

# Day Services

ALFORD CENTRE · COMRAICH · NEXUS · THE ARCHES · INVERYTHAN CENTRE

One of the aspects of mental ill-health that many people find hardest to bear is the all-too-common experience of social isolation. When we have positive mental health, we tend to take for granted our networks of family, friends, neighbours and colleagues and the stimulation, satisfaction (sometimes frustration too!) that these relationships bring us.

When mental ill-health affects our self esteem and our confidence in our own abilities or makes us behave in ways that people close to us find unsettling or worrying, our relationships can suffer rapidly. We may withdraw contact from others and isolate ourselves from many ordinary activities or others may reduce their contact with us through discomfort, not knowing how best to respond to us. If our problems grow, leading to prolonged sickness or unemployment, then our incomes may drop and severely limit our financial freedom to engage in our usual activities.

People affected by mental ill-health and experiencing social isolation may feel that their lives may never recover. The experience of many who use our services and our befriending schemes shows that recovery is achievable and that their quality of life can improve greatly.

Support services available in our five Day Centres provide a vital lifeline to people in the process of recovery. They are a community-based focal point where people can find a renewed sense of purpose and direction as well as a non-judgemental company and enjoyable activities.

A particular strength of our day services is the culture of user involvement where individuals are encouraged to have a voice in the life of the Centre and to take responsibility.

## Aberdeenshire

People affected by severe and enduring mental ill-health need help to recover as much control as possible over their lives and to rebuild their confidence.

In Aberdeenshire, they can receive such help from MHA staff based at Day Centres in Ellon, Inverurie, Peterhead and Banff. These Centres provide accessible settings where people can feel safe, rather than feeling judged and stigmatised. Staff can get to know their strengths and their needs and plan with them the kind of support that will help them to regain self-esteem. Many of these activities subsequently take place outwith the Centres, with staff sensitively supporting people's efforts to reintegrate into their communities.

## Aberdeen City

MHA's Alford Centre fulfils a similar role for the people of Aberdeen City.

Some 250 people are currently members of the Centre: a service user committee plays a significant part in determining the nature of activities, giving members the opportunity they need to influence their environment and to gain new skills. As in Aberdeenshire, activities and support programmes are jointly planned to ensure that they meet individual needs. Whilst the Centre provides the hub for services, considerable emphasis is placed on promoting community integration and involvement.

Aberdeen City Council has recently instigated discussions regarding the shape of future Day Service provision in the City. MHA has readily engaged in these and is keen to work in constructive partnership with the City Council, other service providers and interested stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcome for service users.

We are committed to ensuring that the views of members of the Alford Centre will play a significant part in these discussions.

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