys upstairs' it don't half make you feel important being involved. It's hard to imagine if it's even possible to feel as important as the candidates seem to think you are during the interviews, though.

By Neil MacKenzie



On the Ball

by Sean Humphreys
(Project Assistant, St. John's Hill)

In June I organised a small game of 5 a side football for a few of the residents at St John's Hill. We played at the Craggs Sports centre and it turned out really well. During the World Cup I invited all service users to the drop in room for several of the matches and everyone appeared to enjoy themselves, there were often 6 or 7 watching and we sometimes provided some snacks and juice. With football being at the forefront of people's minds I decided to organise the first football event around this time.

I booked a pitch at Portobello Power League complex, an excellent outdoor facility with 8 quality pitches and a bar with a pool table and computer games. The staff were very helpful by providing use of balls, bibs, a whistle and juice from the bar.

I contacted staff at all projects to ask them to promote the plans to anyone who may be interested. I had a lot of assistance from some other members of staff, and also with staff cover and transport on the day. Jim Tobin - senior - (who works nightshift at St John's) came in on his day off and did a lot of driving and a bit of refereeing and Claire Gardiner (from Lauriston) helped with the event on the day and took part in the football.

We had 11 people - enough for a good five a side game and some other activities like a penalty shoot out and "Sky Sports cross bar challenge". It was a really good afternoon, the football was quite competitive and everyone tried really hard and played very well.

Each time we have finished the day off with some food (pizzas, KFC takeaway etc) back here at St John's. The total cost of each day including football and food & juice has been 60-70 pounds in total. That is roughly £5-7 pounds per head. We have funded this from our service user budget and have asked for participants from other projects to make a donation based on a rough calculation of the cost per head.

Peter Roberts, a resident St John's Hill has thoroughly enjoyed being involved. "Its been brilliant, good to get out and do something, I've not played football much for years. Its something to look forward to, I wish we could get more people involved", he explained.

Colin Bellard, also a resident at St John's Hill, says it has encouraged him to think about playing competitively again, he would also like to be involved in games against other projects, rather than mixing teams. "Its been great aye, it would be good to get more of a challenge, like maybe playing a match against other projects, because we've got some good players here".

Because it was such a success we've organised 3 events since and thought we could repeat it on a monthly basis, although if we were to ask the service users I think they would like it to be even more frequent!

Anyone interested, contact St John's Hill on 0131 557 5502 or speak to your project manager.



Living at Bruntsfield

My time at Bruntsfield has been good, if I hadn't got into the project when I did then I would probably be 6 foot under by now. I have been made to feel welcome since I moved in, the staff have been really helpful with loads of different things, my health, my housing, they helped to explain things that I didn't understand, they have explained things in a way that is easy for me to understand.

As I say, the staff are there for you if you need them but they are not in your face, it's a good & relaxed atmosphere in the building, you can relax in the TV room, there are good cooking facilities & the staff can help you with things like cooking, making up shopping lists, appointments. Some people find these kinds of things easy but others find them difficult, the staff are there to help & they do.

Steven Morris

Bruntsfield Project

Our community police officer donated a pool table to the project last month, since its arrival many hours of fun have been had & it has been very beneficial for our service user group. South Fort Street have offered a pool challenge between

the two projects which is due to take place over the course of the next few months.

A few creative members of staff have made up the following little prose to try to capture a little banter with regards to the pool table donation.



There was a local bobby, Goodall was his name,
When he brought a snooker table in, his reputation shot to fame
The residents were delighted many hours of fun to be had
To see that the police aren't all bad, was something to make them glad

The rules they were decided, the games to commence
Of staff natural ability there was a distinct absence
Groupwork took a whole new turn, snooker & pool became the norm
After lots of practice the staff team are now on top form.

Rocket Ronnie, Hurricane Higgins & Dennis Taylor, who are they?
Pop into Bruntsfield & the service user group will show you how to play
The leathers set a challenge, a competition you say?
Bring it on South Fort Street – Just you name your day!!!



Bruntsfield Likes & Dislikes

We asked all our service users if they would like to take part in an ad hoc survey of their experiences in Bruntsfield, we asked them if they would list 5 likes & dislikes about the project / their experiences of staying here so far. Here is what they came up with ...

Alex Penman

Likes

1. Staff
2. Pool Table
3. Drop in room
4. Some residents
5. The garden

Dislikes

1. Sometimes I get fed up, stressed & bored
2. Paying my service charge
3. Don't like getting beaten at pool
4. Cant think of anything else



Wendy Morris

Likes

1. Having fun with the service users
2. Having a fantastic, creative, motivated staff team
3. Mr Jack - the Bruntsfield Mascot
4. Having a good day
5. Winding Nicole up

Dislikes

1. This photo!!!
2. Feeling like the service users are disadvantaged
3. Having a bad day
4. When Mr Jack hounds me for biscuits
5. When Nicole is having a mare about Training
6. When Nicole is having a mare about Christmas rota's
7. When Nicole is having a mare about her hair
8. When Nicole is in a huff!!!



Garry Stone

Likes

1. Being back staying at Bruntsfield
2. All the staff are easy to talk to – good to get on with
3. the help & support I receive here
4. being allowed to help out at times
5. the fact that I can come & go as I please

Dislikes

1. I cant think of anything



MM (Who did not wish to be photographed)

Likes

1. staff
2. how comfy & homely it feels here
3. groupwork & the pool room
4. that cooking sessions are held with service users every so often
5. my en suite shower & the laundry room

Dislikes

1. people drinking & smoking in the TV room here – find it disrespectful
2. the peer pressure
3. plastic mattresses – hard to sleep on especially with wounds
4. no compulsory house meetings – all voluntary
5. other service users personal hygiene when in the communal areas



Christmas Quiz

Have a shot at this Christmas Quiz for your chance to win a **£25 gift voucher for Argos.**

All entries to be in by January 15th.

1. In 'The Twelve days Of Christmas', if you add up the number of swans-a-swimming and geese-a-laying, what do you get? 13, 14 or 15?
2. Which Charles Dickens novel featured the character of Tiny Tim?
3. What was special about the FA Cup qualifying soccer match between Linfield and Cliftonville in 1888?
4. Who had a hit single in the seventies with 'I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday'?
5. Which Eastenders character married Cat Slater on Christmas day 2003?
6. If you were born on Christmas day which star sign would you be?
7. Which Cliff Richard single was at number one over Christmas in the UK in 1988?
8. What was the biggest selling single in the UK in the 1980s?
9. What is the traditional Christmas flower?
10. In which James Bond film does the character Dr Christmas Jones feature?

Send your answers to Rebecca Muir, Hillcrest Housing Association, FREEPOST, NAT22732, Dundee, DD1 1BR (no stamp required) or email to rmuir@hillcrestha.org.uk

Or give to your support worker who will forward onto Rebecca.

Good Luck!



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