

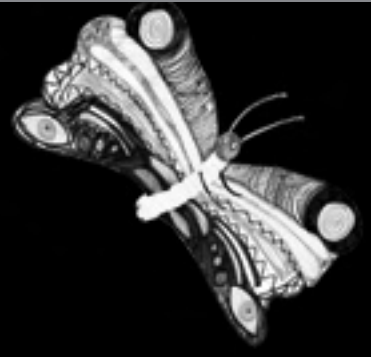


a charity at the centre of caring

Praxis care

A CHARITY AT THE CENTRE OF CARING

2007 Annual Report



Foreword



Chair: Bill Canning

It has been another busy and successful year for Praxis Care with a number of new developments opening.

Meenalig and Swan House in Navan provided homes for individuals with a learning disability and challenging behaviours.

Mullingar provided the first community forensic unit in Ireland for people with a learning disability.

In Worcestershire Challenge took over two nursing homes for people with learning disabilities and complex needs strengthening the organisation's base in England.

In Lurgan a new twenty place Supporting People scheme 'Castle Lane' opened offering a variety of living accommodation to individuals with a learning disability.

In Lisnaskea, Coleraine and Derry three floating support schemes for individuals with mental ill health, dementia and alcohol related issues got started. This model of care is one which the Trusts are keen to see develop throughout Northern Ireland.

Praxis Care Group 25th Anniversary



Chief Executive: Nevin Ringland

In Derry Praxis also opened a Young People's Scheme for those leaving the care system at risk of mental ill health and the scheme moved into new accommodation early in January 2007.

In Manchester, Larne and Dunmisk new Supporting People schemes opened and these projects are proving invaluable to their local communities.

The organisation hosted a very successful international Brain Injury Conference at the end of September and this has created a number of opportunities for development. In addition Praxis Care input played an integral part in the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability. Chief Executive, Nevin Ringland, chaired one of the Expert Working Committees - Dementia and Mental Health Issues of Older People - and Director of Care, Alyson Dunn, was also a member of this committee. Irene Sloan was a member of the Learning Disability Committee. Nevin was also a member of the Steering Committee and participated on the Needs and Resources Committee.

In order to ensure that Praxis Care continues to lead the field in terms of quality, the organisation has set up a number of quality improvement groups this year with representatives from various schemes and departments. Praxis Care aims to apply for the 'Investors in People' award and the quality mark ISO 9001 next year, as these are standards which will help the organisation create a better environment for staff and service users.

Chief Executive & Chair

25 Years - Then and Now



Service User, Kilmorey House

It all started
a lifetime
ago...

It all started a lifetime ago! The Belfast Telegraph in 1980 wrote a small article about how two young men in their early twenties had a plan to open two hostels to house and support people with mental health problems. However, it took seven years of operating a landlady placement and befriending scheme before the first Praxis accommodation scheme was opened. Praxis' reputation for delivering quality care in the community spread. This led to almost all Health & Social Services Trusts in Northern Ireland giving Praxis the opportunity to develop accommodation, day activity and other support services in their areas.



In the early 1990's, Praxis Mental Health was asked to develop services to support people with a learning disability, and older people. Praxis responded with two new charities which both facilitated the provision of care services.



Challenge for adults and children with learning disabilities and **Respond** for older people.

Praxis, Challenge and Respond eventually amalgamated to become the largest charity delivering care services in Northern Ireland.

This has allowed Praxis to provide a great deal of stability in a sector where many charities do not know where their next penny is coming from and comprehensive training to its staff, including widespread NVQ training.

Of paramount importance, is the Praxis development of a clinical and social care governance department which sets and monitors standards and policy implementation throughout the organisation. These good practices within Praxis Care enable us to focus all that it does on meeting the needs of the people it serves.



Secret Garden Coffee Shop

Praxis has "come of age" and is in a prime position to influence government policy in ways which will benefit the people it cares for and supports. An emphasis on quality of care in

Praxis' existing services is assured through enhanced training and the work of its clinical and social care governance department. The continued focus on evaluation and research will support existing services and also find new and better ways of delivering care.



Connaught House

Twenty five years ago, Praxis never thought it would develop services outside Northern Ireland, yet it is now delivering accommodation and support services in the Republic of Ireland, England and the Isle of Man.

Praxis has brought good practices to these jurisdictions and also brought many ideas back to Northern Ireland. This can only be good for the people it supports.

Finally, Praxis pays tribute to the many volunteers who work as Befrienders, sit on Quality Improvement Working Groups and

those who sit on the Praxis Governing Board.

The next 25 years will build on what we have done to date. These are exciting times!



"The Courtyard"



My Little House

Service User, Clements Court

I sit alone in my tidy home:...the time drifts silently by,
And I fondly recall the days of my youth and a tear often springs to my eye;
My floors are all wood. ...there's no washing to do.. .the tele is on night and day,
There's nothing to do but relax in my chair.. .no worries about bills still to pay!
Now although I love this grand little house, believe me I'd swap it tomorrow,
To return to those years when money was scarce and face once again all the sorrow;
My home then was just 'two up and two down', outside in the yard was the toilet,
A coalshed a jawbox. ...a 'fridge' on the wall, such happiness nothing could spoil it;
A black range stood in the 'living room', I polished it daily with pride,
'Till it gleamed like the sheen of the finest silk... as the bread baked away inside;
Now the range made the house very cosy, and many's the time I was glad,
'Cos the icicles frosted the inside panes whenever the weather was bad!
My mother she lived round the corner, my Granny the street next along,
The wanes all played on the pavement, the streets were so noisy with song!
The clothes they were washed in the 'jaw box', wrung out and fed through a wringer,
Then hung from the ceiling like bunting, I had not a moment to linger;
Down on all fours I'd scrub the tile floor, mansion polish was great for a shine,
From morning to evening, there were tasks to be done, I never wasted no time.
My husband he worked on the buses... before that he'd been in the War,
When he came in from his job of conducting, it was out to the pub for a Jar;
And when the children were sleeping, he'd take his top coat from the door,
And spread it across his slumbering girls in order to heat them some more.
I'd make all my daughters their dresses, I'd sew till the light seemed so _dim,
Oh the joy in my heart to see them all dressed, as they sang their Sunday School hymns;
Then out for a walk on a Sunday, it was 'shanks pony' sure no-one had cars,
And a stroll to Prehen... to the Bolies... it would seem like a journey so far;
The games for the children were simple ...hopscotch, a ball and some rope,
And if there was any bad language, their mouths would be washed out with soap.
My goods were all got from the Cash Stores, I'd pay at the end of the week,
When my husband would give me my wages... broken biscuits I'd buy as a treat.
Once a year we had an Excursion, to the sands of Portrush we would go,
Our Church would give us our lunch and our tea, we'd come back on the train all aglow.
At Christmas the gifts were so simple, I'd pay into a 'club' all year round,
The children would open their stockings and squeal with such joy when they found...
An apple... an orange...some chocolate... an annual and maybe a game,
Nowadays children get gifts every day, to me it's really a shame.
I don't think the young ones are happy. . . unless they get what they want,
I see them out standing on corners... sometimes I can hear a wee taunt!
I suppose they just see an 'oul' woman. ..they don't realise that I too had dreams,
And to me I was young only yesterday, how bright the memory gleams;
So I sit alone in my tidy house, my children have homes of their own,
And I fondly recall the days of my youth and pine for the years that have flown.



Celebrating a Birthday

Hillsborough Castle cannot be accused of saying 'not in my back yard, sorry, garden!'. Not only has the Castle leased its most wonderful 'Secret Garden' to Praxis Care but it also has been extremely committed to its development for use by our service users. It also sent one of its most honoured guests, HRH Prince Edward through the back garden gate to see what was going on at the celebration of twenty five years of Praxis Care. It's not every day that a Royal lifts the latch!

The celebrations were a great day out for service users, staff and invited guests.

Although the rain poured down in the morning by the time the event got underway the clouds lifted and the sun shone all afternoon so everyone got to fully enjoy the garden at its best.

The garden looked delightful, thanks to the tremendous work done by the Secret Garden team leading up to the event and the many staff who came from Head Office the day before to help with weeding, the organic way. This was over and above the call of duty by all staff and was much appreciated.

Celebratory activities included something for everyone; a falconry display, American cars with the Chief Executive's Ford 150 Harley Davidson Special Edition, bouncy castle and a disco. Prince Edward took an interest in the activities and showed a genuine warmth to everyone he

chatted with. Some say that the only way the day could have been improved would have been if the Prince had brought his wife!

Everyone should be justly proud of being part of an organisation which has endured for twenty five years, providing care for the most vulnerable in society and providing jobs for over nine hundred people. The 'Garden Party' was a terrific celebration for a terrific group of staff and service users.

Who next will open that back garden gate? The 'Secret Garden' is a secret no more.



THE SECRET GARDEN

Service User

The Secret Garden is the place to be full of love and harmony
Staff in the Secret Garden are very funny and they make their own honey
The weather is sometimes great and sometimes bad and other times it makes you sad.
The staff in the coffee shop are always busy and at the end of the day I bet they are dizzy
The Secret Garden, it is great and I hope the customers appreciate
The hanging baskets, they are blooming. After all, we're only human.
The Secret Garden can be fun, as long as all the work is done and at the end of they day you might get a bun
The Secret Garden can be slick as long as you don't nick and never act the mick

Think First...Think Number One...Think Praxis Care

Praxis Care prides itself on innovative practices and leading the market in providing choice for service users. Praxis Care has thus been first in establishing a number of ground-breaking environments for service users:

As a consequence of all our "firsts", Praxis Care is the first Northern Ireland charity to successfully export its services to England, the Isle of Man and into the Republic of Ireland. The borders of sea and land have fallen.

- ▶ Praxis was first to establish intensively supported housing schemes for people with mental ill health.
- ▶ Praxis set up the first Challenging Behaviour Unit in Northern Ireland enabling individuals with learning disabilities and very challenging behaviour to live in the community.
- ▶ Praxis' children's respite unit at Rainbow Lodge in Ballymena was the first of its kind in Northern Ireland providing respite care to children with learning disability and severe challenging behaviour and affording the families of these children much needed breaks.
- ▶ Praxis was the first to set up a forensic unit in Ireland for people with a learning disability.
- ▶ Praxis Korsakoff Unit in Newry, Co Down is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland. The unit is a home for individuals with alcohol related dementia.
- ▶ Praxis' scheme at St Paul's Court in Lisburn is the first supported living environment provided to elderly individuals suffering from dementia. The scheme is a true alternative to nursing care that aims to maintain the individual's independence and choice throughout their senior years. Assistive technology, again a first, aids Praxis in providing this freedom to our service users.





Caring about Children

Beechfield Children's Unit has gone through many changes this year, with care planning and staff training being two of the most significant. Work was completed on the back garden to provide a soft play area and a high fence ensuring a safe environment for the children and young people to play. Performances by the 'Bumble Bee Orchestra' a group of musical artists captivated the children. They also enjoyed a number of outings to the cinema, Castle Espie, Lady Dixon Park, Hillsborough, a swimming pool and the Belfast Opera House. The children thrive on the freedom to experience new and exciting things.

The two schemes in Leicestershire, Glenfield and Melton, both provide respite care for up to 60 families with children with learning disabilities. Both have been fortunate to retain a consistent core team of staff which helps provide continuity for the children who stay on a regular basis.

Glenfield also provides for children who have complex health needs and the scheme continues to promote and strengthen professional links. Staff have developed a working relationship with the Diana Nursing Team in Leicestershire whose principal aim is to provide nursing care to children in their own homes. Members of the Diana Nursing Team work alongside Praxis staff in providing sound care to the children, which meets their needs and allows the service to support families and children who might otherwise be excluded.

The Melton scheme offers respite to children with challenging behaviour and staff manage the children with professionalism, humour and a resilience that has helped to cement a supportive and cohesive team.

Both Glenfield and Melton provide a wide range of community based activities for the children, ranging from ice-skating to meals out, rock climbing, visits to the local parks, theatre visits and seaside activities. These outings are facilitated by each scheme having its own mini-bus.

Both schemes seek to actively involve the local community through garden parties and open days and by inviting neighbours, councillors, The Lions

Clubs and other interested local people to visit. The staff, parents and friends are instrumental to the success of these activities.

“They teach the children excellent life skills that will help them in adulthood. The children go to lots of places (the clothes coming back washed helps a lot!)”

“We are pleased to see and to hear about how much our child is involved in helping to make his own meals and to do washing up. The staff get on very well with our child.”



Caring about Young People



Foyle Young People's Project was initiated in 2005 to provide supported accommodation to six young people aged 16 - 21 years, who, on leaving the foster care system are deemed vulnerable and present with complex needs. The Project offers 24 hour support with highly skilled and trained staff. An individually tailored support package is designed to assist the young person to successfully make the transition to full independent living within the community. Peripatetic support is also provided to vulnerable young people within the community in order that they maintain their current place of living. This also extends to young people exiting the project in order to provide a continuum of care approach.

The model has been critically developed and young people have been actively involved in policy development. An inter-agency approach to meeting young people's needs is central to the support offered. This will enable the young people to achieve their potential within a safe and nurturing environment promoting options and choices which will be under-pinned by a person-centred needs led approach.

Befriending Service for Young People Leaving Care

This service which covers the entire Northern Board area is co-ordinated by one full time member of staff. Currently 17 volunteers are matched with young people who require extra support in the transition period from leaving the care system to becoming fully independent

The focus is predominantly social and concentrates on building confidence and social interaction in the community but volunteers also provide support in practical areas such as job applications, budgeting and shopping according to individual needs.

Anyone over the age of 18 can volunteer and this can be a very rewarding experience.

“Even in a short time I have seen this young person grow in confidence. I find the experience of befriending rewarding and fun. I would recommend this to everyone; we all have something special to offer and you could make positive changes to a young person's life.” Befriender, Antrim



Caring about Adults

In MANCHESTER a block of flats was purchased to facilitate another 14 individuals with mental ill health. The flats are currently undergoing refurbishment.

In April we took over the running of two Nursing Homes in KIDDERMINSTER under a contract with Worcestershire County Council. Coombe House and Rose Orchard, Baxter Avenue, both nursing homes for adults with learning disabilities and complex health needs, recently received a rating of 'excellent' from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI).

Homes in NAVAN and MULLINGAR opened during the year marking Praxis Care's first venture in the Republic of Ireland. In Navan care is provided for individuals with learning disabilities in two five-bedded bungalows and in Mullingar a four-bedded house supports individuals with a range of challenging behaviours.

LAUREL LODGE IN LARNE opened in June 2006. The purpose built complex caters for clients with long term mental health needs. The facility comprises an eight place group house and a block of four self-contained flats for individuals who benefit from a more independent lifestyle. The unit is staffed by professionally qualified and experienced staff, all with appropriate training in the area of mental health.

In LURGAN, CASTLE LANE COURT, a Praxis Care Supported Living Unit, opened its doors to tenants on 1 November 2006. Initially, three clients from long stay hospital care moved in and they have since been joined by a further seven tenants who have come from both hospital and residential care. The unit consists of a core house, which holds eight residents; individual apartments which house four residents; and four bungalows, each designed to house eight residents. The structure of the unit enables residents to receive a suitable level of support and care appropriate to their needs. The scheme is unique in that it caters for individuals with a range of needs and provides day care that is suited to their individual requirements.

CHISHOLM HOUSE IN BALLYCLARE is home to twelve residents. A massive refurbishment took place in 2006 during which residents lived first in a hotel then in houses situated around Ballyclare.

Although this was not without its problems, a few residents have since been able to move on to more independent living as a result of developing new skills during their displacement. On the whole, the decantment experience was a positive one.

Everyone was thrilled and delighted with the refurbishment. One resident stated, "It's great, more homely and I have my own en-suite. My room is decorated to my own taste and I'm very happy to be back, staff are very supportive and kind". Service User, Chisholm House

"Praxis makes you feel at ease and I can talk to them if anything happens and if I need a hand with something"
Service User

"I find that I am listened to and that my problems are taken seriously. This kind of support is very important to me"
Service User

OUR BARGE TRIP

by Service User, Coombe House

We went to Welshpool on a barge. We had a great day. It was nice and peaceful. The sun shone. We saw lots of ducks, swans and colourful dragonflies.



Caring about the Elderly



Praxis Care continues to develop its services for the elderly, especially clients with dementia.

In early 2007, St Paul's Court

began a pilot scheme to provide day care / respite service for two gentlemen diagnosed with dementia. The South Eastern Trust is keen to develop this service further in light of its initial success. A day care worker seeks community resources to co-ordinate activities. Staff accompany the service users on various trips and outings which provide opportunities to get to know others at the scheme with similar interests.

Building work began on the site for "Phase Two" of St Paul's Court in March 2007 and it is due to be completed in March 2008. This extension to the original scheme consists of seven one-bed apartments and one two-bed apartment which will provide care and support to people with moderate to severe dementia.

"For twenty years I had to cope on my own because of my husband's illnesses. St Paul's Court came up and we decided to come here. Everything has worked out very well for us. We have independence here in our own bungalow and the staff respect our privacy. If we hadn't moved here, in a year or so maybe we would have been split up. This type of accommodation allows us to spend the rest of our days together as a married couple and that means a lot to us."
Service Users, St Paul's Court.

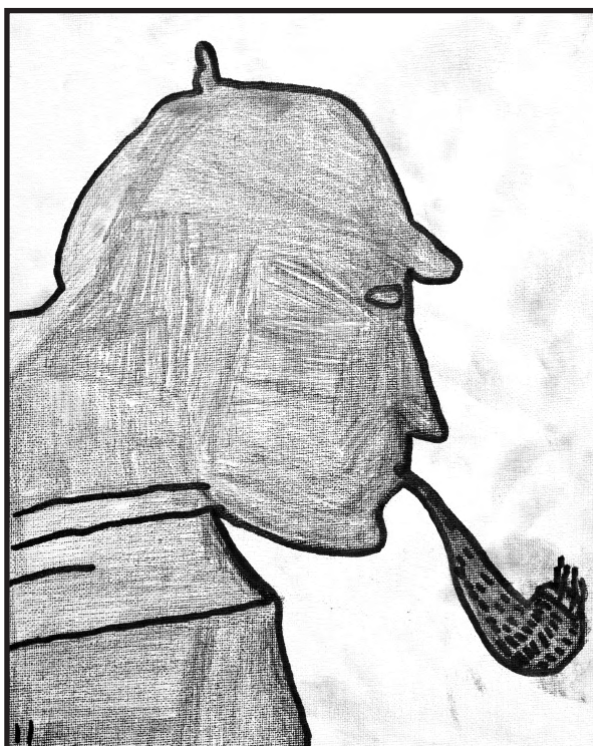
The Foyle Age Appropriate Centre provides a specialised service for twenty adults on placement. Ten older adults with learning disabilities are catered for on a daily basis in Richmond Hall and individuals enjoy a number of social and therapeutic activities such as art, flower arranging and even armchair aerobics.

Several new Floating Support Services for the

elderly opened during the year in the Foyle, Coleraine and Fermanagh areas.

Foyle Floating Support moved to a new office base at Rockmills to accommodate the growing service provided to a range of client groups including older people, older people with addictions and young people with physical disabilities plus addictions

In Coleraine a new office was acquired at Kingsgate Street to accommodate the growing floating support service provided for people with dementia while in Fermanagh and Tyrone, a service for individuals with mental ill health or dementia is operated from the Lisnaskea Scheme.



A TRIBUTE TO RESPOND

Service User, Clements Court

When I'm tired and feeling sad
Help is at hand for which I'm glad
I'll never sink into despair
While my true friend Respond is there

Caring about Acquired Brain Injury

Praxis Care and the Irish Wheelchair Association jointly hosted a major International Conference on Brain Injury in September. The two day event was held in Dublin and attracted over 240 delegates. All feedback, whether formal or anecdotal, has been extremely positive .

Dr Jeff Kreutzer, Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation from Virginia Commonwealth University, captivated parents and carers with his family therapeutic approach. Many carers described his input as one of the best parts of the conference. Dr Kreutzer was himself impressed with the work of Praxis in the area and is keen to maintain contact with the organisation.

Jane Lapotaire, the internationally famous classical actress, stole the show with her very intimate account of her personal journey following a serious car accident which left her brain injured. The conference was spell bound. Other service users talked about their experiences which really made all of the 'professionals' present sit up and listen to what it is like to be on the receiving end of care.

Twelve workshops were held over the two days. Subjects covered included community services and a presentation on Praxis' own Korsakoff Unit, which provides residential care for those who are brain damaged as a result of alcohol misuse

One of the most popular contributors was Graham Ogilvie who has the unique title of Conference Illustrator. Graham captured the essence of the conference in cartoons.

In summary, the conference brought together service users, their families, international specialists from a variety of disciplines and politicians.

This was the first cross border conference of its kind which hopefully has set a precedent for collaboration on a North / South basis in an area in which Praxis has taken the lead.

Caring about Volunteering



unsung heroes

Praxis Care was honoured to receive the Queen's Award for Volunteering in 2006. This was in recognition of 25 years of volunteering within the organisation, particularly with regard to volunteer befriending. The Befriending service was initially set up as an arm of supported accommodation to meet the needs of people discharged from hospital and was recognised for its provision of friendship and support for those who are socially

isolated by mental ill health. The programme enables people with mental health problems to feel part of the community by encouraging the development of personal interests and social activities within the community.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is given for outstanding achievement by groups of volunteers who regularly devote their time to helping others in the community. The Award recognises the vital role played by the hundreds of thousands of 'unsung heroes' of the voluntary and community world and emphasises the importance of continuing recognition of their work. Praxis Care can now use the Unsung Heroes logo which aptly reflects the dedication and commitment of our volunteers.

The official presentation of the Award was made by Lady Carswell, the Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, on behalf of the Queen, at our Annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony in October 2006. 140 people gathered from around the province to enjoy a meal together and recognise the contribution of all volunteers. Lady Carswell spoke positively of the benefits of the befriending scheme and the commitment of the volunteers, and she, along with Nevin Ringland our Chief Executive, presented awards to volunteers who have been with the organisation for five, ten and fifteen years.





Garden Party at Buckingham Palace



This was a very significant year for Praxis as the organisation celebrated its 25th anniversary. From small beginnings it has grown tremendously and to mark the occasion the organisation was granted the Queen's Award for Volunteering and four members were invited to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

My fellow companions were another volunteer, the person he befriends and the longest serving member of the administrative staff. As 18 June 2006 was one of the hottest days of the summer we were very happy to see that lots of tables and chairs had been provided where we could enjoy refreshing glasses of water.

At the appointed time, we entered the forecourt and made our way through one of the arches into a second courtyard which we crossed and ascended a flight of steps into an indoor gallery which contained many portraits of royalty and beautiful cabinets set into the walls, filled with exquisite pieces of priceless china. That led us out onto a balcony which overlooked the gardens.

I felt very privileged to look around to find myself among so many who were being honoured for their voluntary contributions to the well-being of people in their communities.

After a short time, we were arranged into groups and the Royal Family (on this occasion the Queen, Prince Philip, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and Prince Andrew) descended the steps into the garden. I was delighted that the Queen herself, wearing a light summer dress and carrying a large white umbrella to shade her from the sun, came to our group. She spoke briefly to some of the visitors and her warm smile made us feel very welcome.

After the Royal Family withdrew to join special guests in the royal marquee we were free to enjoy afternoon tea consisting of a very

inviting array of dainty sandwiches, scones and cakes. Some time later we were given ice cream made from the milk of the Queen's dairy herd of Jersey cows.

The Palace is set in extensive grounds, apparently there are about forty acres, and I wanted to see as much of them as possible so I set off from where the marquees were. There was quite a large lake with an island in the centre on which were growing trees and ornamental shrubs. Indeed, throughout the grounds were many trees which offered welcome shade on such a hot day. I was interested to note how informal the occasion was as there were little groups of people sitting on the ground chatting or strolling in a leisurely fashion. In one place there were several large beds of roses, each one planted with a single colour of rose, and all were blooming profusely. There was also a very long and wide herbaceous border containing all the usual clumps of perennial plants and at the front of the border, little clumps of different herbs, all of which would provide a delightful aroma on a damp day. Nearby was a vast and astonishingly beautiful urn.

As people began to leave, the two bands continued playing. We all felt very proud and grateful to be the representatives of an organisation that had been so graciously honoured.

Caring about Carers



SERVICE USER, PRAXIS LURGAN

Lost
No hope
Written off
Put to the side
Another number
To the delight of some
Not meant to improve your life
A victim or a survivor?
It's up to you to make the effort
Realise that you will have to make
changes
It's about unlearning and relearning
Your life will not be the same again
It is an opportunity
Put all things in perspective
We all go through bad times
Now search for the good
Help is at hand
Try again
Focus
Found

Praxis, in association with Belfast Wide Trust, provides an Advocacy Service for carers and friends of those suffering from mental ill health.

Over 190 people receive advice and support from our Carer Advocacy Project Worker on a wide range of issues.

The Carer Advocate liaises with Consultant Psychiatrists and the Community Mental Health Team on behalf of carers and also participates in various meetings with Managers and Directors of Mental Health within the Trust in order to highlight the needs of carers.

In addition to the above guidance and advice, the service has also developed:

- ▶ A weekly support group in West Belfast
- ▶ A monthly support group in North Belfast
- ▶ A swimming group (covering both North and West Belfast)
- ▶ A weekly "Steps to Excellence" personal development course, facilitated by the Carer Advocate. This is designed to help individuals progress from feelings of negativity and develop more positive attitudes.

Caring about People with Phobias

This year saw the conclusion of the NIAAS Project funded by the Big Lottery Fund. The Project, comprising three separate strands, exceeded all targets in relation to reaching out to those suffering from anxiety and phobias in each area of its operation. Over 2,000 people used the Helpline and Counselling Services and feedback from service users was very positive in terms of meeting their expectations and providing practical help in dealing with anxiety and phobic states.

The Group Work component of the Project proved very successful and it is hoped that many of the additional groups begun during the life of the Project will continue to operate on a self-help basis.

The Self-Help Groups, Telephone Helpline and Telephone Counselling Services, all manned by volunteers, proved accessible and easy to use and provided an invaluable service to those who availed of it. NIAAS continued to provide a one-to-one counselling service at its Lisburn Road office.

With funding running out for the Project, time is being spent applying to various charitable enterprises with a view to securing further monies to assist us with this important work. It may, however, be necessary to reduce the level of service provision in the incoming year if further funding is not forthcoming. In the meantime Praxis Care has agreed to continue with the Project in its entirety until the overall situation becomes clear.

A Temporary Counsellor has been appointed to continue to provide the service and also provide support to our volunteers.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers and staff whose dedication has made the project such a success.

Caring about Staff



Since 1 October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, jobseekers and trainees because of their age. This new piece of employment legislation has enabled Praxis Care to retain staff with valuable experience and knowledge after the age of retirement.

One member of staff who took advantage of the new legislation is June Scott, Relief Support Worker employed in Conlig Workskills. June has been employed by Praxis Care for over 12 years and the new age legislation has enabled her to continue working part time. Before she joined Praxis, June worked with children with learning difficulties at Barnardos for 14 years. So the ability to retain someone with her experience is invaluable to our organisation.

Praxis carer June was keen to keep working for both financial and personal reasons and to keep

active 'I don't know how people just retire and do nothing.' In addition, June likes her job and the people she works with and finds it very satisfying.

Colette McAtamney has been a Project Worker in the Magherafelt Mental Health Scheme for 17 years and relished the opportunity to stay on after her "official" retirement age. Colette works part time and made the decision to continue working for a variety of reasons, including financial considerations, job satisfaction and also because she enjoys the interaction with clients and her colleagues. Colette notes that her work is very rewarding and she feels a real sense of achievement as she watches service users develop and embrace a more independent living style. Colette also enjoys the opportunity to keep abreast of latest training available within Praxis and hopes to continue working as long as she is able.



Caring about Training

The Staff Development Department has been working hard to progress individuals with their continuous professional development. The team is involved in a variety of projects which aim to enhance the skills of Praxis Care staff and enhance quality of life for service users we work with.

Induction has been a huge part of the Staff Development remit over the past twelve months. 150 new members of staff have been involved in the induction process with a number having completed or in the process of completing their workbooks which record their development since commencing employment with Praxis.

Mandatory training continues to be rolled out over the training calendar year. This involves Fire Safety training, Vulnerable Adult training, Moving and Handling training, Food Hygiene training, Managing Violent and Aggressive Behaviour and Personal Safety and Child Protection as required.

In total 1,250 staff have been involved in mandatory training over the past year.

In addition to the above, the staff development team continues to provide an on-going annual programme of training based on a training needs analysis.

Some staff have identified their own development needs and have opted to progress through the NVQ route which is supported by the NVQ centre based within the Staff Development Department.

The Staff Development Team has had a number of changes in personnel over the past year. Expansion has led to the addition of a new (Managing Violence and Aggression) trainer, NVQ co-ordinator and new administration staff which has further enhanced the department's capacity and capability. Next year promises to be another busy year with further expansion in the team to meet the needs of staff.

Angela O'Donnell (Korsakoff Project, Newry) attended a Mental Health Recovery training day and as a result she was able to put into practice a recovery plan with a service user within Connaught House.

Angela explained that before attending the training she did not know very much about the approach and was therefore unsure as to its benefits. However afterwards, Angela recognised the training and resources provided were very applicable and helped develop her value base in respect of working within mental health and aiming to promote recovery. She was then able to share her learning with the staff team and also encouraged other workers to attend this training. Mental Health Recovery is now a primary approach within the scheme and a number of interventions have occurred as a result of the recovery model/approach.

A service user from Connaught House confirmed that they had benefited from the mental health recovery plan in learning more about their symptoms, recognising behavioural patterns which may lead to relapse and how to deal with them. The service user stated that they now knew more about their mental health than before and would be interested in continuing their learning, specifically about the chemicals in the brain that trigger mental illness and how these can be balanced. Service users confirmed that it was beneficial to talk to staff and fellow residents about the recovery plan and that talking about issues helps to prevent relapse.



Caring About Quality

In the second year of the Service User Satisfaction Survey a steering group, consisting of both service users and frontline staff, was established to provide ideas and advice on all stages of the survey. Part of the initial work was to create a name for the survey and 'Views from U' was agreed by the steering group.

An organisation wide survey of service users' views was conducted to obtain information on the various areas of service provision within Praxis Care. The survey polled the views of all our service users in order to identify areas which work well and also to highlight areas that could be improved.

The results of this survey assist Praxis' quest to achieve and maintain 100% satisfaction with our care and support programmes.



Mental Health

The vast majority of the Praxis Mental Health service users questioned were satisfied with the service they received. Most of the service users also stated that they would recommend the service to a friend in need of similar support. Service Users particularly appreciated staff listening and understanding and providing practical support to help them live more independently.

“Praxis makes you feel at ease and I can talk to them if anything happens and if I need a hand with something”

Learning Disability

Most were happy in their house and with the service provided by staff. Of particular importance to this client group was having their own room, making friends and the social activities co-ordinated by staff.

SERVICE USER, PORTADOWN

I moved from Forest Lodge to a three bedroom ordinary house in Portadown which has become my home. I really enjoyed it, it was hard for me at first. I have a new house mate called Mervyn. I like him very much. I am enjoying my new house. I used to live in Little Forest. I do my own ironing, hoovering, mopping floors and I tidy my own room. I got new furniture for my bedroom. I also got my room painted and got a new wooden floor. I am proud of myself because I have moved on to a better house.



Carers

Challenge services were also highly commended. For example, many parents noted that their child enjoyed their time at the respite home. Again, there was praise for staff qualities and the ability of staff to cater for individual needs in a small and homely environment.



Also important were the facilities in the unit and the social outings which enabled children to interact with people other than their family. Learning daily living skills and reaching individual potential were also key points.

“They teach the children excellent life skills that will help them in adulthood.”



Elderly

100% of the Respond service users reported that the staff listened to them and that they had trust and confidence in the staff. 96% of Respond service users said that their quality of life had improved through having contact with the service. The opportunity to live independently and make friends and socialise was highlighted as a key advantage of the service.

Home Response

98% of those questioned stated that they would recommend the service to a friend who was in need of similar help and 99% stated that their quality of life had improved. All of those who responded felt that staff visits were spent in a helpful way and that the service helped them to cope better. Again, it was felt that independence and socialising in the community were encouraged.

“I would have no standard of life without the help I receive from Praxis. They are my lifeline”

“My quality of life has improved greatly and I have not been in hospital for eight years through having contact with Praxis Home Response”



Workskills

The majority of service users said they were happy going to Workskills and that they learned something useful. Doing lots of different jobs and meeting new people were highlights of the service.

SERVICE USER, CRUMLIN

I live in Crumlin Scheme and I attend the Cookie Company in Portadown. I really like it there, we make all sorts of beautiful cookies like fifteens, mars bar krispies.

Caring About Research



The Research Sub-Committee

The Research Sub-Committee was established in September 2006. The group comprises three Praxis Care staff members (Mr Nevin Ringland, Mrs Irene Sloan, Mrs Sonia Mawhinney), two Board members (Dr Oliver Shanks and Mrs Rosaleen Moore), and two external individuals (Dr Martin Dempster and Dr Colette Gray from Queen's University and Stranmillis University respectively).

The group meets quarterly with the remit of encouraging and supporting the department, reviewing research proposals, offering advice on methodology and assisting in defining the strategy for research within the department.

Researching...Addiction in Roscommon

The Research Department has recently completed an evaluation of Harristown House, the only residential addiction treatment centre provided within the criminal justice sector in Ireland. The evaluation was funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and commissioned by the Probation Service.

Harristown House, located in Castlerea, County Roscommon, is a twelve-bed residential facility for men who have come into contact with the criminal justice system as a result of their misuse of alcohol and/or drugs. The research was commended as providing valuable information on the service provided by Harristown House in

terms of both service delivery and outcomes. Although many clients relapsed after discharge, the majority had achieved abstinence by the end of the research.

Furthermore, almost two thirds had not re-offended. A relationship was observed between recidivism and relapse - all those who re-offended had relapsed. Negative attitudes towards the criminal justice system were identified as significant predictors of recidivism. However, no significant changes in criminal attitudes

were observed over the course of treatment.

Based on these findings, a number of recommendations were made to improve upon the service.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from the Praxis Care website.

Research uncovers new 'model of care' that can change the lives of people with alcohol related brain injury

A new piece of Praxis Care research has documented the life changing progress made by 4 young men with brain damage caused by severe and long term alcohol abuse. The condition is called Korsakoff Syndrome and results in people having permanent short term memory loss. Alcohol related illness is an increasingly prevalent problem in Northern Ireland, and one which costs the NI government in excess of £35 million per year. Praxis Care has reported that often people are misdiagnosed or inappropriately placed for significant periods, after brain damage has occurred. This was the case for the 4 men in this study. Progress of the men was measured closely over their first twelve months of moving into the new specialist unit. The findings from the study suggest that a unit such as this can give back a 'quality of life' to people with Korsakoff syndrome.

To read a copy of the full report go to research publications on www.praxiscare.org.uk.

Quiz

1. IT IS EASY TO RECOGNIZE PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS BECAUSE THEY ACT CRAZY.

False: A person who is being properly treated for a mental illness can lead a normal, productive life and show no signs of the illness.

2. WHO IS THE MOST LIKELY TO BECOME MENTALLY ILL?

Mental illness can affect anyone, regardless of intelligence, social class or income level.

3. MENTAL ILLNESS IS VERY UNCOMMON.

False: Mental illness is more common than most people realise. Over the course of a life time 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health difficulty that interferes with daily living.

4. VIOLENCE IS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL ILLNESS - TRUE OR FALSE?

False: People with mental illness are more likely to be the victims, rather than the perpetrators of violence.

5. DRUG OR ALCOHOL ABUSE IS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL ILLNESS.

True: Nearly 50 percent of people with mental illness abuse drugs or alcohol. Often, people with mental illness abuse drugs or alcohol to cover up signs of mental illness. Drug or alcohol abuse is their way of coping.

6. THERE ARE MORE EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS FOR MENTAL ILLNESS THAN EVER BEFORE.

True: While there are no known cures, standard treatments that can significantly reduce the symptoms of mental illness and enable those affected by them to live productive lives. Unfortunately, more than 50 percent of people with mental illness never seek treatment.

7. STIGMA REFERS TO:

Prejudices that can prevent people in need of speaking out

8. AGORAPHOBIA IS:

A fear of being in places or situations which would be difficult to escape from

9. WHAT IS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, affecting 450,000 people in the UK.

10. WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

Symptoms of dementia include loss of memory, confusion and problems communicating with others.

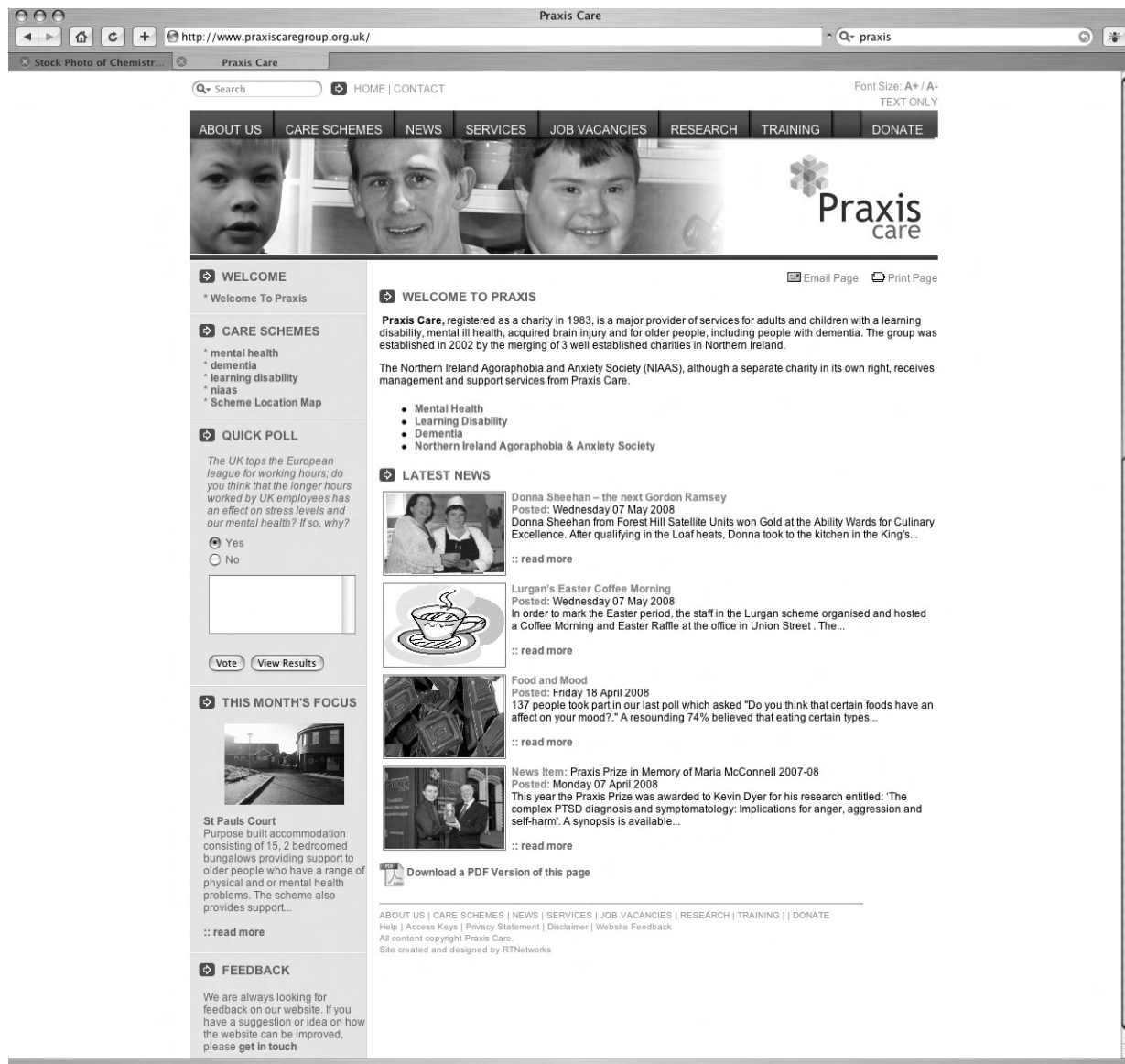
11. WHAT CAUSES ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

So far, no one single factor has been identified as a cause for Alzheimer disease. It is likely that a combination of factors, including age, genetic inheritance, environmental factors, diet and overall general health, are responsible.

12. WHAT IS A LEARNING DISABILITY?

Learning Disability is a disorder that affects people's ability to either interpret what they see and hear or to link information from different parts of the brain. These limitations show up in many ways - as specific difficulties with spoken and written language, coordination, self - control, or attention.

Communication



In March 2006 a Steering Group was formed to review the Praxis Care website. This group was chaired by Director of Development, Bill Halliday, and comprised members of staff representing different areas across the organisation.

The group worked in partnership with web designers RT Networks to develop an up to date and accessible website that would appeal to professionals, the general public, staff and service users alike.

The Steering Group met on a monthly basis to discuss ideas and review progress. All staff and service users were asked for their feedback which

was invaluable in assessing that the website was user-friendly and provided the right sort of information on all Praxis Care services, individual schemes, and Central Office Support Services Departments, eg Staff Development and Research. The News Section, covering events, both corporate and at scheme level, is updated frequently with all staff and service users encouraged to contribute.

Further information is available to download, for example our Annual Report and Research Publications plus the Praxis Care DVD can also be viewed on-line.



New features include:

- ▶ “Scheme in Focus” which provides more detailed information on various schemes within Praxis Care on a rotational basis.
- ▶ Information on job vacancies and application forms available to download.
- ▶ A poll question which is changed quarterly.
- ▶ A map of the British Isles showing the location of Praxis Care schemes.
- ▶ A “Donate” section explaining how donations can be made and what this money is used for.
- ▶ Feedback form for comments and / or suggestions on the site.

The site has also proved a useful and accessible way of celebrating events such as our Annual Volunteer Awards, Training Awards, the 25th Anniversary Garden Fete and Royal Visit as well as publicising events such as the first all Ireland Acquired Brain Injury Conference and the activities that take place regularly at all schemes.

The site was successfully launched in September 2006 and since then has gone from strength to strength. The number of hits on the site has grown beyond recognition: in the first two months the site averaged 95 hits per day; this has now increased to a daily average of 155 hits. In total there have been over 30,000 hits since September 2006 with the site being accessed as far afield as South Africa, Brazil and New Zealand as well as many European countries. Statistics show that the site is being accessed through popular search engines such as Google, MSN, AOL and Yahoo as well as by the domain name.

The Steering Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis to review the website and ensure it is still meeting the needs of the organisation.

Internal Communications

Praxis Care promotes good communication throughout the organisation by the following methods:

- ▶ The Chief Executive visits each scheme every 18 months. This provides an opportunity for staff to communicate with Senior Management in a two-way flow.
- ▶ The Director of Care meets with Operational Assistant Directors monthly and in turn, Assistant Directors hold regular meetings with their Managers.
- ▶ Communications Forum Meetings are held with Senior Staff on a quarterly basis while Interdepartmental Meetings, with representatives from all Central Office Departments are held on a monthly basis.
- ▶ Team meetings are held regularly both in Central Office and at Schemes.
- ▶ A monthly News Sheet has been introduced to keep staff informed of developments and changes in the organisation. Every member of staff receives a copy of this News Sheet attached to their payslip.

GOING TO WORK

SERVICE USER, ANTRIM

Steady as a heart-beat
With shadow racing-on
Moving with conviction
Mouth open for a yawn

Routine makes reluctance
While time, adds the
dread
These things, give us
substance
Whilst, getting out of
bed

Embracing Technology

All of us have experienced the increase in the use of technology within our daily lives. For most of us technological advancements have created safer modes of transport, higher quality communication systems and a variety of appliances within our homes that make life that little bit easier. For others, however, technological advances have brought about changes that are life enhancing and support them in living as safe and independent a life as possible.

Praxis has moved with the times in adapting some of these modern day technologies to support a variety of people with brain injuries, learning disabilities, mental health issues and dementia.

Tunstall Techno

The Tunstall Techno is a communication system which has been employed throughout a variety of Praxis properties. Its ease of use and portable nature means it can be used in a variety of situations including:

- ▶ Signalling for help
- ▶ Listening for difficulties
- ▶ Indicating to staff if a person requiring support leaves their room at night.
- ▶ Handsets show the location and allow staff to talk to the service user to check if they need assistance without having to invade their privacy.

Individualised SMART Technology

For Service Users who have sensory difficulties sensors can be placed in various locations, for example under the pillow, and these will vibrate to alert them in case of an emergency, an incoming telephone call or someone at the door.

Sensitive lighting in hallways turns on automatically when the hall darkens or can provide soft lighting during the night in case the service user leaves the room.

Each of the above systems helps to create a safer living environment within a person's own home so they can remain as independent as possible and continue to live a quality lifestyle.





Caring about the Environment

Poem by Service User, Coleraine

The 21st Century's started to pass
Enveloped in clouds of greenhouse gas.
The sea level rises, the planet warms,
Europe's expecting its first locust swarms.
Humanity seems to have only just blinked -
Already, there's animal species extinct.

The world is dead set on a course for
disaster.
It feels like it couldn't be going there faster.
We've made a real hash out of running the
planet,
Hope for the future? I think we should can it
Unless we collectively come to our
senses.
Start building up bridges and tearing down
fences,
Re-connect with the rest of our fellow
humanity.

The drive towards introducing more sustainable practices into the organisation is being led by Praxis Care's Central Office. Measures already in place include recycling of paper, cardboard, printer cartridges, computers and mobile phones. A programme has begun to replace all lighting in the buildings, with low energy fittings and a number of other power consumption reducing measures.

Going Green at Schemes

Ensuring we all contribute towards reusing and recycling materials is important to the organisation and to each person within it.

Praxis Care supports service users and staff to recycle and reduce waste overall.

This has involved getting advice on the best ways to **GO GREEN**.

Changing light bulbs, insulating homes, turning heating down by 1°, using local recycling, saving on waste, using recycled paper, using reusable carrier bags, cutting down on car journeys. It has been enlightening to see how easy it has been for

Central Office and schemes to adopt more environmentally friendly approaches.

Service users and staff have embraced these ideas and the whole experience has proved both educational and interesting.

SERVICE USER, BANGOR

I live in the RFC in Bangor. The RFC is situated in beautiful and quiet surroundings. We have many species of birds, such as the wood pigeons, bluetits, starlings and robins but you must not forget the obstreperous magpie.

We have a family of house sparrows nesting in the roof of the RFC and above my bedroom window which is lovely to hear in the mornings when I am not so good for a while. My friend Betty keeps a gorgeous little bird named tweetie-pie. We find it therapeutic for us both. We have a resident hedgehog in the garden. Betty and I feed it on cat food and we have named him Sammy.



The last word...

The Praxis staff are so caring and giving
They help me through my day of living
When I am feeling lonely and blue
Praxis are there to see me through
When I am feeling down and out
They always come and help me out.
They help me at each passing day
I really like their friendly way

Service User, Magherafelt

My mother died a while back. I had always feared that I wouldn't be able to cope with this, but with all the support I had in place, I was able to stay well. After a lifetime of struggling with mental ill health, I have now accepted my illness and know to ask for help when I need it.

Service User, Lurgan





Quality of Life - What Does It Mean?



It can be a book club, walking group, supporting carers, giving time, going swimming, helping with debt management, holidays, cooking, attending educational courses, specific group work, shopping, day trips, learning to drive, keeping a pet or decorating a home; the list is endless.

To strive to improve one's quality of life takes creativity,

Quality of life is a phrase, which is repeated again and again when it comes to health and social care. But what does it mean? Aristotle even toiled over an explanation before finally deciding that it centred on individuals' happiness. Some would say that having a good quality of life is one which is meaningful and enjoyed.

At Praxis Care we aim to assist individuals to improve their quality of life. But how do we achieve something which has been debated about since time began?

What we recognise as an organisation is that each person who accesses our service is an individual and has individual needs. What can be meaningful and enjoyable for one person can be a chore and unpleasant for another.

However Praxis Care employs a wealth of individuals who have immense knowledge, expertise and skill within their field, be it mental health services, learning disability, elderly services, children's services etc. By gaining knowledge and imparting what we know to our service users we can encourage people to try out new suggestions, to engage and feel supported.

Support can take many forms and can sometimes be the smaller less noticeable or talked about support that can make differences to how individuals view their life.

enthusiasm and knowledge.

It is about not assuming what we think would be best but listening to the individual and viewing their needs holistically to gain a better understanding of how our support can lead towards individuals having more meaningful and enjoyable lives.

MY SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Service User, Navan

I went to Carlingford for my summer holidays. I went with my friends from my house and we stayed for two nights.

On our first day, we went out on a boat. I saw seagulls there in the sea. I also saw ships and mountains. We were very safe because we were wearing life jackets. The weather was good. We had sun cream on our faces.

After we came back, we had fish and chips. The next day we went bowling and to the dog track. I had sausages and chips for my tea.

On the last day, we went to the castle for a walk and ice cream.

I had a good time and I would like to go again next year.

Finances

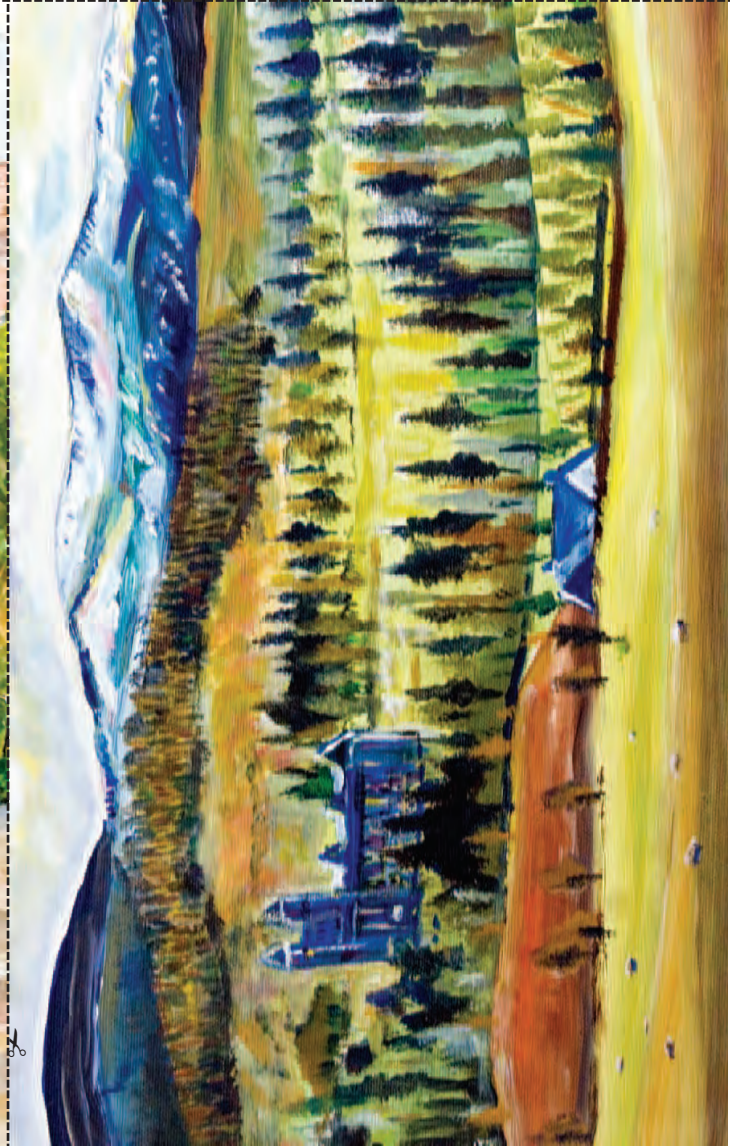
PRAXIS CARE LIMITED COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Statement of financial activities (incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)
Year ended 31st March 2007

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2007 £	Total Funds 2006 £
Incoming Resources					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Voluntary Income	2	53,447	15,902	69,349	21,720
Activities for generating funds	3	-	-	-	25,174
Investment income	4	5,646	-	5,646	362
Incoming resources from charitable activities	6	17,147,169	163,212	17,310,381	14,155,200
Other incoming resources	5	107,698	-	107,698	40,341
Total Incoming Resources		17,313,960	179,114	17,493,074	14,242,797
Resources Expended					
Cost of generating funds:					
Costs of generating voluntary income	8	-	-	-	(47,642)
Charitable activities	7	(16,973,830)	(239,386)	(17,213,216)	(14,085,915)
Governance costs	7	(103,123)	-	(103,123)	(98,941)
Other resources expended	9	(29,395)	-	(29,395)	-
Total Incoming Resources		(17,106,348)	(239,386)	(17,345,734)	(14,232,498)
Net Income Resources for the Year	10	207,612	(60,272)	147,340	10,299
Gains/Loss on revaluation of freehold property		5,312,678	-	5,312,678	-
Unrealised gains on investments		1,942	-	1,942	884
Net Movement in funds/net income for the year		5,522,232	(60,272)	5,461,960	11,183
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		4,298,769	82,234	4,381,093	4,369,910
Total funds carried forward		9,821,001	22,052	9,843,053	4,381,093

The statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared. All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

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JOHN BLEE, DERRY, 1st Prize, Praxis

PAUL MacNAMEE, CONLIG WORKSKILLS, 2nd Prize, Challenge

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BILL McCONNELL, CLEMENTS COURT, 1st Prize, Respond

JEMIMA MacCLEAN, GLENFIELD, 1st Prize, Children's Section

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THOMAS KENNA, MULLINGAR, 1st Priz, Challenge



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FOYLE COOKIE COMPANY, 1st Prize, Group Entry, Challenge

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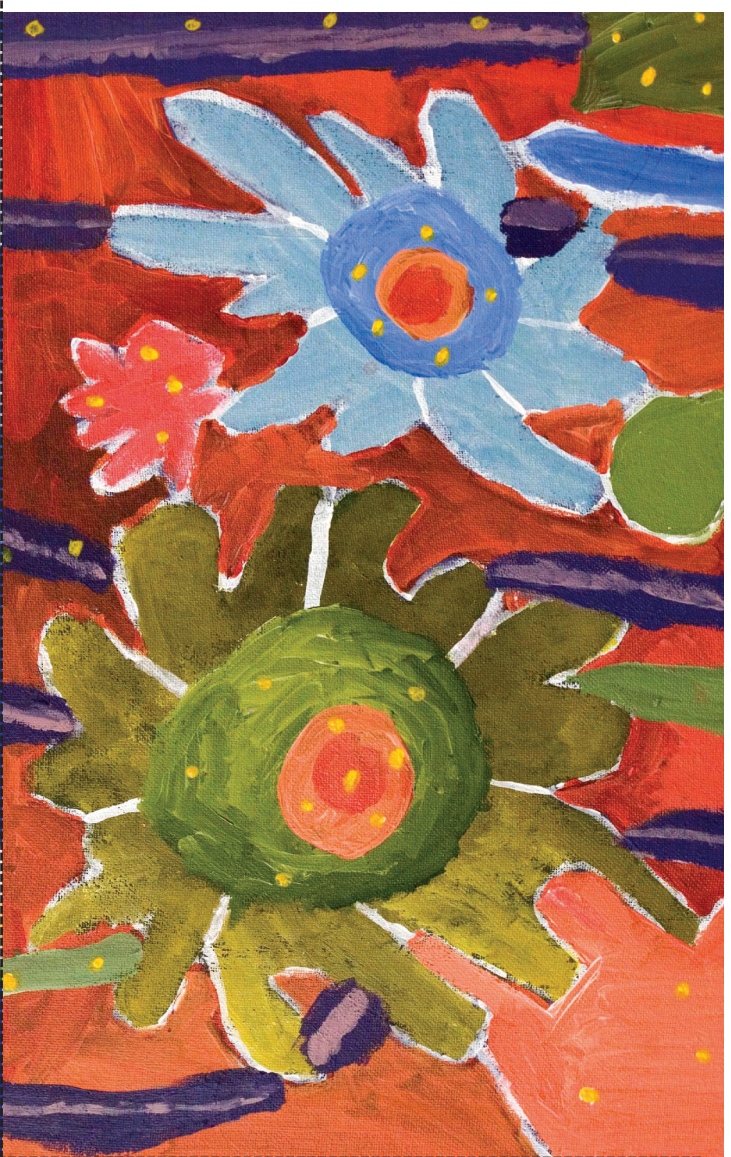


BERNIE KELLY, DERRY, 2nd Prize, Praxis

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ALAN GIBBS, BAXTER AVENUE, 3rd Prize, Challenge



PRAXIS CARE STATISTICS

NUMBER OF PEOPLE (ADULTS) WE PROVIDE A HOME TO:

Learning disability	N = 116
Mental Health	N = 224
Elderly	N = 36
Total:	N = 376

NUMBER OF PEOPLE (ADULTS) WE HELP IN THEIR OWN HOME:

Home Response	N = 192
Floating Support	N = 145
Total:	N = 337

NUMBER OF PEOPLE (ADULTS) WHO ATTEND OUR DAY ACTIVITY SERVICES:

Mental Illness	N = 109
Learning Disability	N = 111
Total:	N = 220

Number of children receiving respite services:	N = 107
Number of volunteer befriending matches:	N = 106
Number of service users waiting to be matched:	N = 167
Number of volunteers waiting to be matched:	N = 9

CARE SCHEME MAPS



