



# Apex Highland

Volume 6

2014

## Multiple acknowledgements for Apex Highland continuing high standards.

It has been a good year for productivity for us and this culminated in a fantastic total of 3 awards which were acknowledged at our annual Staff Conference in Dunfermline in April this year.

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An exceptional effort from our staff and volunteers won the Highlife Highland Award for "Staff and Volunteer Exceptional contribution" this was for the 3 years of effort in completing the Abriachan Forest literacy trail.

We also received a Silver Award for Healthy Working Lives. To achieve the Silver Award, our Manager and staff had to meet and evidence all 6 criteria sections, as follows: have policies in place for alcohol and drugs; attendance management; avoiding accidents, incidents and near misses; eating more healthily; promote physical activity and to have managers trained in mental health, wellbeing and stress in the workplace.

Following on from that success we also secured a National Recognition Award from the Scottish Mentoring Network for the innovative nature of the project at Abriachan coupled with our ability to evidence strong organisational structure.



Alistair McDonald, Service Development Manager

Katrina Beattie, Personal Development Mentor

David McNulty, Personal Development Mentor

You can refer through our website by clicking on this link

<https://aimhigher.meganexus.com/portal/index/refer>.



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### M&S Placements 2014



All in all this opportunity was well received by our 2 service users who learned a great deal in their time at the store and enjoyed the experience immensely.

In February 2014 we offered the Marks & Spencer/Scottish Business in the Community placement opportunity to our service users. This 2 week placement helps to support individuals to overcome potential barriers to gaining employment by adding skills, training and work experience to develop a more positive future.

In February Samantha was taken into the womenswear department for her 2 week placement. During this period she experienced work within her department shadowing her designated "buddy" (specially trained M&S staff).

We also had Gavin on his 2 week placement. He worked in several different departments, including the café, menswear and also children's clothing departments. Gavin gained lots of different skills within each department while working along side his designated "buddy". This allowed for a broader taste of what different roles were involved within each department

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who was involved with the placements. The feedback from M&S staff was extremely encouraging on the progress, increased confidence and personal development displayed by Samantha and Gavin. They would hope, at a later date when positions become available, to consider offering them employment within the M&S store in Inverness.



*Gavin : "I really enjoyed my time at the Inverness Marks & Spencer's Store! I liked the Café the most because it was fast working, I could definitely see myself working in a similar position in the near future."*



*Samantha : "The 2 week placement has really helped me with my confidence and given me that boost I needed."*

## SMART Recovery

### Inside & Out

Apex has been delivering the SMART (Self Management and Recovery Training) community group in Inverness for over a year now. In addition to this we are co-facilitating in partnership with HMP Inverness, running weekly groups in the community and HMP Inverness.

Sheena Macsporrán (SPS Programmes Officer), Stephen Boyle (SPS Programmes Officer) and Scott Colgan (Apex Scotland) facilitator's have supported each other to deliver effective Self Management and Recovery Training within both groups.

Groups take place on Monday morning's within HMP Prison and Wednesday afternoon within the Apex Unit. It is a lively and positive resource for service users to discuss their continuing recovery from addictions and negative habits, empowering them to change their behaviours and goals.

The group inspires and encourages motivation and challenges its members to broaden their horizons and outlook on themselves and the opportunities available throughout Inverness. Encouraging learning, participants are able to sign up to the free online course "Get Smart" in the community and become group facilitators themselves and go out into the wider community and extend their recovery. Topics included for discussion are: building and maintaining motivation; coping with urges and managing thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

Some feedback we have had:

***"It would make me feel great, knowing that I have changed my life around, something good that I have worked hard for, something that will make a difference to my families future "***

***"SMARTS Hierarchy of Values Session made me focus on new goals and what's really important, to get out, get help and settle down again, keep my kids close by me, and another trade under my belt and a home"***

***"I am angry with myself as time inside is time wasted"***

## Osprey House

Apex extended its own Smart Group and provide the same open and confidential support to those attending Osprey House. The meeting takes place every Friday from 1pm - 3pm within Osprey House itself and is open to anyone with a addictive behavioural issues. Osprey House is the Drug and Alcohol Service for the Highlands. The service is completely confidential, delivered by NHS and Apex staff and geared towards anyone who is

experiencing problems in their life associated with alcohol and drugs or related issues. This includes family and friends. The service is provided in an informal friendly setting. Osprey House( NHS ) and Apex are both partners of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership who contribute to SMART in Inverness.

## Auricular Acupuncture

The success of our Auricular Acupuncture service has led to interest from volunteers and staff from other organisations.

In May and August 2014 we have organised further NADA training course and this will allow us to develop the acupuncture specialist interventions. Along with groups in our Unit on Wednesday's we also support the delivery of groups at the Prison every Friday.

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, we have set up a women's only group while continuing to offer a mixed group. Once they have completed their 8 week course, they can move onto the mixed group if further sessions are required.

The majority of women attending have suffered from mental health and addiction issues. Feedback so far has been positive.

## Weekly Acupuncture Sessions

Each service user attending our acupuncture has weekly sessions over a 6-8 week period. They can opt in/out dependant on their health/wellbeing and the benefit they have had from the treatment.

Although we deliver our acupuncture sessions primarily for stress relief, anxiety and relaxation, our service users have seen marked improvements within their lives, such as:

- ◆ Reduced withdrawal symptoms from drug and alcohol use
- ◆ Deeper and better sleeping
- ◆ Reduced craving
- ◆ Improved appetite, sense and smell

We currently have 7 staff qualified to deliver acupuncture and a number of volunteers who assist both in the prison and community.

APEX has funded training for 2 NHS Nursing Staff, 2 Criminal Justice Support Staff and 2 Prison Officers.

A further course in May will fund another Prison Nurse and Prison Officer.



## Peer Mentor Development

We are investing in service users who wish to become Peer Mentors with Apex. This initiative will support our Inverness service provision. It is important however to recognise and acknowledge that the reasons behind this initiative are to empower individuals to develop, enhance and fulfill their own potential with a hope that they move forward positively. Service users are encouraged to explore their own goals and aspirations for the future.



We offer relevant and appropriate training and thereafter arrange shadowing opportunities before they go on to become Peer Mentors. Individually they can advise us on where they see themselves fitting into the service i.e. working alongside service users doing outdoor activities or delivering acupuncture treatments. By monitoring, reviewing and offering supervision we ensure individuals feel supported and able to feedback on their progress to identify any future learning or needs.

Last month we sent 2 Peer Mentors to Kingussie where they participated in a 2 day Drystane Dyking Course to help expand on their training and skills for our outdoor activities. We are delighted that they both successfully passed the course and gained their certificates. The hard work and dedication of our Peer Mentors is to be recognised and commended as they really do go on to inspire others to achieve success.

## Poppy Scotland



SUPPORTING OUR HEROES

We currently have one of our Personal Development Mentors (Scott Colgan) working alongside Poppy Scotland in Inverness.

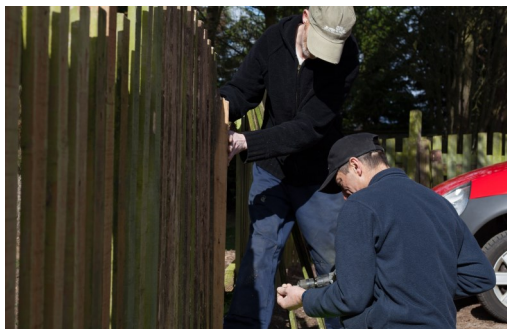
Poppy Scotland is the leading charity supporting ex-servicemen, women and their families in Scotland. They are probably best known for running the iconic Scottish Poppy Appeal, but they work all year round to help veterans and their families receive the care and support they urgently need.

Servicemen and women are highly skilled professionals who, for a multitude of reasons, often outwith their control, can find themselves in need of help when they leave the Armed Forces. This may come as a result of injury on the frontline or as they adjust to civilian life after their military career is complete. Whenever they need help, Poppy Scotland will be there.

**For over 90 years Poppy Scotland has been providing life-changing support for Scotland's ex-Servicemen and women.**

## Animal Sanctuary

Since November last year we have been working at Horses in Clover Animal Sanctuary near Davidston on the Black Isle, for rescued and neglected animals. The work is very much appreciated by Winona and Bill who own the sanctuary and staff and volunteers enjoy the experience which is demonstrated by the consistent level of attendance and hard work.



Colin (Apex Peer Mentor) and Neal (Volunteer) working as a team to fix the fencing around the pond to prevent the animals from escaping.



Grace (Apex Peer Mentor) hard at work shovelling horse manure.



Colin and Alistair (Apex Peer Mentors) mixing cement for the horse stables new floor.



*"Winona and Bill Wall were overwhelmed with the cheque they received from Apex"*

## DONATIONS

Working alongside the horse sanctuary has highlighted the valuable work and selfless care of animals that goes on there. A donation of £500 was made to Horses in Clover by Staff and Volunteer's.



# Animal Sanctuary

Our next challenge for our volunteer mentors is to raise some extra money and donations in kind to help with the running of the sanctuary and the group have been collecting information and working on the fundraising pack. It's a great challenge for us to take on and we are looking forward to being able to celebrate its completion.



Colin and Alistair (Apex Peer Mentors) busy laying cement in one of the horse stables as the floor was too damaged for the horses to use.

Gemma (volunteer) at the top field checking that the horses coats were on and keeping them warm in the cold weather after she had groomed them and cleaned out their stables.



Caleb (Apex Peer Mentor) busy repairing boundary fencing to prevent the animals from escaping. This was a big issue that needed to be addressed as soon as we got there.

## GOOD NEWS STORIES

### Caleb's Story

Caleb came to Apex in 2013 for help to build his confidence. He engaged in the outdoor activities building his confidence and skills.

Since then he has attended the 6 week CSCS training and passed his test. In addition to this he is now coaching CSCS Training, each week giving advice and information on CSCS to other service users accessing this, to help increase their knowledge before sitting the test. Caleb has also attended a 2 Day Peer Mentor training Course.

Recently Caleb was offered a volunteering position at Sight For Action Scotland. He accepted this with great joy and now will be Volunteering there one day a week providing access to technologies for the visually impaired.

Caleb has completed a 2 day Drystone Dyking course in Kingussie with another Peer Mentor. This has allowed Caleb to adapt his training into his weekly volunteering at the Animal Sanctuary with Apex.

We are delighted to have Caleb as part of our team in the Highlands. He has been a positive team member. We hope to develop Caleb into being a future mentor.





## GOOD NEWS STORIES



### Campbell's Story

Campbell came to Apex in early 2013 looking for help to increase his confidence. Campbell faced lots of barriers on the way and realised that Apex was there to help him through this in partnership with Cale House.

Within the first few weeks of Campbell being in Cale, he started accessing our services. Attending Acupuncture sessions to help him relax and the outdoor group to build up self confidence and skills.

As the weeks went by we have seen a dramatic change in Campbell, he is much more motivated and confident. He started attending other activities and training with us, such as: Heartstart certificate; John Muir Explorer Award; SAPhiR Training, which helped him with his awareness on being job ready and the Peer Mentor Training to adapt his knowledge.

Campbell has also just completed a 2 day Drystane Dyking Course in Kingussie with another Peer Mentor, this has helped him improve his skills on the Outdoor Group.

Campbell is now a Peer Mentor, helping other clients on their journey.



## Other News.....

Aron Wright (Administrator below left) and Natasha Harvey (CJS Receptionist below right) receiving their certificates of completion for the SAPHiR Training Course from Service Development Manager - Alistair McDonald.



## Community Job Scotland

Since the beginning of 2014 we have had 2 new CJS starts, both with their own individual role within the Unit.

Natasha Harvey started her 6 month CJS placement in January 2014 as receptionist and has come on leaps and bounds within her role. She has picked up new skills fast and has attended several different training courses since being with Apex, including; SAPHiR Employability Training; Conflict Resolution and also received her Heartstart Level 1 certificate.

Mark Girvan started his 6 Month CJS placement in March 2014 as Services Assistant for Care Farms Scotland. Mark's main role is Administration support for Caroline our local Care Farms contact. He helps her with spreadsheets and supports her office work load. Mark is the Duke of Edinburgh Awards promotion assistant in the Highlands. He is at the early stages of developing DoE awards and promote it to our younger service users to help set them up in their chosen activities and to earn their awards.



Natasha Harvey (CJS Receptionist )



Mark Girvan (CJS Services Assistant )



## Voluntary Hours

Through our volunteers and Peer Mentors we completed voluntary work at various community projects including: Raigmore Estate, Abriachan Forestry Trust, Millburn Road, Horses in Clover and Kingsmills.

Our Volunteers have amassed approximately 5,000 hours in voluntary hours on Community Projects during 2013/2014:

This has saved the community approximately 5,000 hours of paid work accumulating to £31,550 based on the minimum wage (£6.31)

**This equates to a valuable resource in our community.**

Over the last year we have achieved the following outcomes through our team:



◆ Number of participants who have received support:	131	153
◆ Number of participants entering volunteering:	5	19
◆ Number of participants entering employment:	34	21
◆ Number of participants entering education or training:	7	6
◆ Number of participants gaining John Muir Award:	14	25
◆ Number of participants gaining Heartstart certificate:	56	48
◆ Number of Participants gained CSCS Card:	73	25





## Activities Available at Apex Scotland

### JOB SEARCH GROUP

Job search using Universal Jobmatch  
weekly on **Friday's**  
**9.30am - 11.30am women's group**  
**2.00pm - 4.00pm mixed group**



### SMART RECOVERY

Professional and peer support group  
weekly on **Wednesday's**  
**2.45pm - 4.45pm**  
(OSPREY HOUSE OPEN GROUP  
FRIDAY 1.00pm—2.00pm)

### REHAB & DISCLOSURE COURSE

One to one course specialising in disclosure of convictions to potential employers including how, what and who to disclose to. We will fund Subject to Access Police Criminal Record Check.

### SPECIALIST GROUPS

Peer mentor training, employer visits, placements, work based training courses, First Aid at Work, Food Hygiene, Manual Handling

### CONSTRUCTION SKILLS CERTIFICATION SCHEME

Training to gain a CSCS card, the legal health and safety requirement for working on construction sites weekly on **Thursday's**  
**11.00am - 1.00pm**



### OUTDOOR PROJECTS

Team building, learning new skills, increased motivation weekly on  
**Thursday's** for the mandatory women's group and other outdoor voluntary projects every **Tuesday**  
**9.30am - 3.30pm**



### ACUPUNCTURE

Auricular acupuncture for relaxation weekly on **Wednesday's** in Inverness  
**11.30am - 12.30 pm women's group**  
**1.30pm - 2.30pm mixed group**



### HEART START

First-aid course demonstrating emergency life saving techniques monthly on a  
**Wednesday 10.00am - 12.00noon**

